

**Dr. Alan Kurschner's Pre-Wrath Chaos:  
A Review of His "7 Pretrib Problems and the Prewrath Rapture"**

This paper was prepared in response to a request for an analysis of the arguments propounded in a 2+ hour video presentation of "Seven Pretrib Problems and the Prewrath Rapture," setting forth the Pre-Wrath Rapture views of Dr. Alan Kurschner in particular ([7pretribproblems.com](http://7pretribproblems.com)).

Apparently other works written in refutation of the Pre-Wrath Rapture theory were felt not to adequately answer some of the arguments of the video presentation in question, and were thus causing some souls to be shaken in mind or troubled thereby.

As a reminder, the "Pre-Wrath Rapture" theory basically propounds the idea that the rapture does not occur till around mid-way through the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, after the Church witnesses certain prophetic signs, events and personages, and passes through the Great Tribulation, but before being exposed to the judgments and "wrath of God" poured out in the "Day of the LORD." (This may thus be more accurately labeled as the "**≈ Three Quarters 70<sup>th</sup> Week Rapture**," or "**≈Mid-Second Half 70<sup>th</sup> Week Rapture**," or "**Post Truncated Great Tribulation Rapture**".) All of which entails the denial of the imminent or any-moment expectation of the coming of the Lord Jesus to rapture His heavenly people, the Church, His Body & Bride, to their heavenly home and destiny in the Father's house.

After reviewing the video presentation, but before formally preparing our assessment, we revisited the paper prepared by George Zeller titled: "Pre-Wrath Confusion" ([middletownbiblechurch.org/proph/prewrath.htm](http://middletownbiblechurch.org/proph/prewrath.htm)), dealing with Marvin Rosenthal's views. We were reminded afresh, through its perusal, of what a masterful job George Zeller did in that paper, dismantling the system as entirely unscriptural and deleterious. While there are some slight differences between Rosenthal and Kurschner (e.g., the latter more wisely includes the 7 Bowl Judgments as part of the "Day of the LORD"), we believe, nonetheless, that George Zeller's work sufficiently answers Dr. Kurschner's video presentation. For he deals therein with a whole host of disorder and confusion reiterated by Dr. Kurschner:

- CONFUSION #1 : Rejection of the Imminent Return
- CONFUSION #2: Mixes Church History with Jewish History and CONFUSION #8: Why the Church is on the Earth (by involving the Church in the 70th Week of Daniel)
- CONFUSION #3: Misinterprets the Book of Revelation (the divine outline of the book given in Rev. 1:19)
- CONFUSION #4: Tries to Distinguish Great Tribulation from The Day of the Lord
- CONFUSION #5: Unbiblical Distinction between Seal, Trumpet, & Bowl Judgments
- CONFUSION #9: Supposes that the Great Tribulation is Shortened
- CONFUSION #10: Tries to Make a Distinction between the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" and "The Day of the Lord"
- CONFUSION #12: Misunderstanding of "Birth Pangs"
- CONFUSION #13: Failure to Distinguish Cosmic Disturbances (related to Joel 2:30-31, Matt. 24:29 and the 6th Seal Judgment of Rev. 6:12-14)
- CONFUSION #14: Does Not Allow for Church to be Received into Heaven
- CONFUSION #15: Applies Matthew 24:31 to the Church
- CONFUSION #19: The Identity of Those Saved During the 70th Week

All of the above refute the system as set forth by Dr. Kurschner. But George Zeller's paper also refutes other notions that Dr. Kurschner and company did not bother to even touch on in the video presentation:

- CONFUSION #7: Misrepresentation of Revelation 3:10
- CONFUSION #11: Cry for "Peace and Safety" During Troubled Times
- CONFUSION #16: Judgment of Nations Applied to the Church
- CONFUSION #17: Michael the Archangel Called the "Restrainer"
- CONFUSION #20: Misinterpretation of 2 Peter 3:10-12

With that said, we offer herein some further thoughts on aspects that were not directly touched on by George Zeller (for who can possibly anticipate every angle and twist imposed on a text to get around a blessed truth of God's Word?!), as well as reinforcement of things he did address. The present paper should, therefore, serve as a sort of companion to George Zeller's work, and Lord willing, will be of some help to strengthen the faith of those who are holding fast to, or be of some use in delivering a few souls from any system that obscures or robs, the blessed hope of the coming of our Lord Jesus for His Bride at any moment (*"I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown,"* the crown jewel of the blessed hope in the heart). That is our prayer, in the name of the Lord Jesus, in the name of all that He is in the infinite value of His Person and Work before the Father on our behalf. Amen!

### **1) The alleged "Precursor Problem"**

Here Dr. Kurschner and company point out for us that certain events are said in Scripture to occur *before* the "Day of the LORD," i.e., the presence of "Elijah" (Mal. 4:5); the apostasy taking place (2 Thess. 2:3); the revelation of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3-4); and cosmic disturbances (Joel 2:31). And this is used as a basis to deny that the Rapture is sign-less and imminent. For it is assumed that whatever occurs before the "Day of the LORD" must necessarily occur before the Rapture. But that is purely an assumption, a false assumption. Obviously "before the Day of the LORD" does not equal "before the Rapture," a false assumption repeated under the alleged "2 Thessalonians Problem" (addressed shortly). We understand, though, that the Pre-Wrath notion claims that the Rapture and the "Day of the LORD" *must* occur on the same day. That is only because their theory requires it, with their denial of the blessed truth of the imminency of the coming of the Lord Jesus for us, and not because any properly understood Scripture actually says so. (See more below.)

[And even if we assumed, for the sake of argument, that the Rapture and the "Day of the LORD" must occur on the same day, this view, *at best*, would collapse into the erroneous Mid-Tribulational Rapture postponement notion. But the Pre-Wrath scheme devises other "Problems"—"The Olivet Discourse" and "The Revelation" Problems (which are actually insurmountable problems for *their* system)—by manufacturing the presence of the Church on earth during most of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.]

Now . . .

- a) On the cosmic disturbances, simply note that there is nothing in Scripture that even remotely suggests that they all occur only once, and that, therefore, Joel 2:31 must be the same event as the 6th Seal Judgment of Rev. 6:12-14. Noah was in an "ark" and the infant Moses was in an "ark" (same word in Gen. 6-9 and Exod. 2:3). Were Noah and Moses in the same ark?
- b) Leaving aside for a moment how the "Day of the LORD" is defined, or the aspects or phases thereof (see more on this below), there very well may be a transition period or gap between the Rapture and the "Day of the LORD," or between the Rapture and the onset of the 70th Week, just as there was a transition period between the death and resurrection of Christ and the beginning of the mystery period of the formation of the heavenly Body & Bride of Christ on the Day of Pentecost by the special arrival of the Holy Spirit on earth (a nearly two months long gap). So regardless of how, e.g., Mal. 4:5 or Joel 2:31 are interpreted, nothing requires that said prophetic events precede the Rapture of the Church. The truth, therefore, that the coming of the Lord for His Bride ought to be looked for with expectant hearts as possible at any moment remains unaffected. No signs or prophetic events must be fulfilled, awaited, or looked for by the heavenly Body & Bride of Christ before He thus comes.

Dr. Kurschner appears to mock any such possibility of a "gap," labeling it the *"gap theory."* Even though he and his colleagues later (under their "Church and Israel Problem") go on to acknowledge a "gap" (actual word used) between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel. Thus Dr. Kurschner has himself, inadvertently, removed the sting of any insult implied by the "gap theory." Hear him:

"In Daniel, these 70 weeks are divided with the first 69 weeks having been fulfilled in the past, and the final week, the final 7-year period, still awaiting fulfilment in the future. And that during ***the gap, between the first 69 weeks and the final week***, there has been something like **2,000 years and counting**. ***This gap of time*** that we are currently in is commonly referred to as the Church Age."

- c) Dr. Kurschner and company base their entire idea that the Rapture and the "Day of the LORD" **MUST occur on the same day** on two terribly misinterpreted passages: Luke 17:22-35 and Matt. 24:37-40, neither of which have anything to do with the Rapture of the Church! So much for that great argument!

***As such, the Pre-Wrath Rapture theory has absolutely no basis for its scheme to thus manipulate and maneuver the Day of the LORD, all in an ill-devised intent (a self-disclosed intent) to do away with the any-moment expectation for the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Bride. Alas, how incredibly sad that any of His own would endeavor to eliminate the imminent expectancy of our Beloved from the hearts of His heavenly***

***people! (And forced to do so solely for the sake of maintaining their own system of ideas.) Their perverse diversion is to look for and expect anything but the any-moment coming of our Bridegroom. That is the only true "Precursor Problem"!***

The Lord Jesus is undoubtedly speaking in Luke 17:22-35 and Matt. 24:37-40 of His second coming in great power and glory, when the Son of Man is "revealed" *at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week*, and not the Rapture of the Church. (The Lord Jesus, in fact, is NEVER said to so come in the character of "Son of Man" for the Church. For the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him has absolutely no association with judgment of sin. "*In His quality of Son of man,*" as to the Lord's coming, such "*notoriously attaches to Him as executor of judgment (see John 5)*"—William Kelly. Note that, e.g., Luke 17:27 indicates that, **as in the days of Noah (which were days of filled with violence and corruption, not tranquility, Gen. 6:5, 13)** there was eating, drinking, marrying (*in spirit of self-will, lawlessness and indifference, without reference to God and His goodness who provides these things*) "until" Noah entered the ark and the flood came (*upon the lost, who were steeped in a spirit of ignoring warning and thus taken by the suddenness of the flood judgment*). The antitype of the Flood judgment in this context, as the Lord uses it here, is the suddenness of the judgment executed by the Son of Man at His Appearing in great power and glory. (Though, in another respect, the Flood judgment may also serve as a type of the judgments of Tribulation period as a whole. Wherein the Tribulation judgments become progressively more severe and intense and worldwide as the 70th week progresses and climaxes with the Great Tribulation of the latter half of the 70th Week and the actual return of the Son of Man in judgment.)

We should further distinguish between the "the days of the Son of Man" which includes the Tribulation period, and "when the Son of Man is revealed" which refers only to the actual manifestation of His coming at the end of the Tribulation period.

"The Lord next refers to the days of Noah: so should it be in His own days when He comes as the Son of man. It is no question either of receiving the Church or of judging the dead, though the latter will follow at the end, as the former precedes. Here it is distinctly the judgment of the quick on the earth, a truth which has very generally passed out of the mind of Christendom. 'They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all [of them].' This cannot refer to any but those alive upon the earth surprised by the deluge. '**And in like manner as took place in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.**' There was progress in the world; civilisation had advanced, but was it better morally? '**But in the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed all [of them].**' Men too easily forget that a judgment incomparably more comprehensive, but after the pattern of these two Divine interventions, awaits

the world, and more particularly that part of it which has been favoured with the testimony of God. There can be no delusion more ruinous than the notion that because there is much good in the midst of Christendom its doom will not come. The Lord lingers in order to save souls. Such is His long-suffering and grace, but He 'is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness.' (2 Peter 3:9.) When His own are gathered out, judgment will proceed so much the more sternly because His grace was seen, its fruits manifested, and His warnings given in vain. As it was then in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot, - 'after this [manner] shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed.' For the Lord speaks only of His revelation from heaven in the judgment of the world, not at all of translating the saints to be with Himself in the Father's house." (William Kelly)

- d) When it suits his purpose under the alleged "2 Thessalonians Problem" (taken up shortly), Dr. Kurschner, however, not only mistakenly assumes that the Rapture must occur on the same day as the "Day of the LORD," but to prop up his gross misunderstanding of 2 Thess. 2, he goes on to contradict everything else he has set forth by actually *equating* the Rapture with the "Day of the LORD" (the day of God's wrath):

"He [Paul] says, '**Now regarding the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him—**' Let me just stop there. Well, Paul hasn't made any connections here. He's just saying, 'Now I'm going to talk about this.' Now, isn't it sort of odd if he says, '**Now, I'm going to talk about the rapture and the *parousia*.**' And then he doesn't mention it ever again? Well, he actually does. **He's unpacking what it means: The Day of the Lord. Prewrath solves this problem** by understanding that these two events [the apostasy and the revelation of the Antichrist] that will occur **before the rapture and before the Day of the Lord**, and that **Paul is using both concepts interchangeably here as he often does in the New Testament.**"

*That which proves too much proves nothing at all but its own disproof.*

- e) **Note on the "Day of the LORD" and the "Great and Gloriously Appearing Day of the LORD"**

The Day of the LORD is earthly and connected with "times and seasons," and thus wholly unconnected with the heavenly Church and its heavenly hope (Rapture)—which precedes the Day of the LORD (in its Tribulation/70th Week opening phase), and which relates not to "you"/"we"/"us," but to "they"/"them," 1 Thess. 5:3.

**The "Day of the LORD" (Day of Jehovah) is an *epoch* which commences with the Tribulation/Daniel's 70th Week—and thus *prior to* the coming of the King of kings to this earth in order to establish His kingdom, but *sometime after* the Rapture. It is a mistake to tie the beginning of the Day of the LORD with either the Rapture or the Appearing, rather than with the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. **The coming of the "Great and Dreadful," or,****

"Great and Gloriously Appearing," *phase* of the Day of the LORD (Mal. 4:5; Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20), however, does indeed mark the actual time of the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven in great power and glory to the world. The Day of the LORD *as an epoch* encompasses the Millennium as well—lasting through the destruction of the present heavens and earth, whereupon "*the Day of God,*" "*the Day of Eternity,*" commences with the creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth (cf. 2 Pet. 3:7-12, 18; Rev. chaps. 19, 20, 21; and OT passages that speak, at times, of the Day of the LORD upon this present earth in terms of its purely Millennial glory phase). It is vital, then, to observe the specific *phase* of the one epoch of the Day of the LORD dealt with in any given passage of Scripture (i.e., the Tribulation phase, the Appearing phase, the Millennial phase, and the Destruction of the present heavens and earth phase).

On the *Millennial phase* of the Day of the LORD, as presented in the OT Scriptures, consider several perfect cases in point, beginning with Isaiah:

"For there shall be a **day of Jehovah of hosts** upon everything proud and lofty, and upon everything lifted up, and it shall be brought low . . . And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; **and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.**" (Isa. 2:12, 17)

Observe that Isa. 2:17 says that the LORD **alone** will be exalted in the "Day of the LORD." This does not mean that *all throughout the epoch* of the Day of the LORD (right from its onset with the 70<sup>th</sup> Week), the LORD alone will be exalted, but that *as a result of* the judgments of God in that Day, He alone will be exalted. For verse 12 tells us that "the Day of the LORD Almighty will be upon ***all the proud and lofty, and all that is exalted.***" This, therefore, clearly shows that there is a phase of the Day of the LORD wherein others are exalted for a brief time, i.e., solely during the Tribulation/70<sup>th</sup> Week phase, but divine judgment and the establishment of the Millennial Reign soon reverses that situation!

Let us also hear Zechariah, Joel, Obadiah, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah . . .

"Behold, **the day cometh for Jehovah,** and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. And I will assemble all the nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity; and the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And Jehovah will go forth and fight with those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand **in that day** upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem toward the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west,—a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee [by] the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: ye shall even flee, like as ye

fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **And Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee.** And it shall come to pass **in that day [within the introductory phase of that Day]**, that there **shall not be light; the shining shall be obscured.** And it shall be one day which is known to Jehovah, not day, and not night; and it shall come to pass ***[during the Millennial phase of that Day]***, at eventide it shall be light ***[cp. Isa. 30:26—“And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Jehovah bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the wound of their stroke.”]*** And it shall come to pass **in that day [in its Millennial glory phase]** that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. **And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Jehovah, and his name one.** All the land from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem shall be turned as the Arabah; and Jerusalem shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her own place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner-gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. **And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; and Jerusalem shall dwell safely . . .** And it shall come to pass **in that day [prior to the establishment of the Millennial Reign]** that a great panic from Jehovah shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together—gold, and silver, and garments, in great abundance. . . **And it shall come to pass [during the Millennial phase of that Day], that all that are left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.** And it shall be, that whoso goeth not up of the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither shall it be upon them; there shall be the plague, wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. **In that day [in its Millennial glory phase]** shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO JEHOVAH; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto Jehovah of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein. **And in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.** (Zech. 14:1-11, 13-14, 16-21)

**"For behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall turn again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all the nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of my people and mine inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations: and they have parted my land . . . Let the nations rouse themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down, for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! **For the day of Jehovah is at hand [though not yet present, that is, in its Millennial glory phase]** in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: and Jehovah will be a shelter for his people, and the refuge of the children of Israel. And ye shall know that I, Jehovah, am your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain; and Jerusalem shall be holy, and no strangers shall pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day [during the Millennial phase of that Day], that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the water-courses of Judah shall flow with waters; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah, and shall water the valley of Shittim. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, in that they have shed innocent blood in their land. **But Judah shall abide for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. And I will purge them from the blood from which I had not purged them: for Jehovah dwelleth in Zion.**" (Joel 3:1-2, 12-21)**

**"In that day [during the Millennial phase of 'that Day' of the LORD], will I raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations upon whom my name is called, saith Jehovah who doeth this. Behold, the days come [in the Millennial glory phase of the Day of the LORD], saith Jehovah, when the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop new wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will turn again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; and they shall make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God."** (Amos 9:11-15)



**“For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations:** as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy recompence shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. **But upon mount Zion [with the Millennial glory phase of the Day of the LORD] shall there be deliverance, and it shall be holy; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.** And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble; and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau: **for Jehovah hath spoken it.** And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the lowland the Philistines; yea, they shall possess the field of Ephraim and the field of Samaria; and Benjamin shall possess Gilead; and the captives of this host of the children of Israel shall possess what belonged to the Canaanites, unto Zarephath; and the captives of Jerusalem, who were in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. And saviours [*delivers used of the LORD the Saviour as His instruments*] shall come up on mount Zion, to judge the mount of Esau; **and the kingdom shall be Jehovah's.**” (Obadiah 1:15-21)

**“But it shall come to pass in the end of days [in the Millennial days on this present earth]** that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and the peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and Jehovah's word from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many peoples, and reprove strong nations, even afar off; and they shall forge their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-knives: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war **anymore**. And they shall sit every one under his vine, and under his fig-tree; and there shall be **none** to make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples [*now*] will walk every one in the name of his god; but [*in that day*] we will walk in the name of Jehovah, our God **for ever and ever. In that day [the Day of LORD],** saith Jehovah, **will I assemble** her that halteth, and **I will gather** her that is driven out, and **her that I have afflicted;** and I will make her that halted a remnant, **and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and [in the Millennial glory phase of the Day of the LORD] Jehovah shall reign over them in mount Zion, from henceforth even for ever.** And thou, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, **yea, the first dominion shall come, -- the kingdom to the daughter of Jerusalem.**” (Mic. 4:1-8)

“Therefore wait ye for me, saith Jehovah, until the day that I rise up to the prey; **for my determination is to assemble the nations, that I may gather the kingdoms together, to pour upon them mine indignation, -- all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then** will I turn to the peoples [*the nations*] a pure language, that they may **all** call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Cush my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed [*the Jews*], shall bring mine oblation. **In that day** [*the Day of LORD, in its Millennial glory phase*] thou shalt **not** be ashamed for all thy doings wherein thou hast transgressed against me; for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that exult in thy pride, and **thou shalt no more be haughty** because of my holy mountain. And I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and **they shall trust in the name of Jehovah. The remnant of Israel shall not work unrighteousness, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth:** but they shall feed and lie down, and **none** shall make them afraid. Exult, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; rejoice and be glad with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem: **Jehovah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more.** **In that day** [*in the Millennial glory phase of the Day of the LORD*] it shall be said to Jerusalem, **Fear not**; Zion, let not thy hands be slack. Jehovah thy God is in thy midst, a mighty one that will save: **he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will exult over thee with singing.** I will gather them that sorrow for the solemn assemblies, who were of thee: the reproach of it was a burden unto them. **Behold, at that time I will deal with all them that afflict thee;** and I will save her that halted, and gather her that was driven out; **and I will make them a praise and a name in all the lands where they have been put to shame.** **At that time** will I bring you, yea, at the time that I gather you; for [*in the Millennial glory phase of the Day of the LORD*] **I will make you a name and a praise, among all the peoples of the earth,** when I shall turn again your captivity before your eyes, saith Jehovah.” (Zeph. 3:8-20)

**Moreover,** that there is a phase of the “the Day of the LORD” that includes the Tribulation Period/Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week accords with prophetic scripture which depicts the “Day of the LORD” (or “*that day*”), in its *Introductory phase, in the day of His wrath, as a unique time of “tribulation,” “trouble,” “distress,” “birth pains”* in what is **uniquely the worst period of divine judgment in world history—as is the Tribulation Period/Daniel’s 70th Week as a whole and progressively so, especially the 2<sup>nd</sup> half or its last 3 ½ years. And there obviously cannot be two distinct Tribulation Periods characterized as the worst divine judgments in world history!** (Cp. Joel 2:1-2; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Mark 13:19; Matt. 24:15-16, 19-21; Rev. 7:14; 3:10-11; 16:18; Zeph. 1:14-18; Rev. 6:12-17; Isa. 2:10, 12, 19-21; 13:6-13; Rev. 15:1, 7; 16:1; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:1-4, 9;

along with the sudden/unexpected and then more intensive ***“birth pains” of divine judgment and wrath executed during the Day of the LORD*** in Matt. 24:8; 1 Thess. 5:1-4, 9; Isa. 13:6-8; Jer. 30:6-7). All of which accords perfectly with 2 Thess. 2. The Tribulation Period/70<sup>th</sup> Week is thus identified with the ***introductory phase*** of the Day of the LORD.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: **for the day of Jehovah cometh**, for it is at hand; **a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and gross darkness**, as the dawn spread upon the mountains;—a great people and a strong; **there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after them**, to the years of generations and generations.” (Joel 2:1-2)

**“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”** (Jer. 30:7)

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people [*Israel*]; and **there shall be a time of distress, such as never was since there was a nation until that time**. And at that time thy people [*Israel*] shall be delivered, every one that is found written in the book.” (Dan. 12:1)

**“For those days shall be distress such as there has not been the like since the beginning of creation which God created, until now, and never shall be.”** (Mark 13:19)

“When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which is spoken of through Daniel the prophet [*in connection with the 70<sup>th</sup> Week at its midpoint, Dan. 9:27*], standing in what is a **holy place**, (he that reads let him understand,) then let **those who are in Judaea** flee to the mountains . . . **But woe** to those that are with child, and those that give suck **in those days**. But pray that your flight may not be in winter time nor **on sabbath: For then [at that time] shall there be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.**” (Matt. 24:15-16, 19-21)

“And I said to him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they who come out of **the great tribulation [lit. ‘the tribulation the great one’]**, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:14)

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, **I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth**. I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown.” (Rev. 3:10-11)

“And [with the pouring out of the 7<sup>th</sup> bowl judgment] there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a **great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great.**” (Rev. 16:18)

“**The great day of Jehovah** is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly. The voice of the day of Jehovah: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. **That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of ruin and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and gross darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm,** against the fenced cities and against the high battlements. And I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men; for they have sinned against Jehovah; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them, **in the day of Jehovah's wrath;** but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for a full end, yea, a sudden end, shall he make of all them that dwell in the land.” (Zeph. 1:14-18)

“And I saw when it opened **the sixth seal,** and there was a **great earthquake;** and **the sun became black as hair sackcloth,** and the whole moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, as a fig tree, shaken by a great wind, casts its unseasonable figs. And the heaven was removed as a book rolled up, and every mountain and island were removed out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great, and the chiliarchs, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; **and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and have us hidden from the face of Him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; because the great day of His wrath is come, and who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:12-17)**

“**Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of Jehovah,** and from the glory of his majesty . . . **For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts** upon everything proud and lofty, and upon everything lifted up, and it shall be brought low . . . **And they shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah,** and from the glory of his majesty, when he shall arise to terrify the earth. **In that day** men shall cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made each for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to **go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the fissures of the cliffs, from before the terror of Jehovah,** and from the glory of his majesty, when he shall arise to terrify the earth.” (Isa. 2:10, 12, 19-21)

"Howl, for **the day of Jehovah is at hand;** it cometh as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be feeble, and every heart of man shall melt, **and they shall be terrified: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them,**

**they shall writhe as a woman that travaileth**; they shall be amazed one at another, their faces shall be as flames. **Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the earth desolate; and he will destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of the heavens and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.** And I will punish the world for evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will make the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will bring low the haughtiness of the violent. I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even man than the gold of Ophir. **Therefore I will make the heavens to shake, and the earth shall be removed out of her place, at the wrath of Jehovah of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.**" (Isa. 13:6-13)

"And I saw another sign in the heaven, great and wonderful: seven angels having seven plagues, **the last ones**; for in them **the fury of God is completed [not commenced!]** . . . And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls, **full of the fury of God**, who lives to the ages of ages . . . And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go and pour out **the seven bowls of the fury of God** upon the earth." (Rev. 15:1, 7; 16:1)

"Await his Son from the heavens, whom he raised from among the dead, Jesus, **our deliverer from the coming wrath.**" (1 Thess. 1:10)

"But all these ***[these early events of the Tribulation Period/70th Week]*** are ***beginning of throes [beginning of 'birth-pangs' which 1 Thess. 5:1-4, 9; Isa. 13:6-8; and Jer. 30:6-7 tell us are part of the Day of the LORD and expressive of God's wrath].***" (Matt. 24:8)

"**But concerning the times and the seasons**, brethren, ye have no need that ye should be written to, **for ye know perfectly well yourselves**, that **the day of the Lord** so comes as a thief by night. When they may say, Peace and safety, then **sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail [as 'birth-pangs'] upon her that is with child**; and they shall in no wise escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that **the day** should overtake you as a thief . . . because God has not set us for **wrath [thus the birth-pang judgments are expressive of God's wrath as part of the Day of the LORD]**, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:1-4, 9)

"Howl, for **the day of Jehovah is at hand**; it cometh as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be feeble, and every heart of man shall melt, **and they shall be terrified: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them, they shall writhe as a woman that travaileth**; they shall be amazed one at another, their faces shall be as flames." (Isa. 13:6-8)

"Ask ye now, and see, whether a male doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, **as a woman in travail**; and all faces are turned into paleness? **Alas! for that day [that day of the LORD] is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble**; but he shall be saved out of it.' (Jer. 30:6-7)

**Next, observe that in 2 Thess. 2**, the apostle Paul does not correct the Thessalonian saints by telling them that the Day of the LORD could not be present *unless the Son of Man is revealed*, but that it could not be present *unless the man of lawlessness, the son of perdition is revealed!* Which he will be **when** the Restrainer and that which restrains be gone (2:6-8a), and he is thus revealed when the covenant is confirmed for seven years by the head of the revived Roman empire with the mass of apostate Israel in the land **at the onset of the 70th Week** (Dan. 9:27). The fact of the matter is that 2 Thess. 2:3-4 does NOT say that the man of lawlessness will be revealed only **when** he "sits down in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," during the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. Verse 4 is simply a description of the *character and objective* of the man of lawlessness.

"Let not any one deceive you in any manner, because it will not be unless the apostasy have first come, and the man of sin have been revealed, the son of perdition; **who** [not **when** he] opposes and exalts himself on high against all called God, or object of veneration; so that he himself sits down in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. 2:3-4)

This answers part of the alleged "2 Thessalonians Problem," which we will consider momentarily.

Nor does the apostle suggest that one of the errors that the Thessalonians imbibed was that of identifying the Tribulation Period/70th Week with the beginning phase of the Day of the LORD—which is precisely and obviously what they believed (in accordance with OT prophecy). The Thessalonians were **shaken in mind and troubled** because they believed that they were then and there in the Tribulation/70th Week, by being misled into thinking that "the Day of the LORD is present." ***Which itself proves absolutely that the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto Him (2:1, the Rapture) can in no way be one and the same as the arrival of "the Day of the LORD" (2:2): for the former (truth) they eagerly and joyfully looked for, while the latter (deception) greatly troubled them.*** The *anti-Pretribulation error* of the then presence of the Day of the LORD is what the apostle, by the Spirit, masterfully disproves.

**Finally, the apostle Paul clearly distinguishes between the Rapture and the times and seasons of the "Day of the LORD" in 1 Thess. 4 and 5 as well.** For it is possible to be *very "ignorant"* of vital details pertaining to the truth of the Rapture on the one hand (as per 1 Thess. 4:13, 15), while *"perfectly well"* knowing the times and the seasons connected with the "Day of the LORD" (as per 1 Thess. 5:1-2). ***"Plainly then they are***

***two different things, quite distinct from each other.*** Were the rapture an essential part of the times and seasons, then to be wholly ignorant of it [of the details of the Rapture of the saints] would mean partial ignorance as to them [of the times and seasons of the Day of the LORD]. The Thessalonians however were *quite ignorant* as to it, while being *so well instructed* as to them that the apostle could say you *'know perfectly' and 'have no need that I write unto you.'* " (F.B. Hole)

f) **Note on "Times and Seasons":**

"Times and seasons have to do with 'the day of the Lord,' when execution of divine judgment, comes on the world, not on the dead yet but the quick. . . [But] the hope of the heavenly saints, is altogether independent of the revelation of earthly events, as it is *before* their accomplishment; and therefore is that hope precisely the same for us now as for those in apostolic times, allowing time for its full revelation by the apostle Paul." (William Kelly)

"It is not yours to know [Gr. *ginosko*, know by experience] *times or seasons.*" (Acts 1:7)

"But concerning *the times and the seasons*, brethren, ye have no need that ye should be written to, for ye know [Gr. *oida*, know by inward conscious knowledge] perfectly well yourselves, that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief by night." (1 Thess. 5:1-2)

The Spirit Author of these two Scriptures does not and cannot contradict Himself. Observing the difference in the Greek word for "know" in each passage clears away the apparent difficulty and discloses a blessed truth: Acts 1:7 means that times and seasons (of the Day of the LORD) were not to be the earthly portion of the disciples (or of any of us heavenly saints) to "know" *by experiencing them*. For the times and seasons are not connected with the Rapture. As such, we do not "know" them in the sense of becoming objectively acquainted with them *by entering into/by experiencing* them. Nonetheless, *as a subject matter*, we heavenly saints are by no means *ignorant* of the times and seasons; we "know" them thus perfectly well from heeding God's prophetic Word (1 Thess. 5:1-2), which is all *for* us though not all *about* us.

"Times" (Gr. *chronos*) refer to the prophetic periods in relation to the earth (in connection with the Day of the LORD, including Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week and Millennial times in the restoring of the kingdom to Israel, Acts 1:6) while "seasons" (Gr. *kairos*) refer to the characteristics of those prophetic periods. (Cf. the Millennial "*seasons of refreshing*" and the Millennial "*times of restoration*" in Acts 3:19, 21.)

g) **Note on “Day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Or, “Day of Christ,” “Day of Jesus Christ,” “Day of the Lord Jesus,” 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor.1:14; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16)**

I should also add that the “Day of our Lord Jesus Christ” is not to be confused with that which was first revealed in the OT as the “Day of the LORD,” the “Day of Jehovah.” Rather, the “Day of Christ” pertains to the heavenly sphere, and has absolutely no association with God’s judgment or wrath toward sin. It is a day of pure, sovereign, infinite, heavenly grace in Christ Jesus. It is the day—His day—when He comes for His heavenly people, His Body and Bride, to snatch them up to be with Him forever in the Father’s house, in which day we will also appear before *His* Bema or judgment-seat and then *His* Marriage and Wedding Supper, in the heavens, all for *His heavenly glory and joy*, as well as our heavenly blessing.

## 2) The alleged “Olivet Discourse Problem”

The essence of what is contended by Dr. Kurschner and company under the “problem” at hand is that the Olivet Discourse—as delivered by the Lord Jesus and recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21—portrays the Church looking for signs, enduring the Great Tribulation, and being raptured at the end thereof, as seen in Matt. 24:30-31.

**As will be shown, the only true Olivet Discourse problems pertain to all *non*-Pretribulation rapture systems, including the contrived Pre-Wrath Rapture scheme.**

- a) No sound Dispensationalist claims, as is alleged, that “because of the Jewish focus of the book of Matthew, this section [the Olivet Discourse] was not meant for the Church.” (Though the “Jewishness” of Matt. 24 can hardly be disputed as will be seen further on below.)

“To say that it is given to us to know [the Olivet Discourse, for example] . . . proves nothing. All scripture is given *to* us and is good *for* us, but it is certainly not all *about* us; and we are most profited, not by the fancy that God is always thinking *of* us, but by really understanding its objects, scope, and end. Had Abraham imagined that he was to be involved in the impending catastrophe of Sodom because the Lord graciously revealed it to him before it came to pass, such a delusion would have done him harm. It was not to Lot who was there, but to Abraham who was not, that the fullest communication was made. And so it will be, I doubt not.” (R.A. Huebner)

Indeed, Enoch was a type of the Church. and *testified of the second advent and the coming judgment (Jude 14, 15), but did not go through any of it*. Rather he was translated, caught up, raptured, removed from this world altogether before the world-wide judgment of the Flood—the outpouring of God’s wrath—arrived (Gen. 5:21-24; Heb. 11:5)!



“Our business is to gather of what God speaks; and though all scripture is given for our profit, it is in no way necessary that all should be about ourselves. The glory of God in dealing with Jews is, in its place, as much the object of our faith as His dealings with Christians. And the apprehension of the distinctions in His ways, that is, real understanding of His word, depends on our knowing to whom it applies. Is not this taking away scripture from the church? Quite the reverse. There is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel, as revealed in the Bible, which is not *for* the church, but it is not *about* the church.” (W. Kelly)

- b) The fact is, there is no reference to the Church or its Rapture in the Olivet Discourse. Indeed, there is nothing akin to being taken up in the air or to heaven, no gathering together unto Him from the earth to heaven of any group at all! Nor is there even the slightest hint of glorification of living bodies taking place, let alone a resurrection and catching up of the believing dead. That is, NO RAPTURE. *There is thus no “Olivet Discourse Problem”—not, at least, for Pre-Tribulational Truth!*
- c) The reference to angels and trumpet in Matt. 24 does not make it the same as the reference to an angel (archangel) and trump of God in 1 Thess. 4. Again, Noah was in an “ark” and the infant Moses was in an “ark” (same word in Gen. 6-9 and Exod. 2:3). Were Noah and Moses in the same ark?

The time of the sounding of the “last trumpet,” the “trump of God” (1 Thess. 4:16 and 1 Cor. 15:52) is **at** the Rapture WHEN Christ descends into the air. The sounding of this trumpet has its application in connection with something entirely *for Heaven*—NOT in connection with any prophetic earthly events: It means simply the final summons when we heavenly saints leave our earthly sojourn to join the Lord.

“For this we say to you in the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who remain to the coming of the Lord, are in no way to precede those who have fallen asleep; for the Lord himself, with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and **with trump of God**, shall descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord. So encourage one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, 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.” (1 Cor. 15:51-52)

The time of the sounding of the trumpet of Matt. 24:31 and Isa. 27:13 is sometime **after** the Appearing—which itself occurs sometime **after** the sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet of Rev. 11:15-18. The sounding of the trumpet of Matt. 24:31 and Isa. 27:13 (for the

gathering of the elect Jewish remnant to their Land), along with the *preceding* sounding of the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet of Rev. 11:15-18 (especially for judgment on Gentiles), have their application entirely in connection with prophetic *earthly* events.

First: “The second woe has passed; behold, the **third woe comes quickly. And the seventh angel sounded his trumpet:** and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, The world-kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ is come, and he shall reign to the ages of ages. . . And the nations have been full of wrath, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give the recompense to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear thy name, small and great; and to destroy those that destroy the earth. . . And I saw another sign in the heaven, great and wonderful: *seven angels having seven plagues, the last ones; for in them the fury of God is completed.*” **(Rev. 11:14-15, 18; 15:1)**

Then: “***Immediately after the tribulation of those days*** . . . shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the land lament, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with **a great sound of trumpet**, and they shall gather together His elect [godly Jewish elect] from the four winds, from the one extremity of the heavens to the other extremity of them.” **(Matt. 24:29-31)**

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the great trumpet shall be blown;** and they shall come that were perishing in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.” **(Isa. 27:13)**

“The last trumpet” is a “trump of God,” *sounded directly by God*, not the trump of an angel, *sounded by angels!*

“The ‘last trump’ of 1 Cor. 15 is an allusion to the final signal of the break up of a Roman camp for its march. It has nothing whatever to do with the loud sound of trumpet in Matt. 24 (with which cp. Isa. 27:13), any more than with the seven trumpets of Rev. 7-11. . . 1 Cor. 15 presents (and so I may add 1 Thess. 4) our last trump, because the question is of the risen saints; Matt. 24: 31, presents, if you will, the last trump of the Jewish saints then scattered over the earth. How does this identify the two, even if the trumpet in Matt. 24 had been styled the last trump, or “his elect,” were called “all the elect,” neither of which is the fact? Is it a contradiction if the historian speaks of the last trump sounding for the tenth legion in Gaul, and of the trumpet gathering the twelfth legion in Syria?”  
(William Kelly)

" 'The last trump' of 1 Corinthians 15 means simply the final summons when the heavenly saints leave their earthly sojourn to join the Lord – a figure, like others in the chapter, taken from familiar military matters. The trumpet in the gospel [of Matthew, Ch. 24] is rather connected with the divine call to gather Israel from all lands according to the prophets." [With respect to the significance of "the last trump" of 1 Cor. 15:] "In the Roman army, when it was about to move, the trumpet sounded three times: at the first trumpet they pulled down their tents; at the second trumpet they put themselves in order; and when the last sounded they started." (J.N. Darby)

"In the military signals, the last trumpet was the one that actually set them in motion. Josephus says, in the breaking up of the Roman camp, at the first trumpet the tents were struck and all made ready for moving. At the second trumpet, the beasts were laden, and fire was set to the abandoned camp. With the last trumpet to start them, it was demanded if all were ready, and the shout arose, 'we are ready,' and with uplifted hands they marched. (Wars iii. 5, 4.) Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 16, where there are three signals: the Lord with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God." (W. Scott)

- d) **Now let us take up the matter of *who the disciples represent* as the Lord spoke to them in the Olivet Discourse, and the indisputable "Jewishness" thereof (which shows that there is no "Olivet Discourse Problem," except to those holding non-Pretribulation Rapture notions):**

"The normal course of things for us of a certainty is that we hear the gospel, we believe it and come into its blessings, we are brought into the church of God and begin to learn its character, its privileges, its destiny. Then, when instructed in Christian truth, we are put into a position to appreciate and properly understand things that were made known in earlier ages. If this be done there is not much difficulty in seeing the point of view taken in the Gospel of Matthew, for instance, to which Mr. Reese makes so many references. The idea of it being "Jewish" he abominates, and we grant at once that things of an extreme sort have been written on those lines which go beyond what is right. When all allowance for this has been made however, the internal evidence is clear that it was written for Jewish believers, and that it specially exhibits the *dispensational* changes that were impending, while treating the disciples as being just what they then were, representatives of the believing remnant, though soon to be incorporated into the church . . . **Hence also we do not see a rapture to heaven in verse 31 of chapter 24, but a gathering together of the elect upon earth by angelic power.**" (F.B. Hole)

"The disciples, though subsequently forming part of the church when it began, were nevertheless not of it during our Lord's ministry on earth. They believed in

Christ, they followed Him in His temptations, they were instructed by Him, but were not yet of the church, nor could they be till Jesus was glorified on high, {Acts 2: 33} and the Holy Spirit baptized them here below {1 Cor. 12: 13}. **Their position was thus a peculiar one during that transitional order of things which began with John Baptist, and terminated with the cross**, the proclamation going out meanwhile that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. If Matt. 10 be examined, it will be seen that the Lord gave them directions, some of which suited them only in their then state, as in Matt. 10: 5, 6, some of which might well apply when the Spirit was given, as Matt. 10: 16, 20, 24, 42, and others, which evidently look on to a future resumption of the testimony among the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes. Compare especially verse 23. **Throughout this chapter — and it is not the only one of the kind — the disciples are addressed as having a peculiar connection with Israel, and in no way as being the church, or as representing it.** No one denies that much of the chapter was fulfilled after the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the church. It was then, and in Judea, that persecution fell upon them. Still **the chapter does not contemplate them as the church, but as Jewish disciples carrying out a Jewish mission, and awaiting, in the difficulties and sorrows of their testimony in that land, the coming of the Son of man.** In Matt. 17 we find Peter, James, and John, the evident types of the spared and converted Jews in the millennium, and in the same scene Moses and Elias, the types of the glorified saints."

**"It is upon similar Jewish ground that our Lord speaks in Matt. 24.** His disciples had heard Him pronounce desolation in the preceding chapter. But it was a judgment mingled with mercy; for He distinctly intimated that if the Jews should not see Him henceforth, it was not unlimited; it was till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Vengeance must fall upon the unbelieving generation, such as the mass then were and are. But the time is coming when the nation, or at least a remnant of it, shall bless and curse not; wise ones who understand shall at length with joy welcome Him whom they crucified on the tree."

" 'And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?' (Matt. 24: 1-3). **Now it is not doubted that the church may have used, and may still use, the general principles of this chapter. All belongs to the church, for profit, instruction, reproof, or comfort; but most decidedly Matt. 24 is occupied not with the church, as such, but with Jerusalem and the temple,**

**the consummation of the age, the clash of nations and kingdoms, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecutions, and trials, similar to Matt. 10, and a preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to all the Gentiles throughout the habitable world. Such is the general picture to verse 14. After that, the scene becomes more specific, both as to time, place, and circumstances. Precise interpretation must confine verses 15-31 to a period still future, though Jerusalem is still the foreground. 'When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand); then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains' (Matt. 24: 15, 16). **Now what has this to do with the church as the church? What has she to do with that holy place?** (Compare Acts 6:13; Acts 21:28). And how could the setting up of the abomination in the Jewish temple be a sign to the church to flee? But no! the passage refutes the idea. 'Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.' Accordingly they are directed to pray that their flight be not on **the Sabbath-day [what, indeed, has the church to do with the sabbath?!]**, nor in the winter, for either might impede their flight and expose them to imminent peril. It is to be a brief though terrible trial: 'except those days should be shortened [*i.e.*, '**limited**' in extent], there should no flesh be saved' {Matt. 24: 22}."**

**"That these elect are Jewish elect (see Isa. 65:9, 15, 22) is confirmed by the Lord's warning the disciples about false Christs who shall arise. Could the church, who knows that she is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air — could she, I say, be in danger from the cries, Lo! here is Christ, or there; behold, He is in the desert, or in the secret chambers? But a perplexed Jewish remnant, whose hope is a Messiah on earth, might well need such monitions as the Lord here supplies. The coming of the Son of man (for it is Christ coming judicially which the chapter contemplates) shall not be secret, but as the lightning shining from east to west. They were not to be enticed by a 'Lo, here or there.' Other unmistakable signs should be granted. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. 24: 29). Here again it is manifest that the Lord is not describing the translation of the elect church, but the gathering of His elect Israel, and for a plain reason: "When Christ our life shall appear," says the apostle addressing the heavenly saints, "then shall ye also appear with him in glory" {Col. 3: 4}. Christ will not be manifested first, and the church be caught up subsequently; both are to appear together and at the same time in glory. But with the elect Jews the case widely differs. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

**And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other' (Matt. 24: 30, 31). They are delivered and gathered after the Son of man has already appeared. The church had not only been caught up before, but had come out of heaven along with Christ preparatory to His appearing (Rev. 19: 11-14). This prophecy, then, in any full sense, for I do not deny a partial historic accomplishment, looks to a future state of things, and **directly concerns a believing Jewish remnant, quite distinct from the church.**"**

"Is it in Matthew, and other Gospels only, where we read of such a converted remnant? By no means. Matt. 24:15, 21 evidently refers us to Daniel for other particulars of the same scenes and times. **If therefore it be clear that Matt. 24:15-31 concerns a future converted body of Jews, and not the church, have we not here also a divine help for interpreting Dan. 9: 27; 11: 31; 12: 1, 7, 11, and the connected parts of the same? That is, the saints spoken of in Daniel are Jewish, saints, and not the church, properly so called. Daniel's people, or at least the understanding ones (compare Matt. 24: 15) of that prophet, are those whom the Lord further instructs in the prophetic discourse of our evangelist. Again, it is admitted very generally that Daniel and the Revelation are so linked that, when you have determined the bearing of the one, you necessarily therein involve the general interpretation of the other. The beast of Dan. 7 is the beast of Rev. 11; 13; 17; and the time, times and a half, in that same chapter answer to the same period in Rev. 12, Compare the image in Rev. 13 with the abomination of desolation in the Gospel. Plainly therefore, while the Apocalypse has many subjects besides those treated of in Daniel or Matt. 24, while it admits of a far closer application than either to the providential history of the empire, etc., since the days of John, the grand final accomplishment of the book cannot be dissociated from the prophecies of Daniel and of the Lord Jesus Himself, which, we have seen, **specially regard Jerusalem and the Jews at the end of the age.**"**

“ ‘For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.’ [Matt. 24:7] Mark the difference in the language of scripture. **Do we ever find the apostles saying, *The end is not yet, for us [heavenly saints]? On the contrary,*** it is said of us (1 Cor. 10), ‘upon whom the ends of the world [ends of the ages] are come.’ So again, speaking about the cross of Christ, it is written (Heb. 9:26), ‘Now once, in the end of the world [end of the ages]’; [Again, it is said as to us, the heavenly people of God: ‘Little children, *it is the last time*’ (1 John 2:18), and ‘*The end of all things is at hand*’ (1 Peter 4:7)]; **whereas, when the Lord is predicting about the Jewish remnant, *‘the end is not yet.’ And this, because many things must yet be accomplished before the Jews can come into their blessing. But for Christians, all things are ours in Christ even now; the blessing is never put off, though we await the crown at His coming.***” (W. Kelly)

- e) **Note the important observation made by William Kelly above regarding Col. 3:4 and Matt. 24:30-31.** Col. 3:4 gives an additional, inescapable reason why Matt. 24:30-31 cannot possibly be a reference to the Rapture of the Church:

When He appears, we all appear WITH HIM in glory (Col. 3:4). Christ does NOT Appear (is not Manifested) WITHOUT us or BEFORE us or TO us while we are yet on earth (as is true of those, e.g., in Matt. 24:30-31); rather, when He Appears, *He Appears TOGETHER WITH us*. For His heavenly saints, the scenario is NOT: He appears in glory *alone, without us*, and *then* He catches us up from the earth to be with Him, and *then* we too appear in glory. It is altogether the contrary: at the “*manifestation of His coming,*” “*when Christ appears,*” we are ALREADY WITH Him, *for we all APPEAR WITH Him* in glory (Col. 3:4). Thus the Rapture and the Appearing *must be* separate and distinct phases of His coming, with the former *necessarily preceding and facilitating* the latter.

Col. 3:4 implicitly demands a rapture *previous* to His public “manifestation” (how much time previous is gleaned elsewhere). When Christ “appears” in glory, *we will appear together with Him in glory . . . at the very same time*. It is not: He appears in glory *and then* He catches us up *and then* we appear with Him in glory. No, *precisely when He appears, we appear with Him in manifested glory*. That means we are **already** with Him when He appears. Thus we had to have been **previously caught up** unto Him (when He does not yet “appear”) and then *subsequently* we all *together with Him* “appear in glory” to the world (i.e., first He comes without “appearing” or being publicly “manifested” or “revealed,” catches us up unto Himself, and then subsequently we “appear” *together with Him in glory* at the “manifestation” or “revelation” of His coming. He will *never* appear in glory at His manifestation *without us with Him*.) Such is quite unlike the situation outlined in the Olivet Discourse with respect to the waiting and watching godly Jewish remnant: *They are delivered and gathered after the Son of man has already appeared in glory. That is, He appears in glory without them with Him. He does not appear with them when He appears in glory, but appears first and then gathers them afterwards (which gathering is to their land (see below), not to the Father’s House in Heaven).*

“That **the removal of the saints from earth** to meet the Lord does not synchronize with **their appearing in glory along with Him**, is, to my mind, certain from a variety of scriptures. First, Col. 3 declares that when Christ, our life, appears, ‘then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.’ The context would convince any fair mind that rigorous precision is here intended. *The basis is the identification of the Christian with Christ. Is He dead and risen? So are they. Is He now hid with God? So are they now with Him. But this will not be always. He is about to be manifested in glory: when He is, then shall they too be manifested in the same glory with Him. This is decisive against the hypothesis of Christ first appearing, then translating the risen and changed saints, and bringing then and*

**thus His day on the world.** For in this case, Scripture must be broken, as Christ would have appeared in glory **without** His saints and **before** them. Their rapture . . . cannot then be **when** He is manifested; for they are all, Christ and the saints, **manifested together**. Besides, the same result follows from the scriptures which speak of His coming with [all] the saints. They must have been, then, caught up before in order to come with Him." (W. Kelly)

**Thus, again, there is no "Olivet Discourse Problem," except for those who imagine that Matt. 24:30-31 is the Rapture of the Church! (See more on the "manifestation of His coming" under the alleged "2 Thessalonians Problem.")**

- f) **On the future Regathering of Israel, or the gathering of the godly Jewish remnant of Matt. 24:30-31,** we include the following excellent summary of the facts and scriptures on this subject (extracted from R.A. Huebner's *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 2):

"That the 10 tribes, i.e., Ephraim, will be regathered is asserted by several of the later prophets:

Isa. 11:12, 13; Jer. 31:7-9; Ezek. 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 37:16; Hos. 14:8; Zech. 9:13; 10:6; Obad. 18.

There are also passages that speaks of the 10 tribes and Judah:

Isa. 11:13; Jer. 3:18; 30:3; 31:27, 31; 33:7; Ezek. 37; Zech. 9:13; 10:6.

Besides these, many passages speak of the regathering of Israel generally.

Isa. 1:24-31; 4:2-4; 6:8-13; 10:21, 22; 14:1-3; 18:7; 25:6-12; 26:19; 27:6, 12, 13; 33:20-24; 35:10; 49:12, 22; 51:11; 60:1-15; Jer. 16:15; 23:3-8; 30:10; 31:8-10; 32:37-44; 33:25, 26 (cp. Neh. 9:36, 37); Ezek. 11:17; 28:25; 36:24; 37; Dan. 12:2; Hos. 1:9, 10; 2:14-23; 3:4, 5; Amos 9:14-15; Micah 2:12; 4:6-8; 5:8; Zeph. 3:12; Zech. 8:7, 8. See also Joel 3:1-21; 1 Chron 17:9; Psa. 14:7.

Jer. 3:18 is a passage whose force is similar to that of Ezek. 37 [*which passage will be considered shortly under the alleged "Church and Israel Problem"*] . . .

Concerning it, someone said:

But God has given His own marks; He has linked circumstances together which have never yet had their fulfillment, as in this passage, "All the nations shall be gathered unto it." [Jer. 3:17] It is certain that this did not take place at the return from Babylon. But you will reply, It is the church. No; for "in those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together . . . to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." [Jer. 3:18] We see, in a word, three things happening together, which most surely have not had as yet a



simultaneous accomplishment; namely, Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; Judah and Israel united; and the nation assembled to the throne of God. When the church was founded, Israel was dispersed, when Israel returned from Babylon, there was neither church nor assemblage of nations.

It will not do to try to apply these Scriptures to the remnant that returned under Jerubbabab and Ezra since Haggai and Zechariah were among the returned remnant and spoke of the regathering of Israel as *still future*:

Haggai 2:6-9, 21-23; Zech. 2:12; 8:7, 8; 9:13; 10:6, 10; 12:2; 14:1.

Malachi, who wrote *after* the return from Babylon, also shows that Israel will be regathered: Mal. 3:3, 4, 17; 4:2. There can be no fair or right question about it. The nation of Israel will be restored to supremacy and that under Messiah. It is difficult to understand the cloud that is over the mind that attempts to find the church in the above Scriptures. Consistent with all these predictions was the faith and expectation of the little remnant when our Lord was here.

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### ***The Purging of the Rebels***

So it is a great mistake to think that every Jew living at the time of the regathering of Israel will enjoy the blessedness of the kingdom. It is true, because God says it, that those in the bond under Messiah shall all be righteous (Isa 60:21). It is most true that "all Israel shall be saved":

. . . and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, the deliverer will come from Sion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26; see Isa. 59:20),

but the ungodly of the 10 tribes will not be brought into the land. They will first be brought into the wilderness, and the rebels will be purged out (Ezek. 20:33-38). "They shall not enter into the land of Israel."

As to those already in the land (chiefly Judah), two thirds shall die and of the third part Jehovah will say, "It is my people" (Zech. 13:8, 9).

So one way that the Deliverer will turn away ungodliness from Jacob is by destroying the ungodly. **All left will compose the nation -- all born of God, and all under the new covenant.** See also Isa. 1:27 and 4:2-6.

### ***The Agencies of The Regathering***

There will be a partial regathering . . . by purely human agency (Isa. 18) [in unbelief].

The final regathering, however, will utilize a number of agencies:

***Jehovah: Jer 16:15.***

***Christ: Isa 49:6.***

***The peoples: Isa 14:2; 49:22.***

***Vehicles: Isa 66:20.***

***Fishers and hunters: Jer 16:16.***

***Ships of Tarshish: Isa 60:9.***

***The great trumpet: Isa 27:13.***

***His angels, with a great sound of trumpet: Matt 24:31.***

### ***From Where Will They Be Regathered?***

The agencies used in regathering Israel indicate that Israel will be found widely dispersed. But, when countries are named out of which Israel will be regathered, the countries are generally located near Palestine (Micah 7:12; Zech. 10:10). An interesting exception is found in Isa 49:12, where Sinim probably means China, and in Zeph. 3:10. No doubt every one of them no matter where scattered will be regathered for in Isa. 11:11, 12 we read:

***And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand the second time to acquire the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the isles of the seas.***

#### **g) “No one knows the day or the hour”**

Scripture *nowhere* indicates that the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (which is not the Rapture) will take place on the very day on which the 70th week expires or on any other revealed day, e.g., 30 days after the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week or otherwise. It is true that Dan. 9:24 declares that 70 weeks must be completed before the 6-fold blessing can come to Israel as a nation. But, again, this does not mean, nor does any scripture state, that the appearing of Christ in glory takes place on the very day on which the 70th week terminates. It is a mistake to assume this. His appearing in kingdom glory may take place up to several days later or several days earlier. This is key, and, as such, clears away all difficulty on the matter.

The manifestation of His presence may take place anywhere from shortly *before* to shortly *after* the termination of the 70th week. He will come executing judgment over the course of several days, not merely on the very day of His appearing in power and great glory (nor is the Beast and his false prophet disposed of on the very day of His appearing).

"The appearing of the Son of man (Matt. 24:30) will be [immediately] after the tribulation (Matt. 24:29) but just how soon after, we do not know. The approximate time may be gauged but the day cannot be fixed." (RAH)

With respect to the Beast/Antichrist, the Lord may be manifested, e.g., days before the actual close of the 70th week, and then destroy the Beast a few days later. Nothing requires that the Lord Himself appear on day 2,520 of the 70th Week (no one knows the day or hour!). It may be true (or it may not be) that the Beast's satanic power is taken away and he be destroyed on day 2,520 . . . yet that does not prevent the Son of Man coming in great power and glory a short while before that (for example), and the Beast still end up being verily destroyed by the manifestation of His coming. Though we believe the Lord may just as well Appear a few days *after* day 2,520 of the 70th Week, creating no difficulties in my mind either.

Some, by the way, believe that the two witnesses of Rev. 11 prophesy during the 2nd half of the 70th week (not during the 1st half), for the 1260 days, at the end of which they are killed, and lie in the street for 3 ½ days, and then are resurrected and taken up to heaven. Thus, according to this understanding, 3 ½ days beyond the expiration of the 70th week, Christ is still not seen as having returned to the earth yet! (See further comments below.)

In the Olivet Discourse our Lord states, "Thus also ye, when ye see all these things, know that it [or He] is near, at the doors" (Matt. 24:33) -- *not* "now you will be able to know or calculate the exact day on which I will appear in power and great glory." Rather, a few verses later He says exactly the opposite! (Matt. 24:42, 44, 25:13).

\*\* "**Watch** therefore, **for** ye know not on what day your Lord doth come." (Matt. 24:42)

\*\* "Therefore, be ye also **ready, for** in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:44)

\*\* "**Watch** therefore, **for** ye know neither the day nor the hour." (Matt. 25:13)

Their need to "watch" and make sure that they are "ready" are explicitly grounded, in these exhortations, on the fact that they "know neither the day nor the hour." If they were at some point able to compute and "know" the exact day or hour of His Revelation, then would it not be true that, at that point, they have no more need to

"watch" or be "ready"--*according to these passages?* Why should they continue to ensure that they "watch," *according to these exhortations*, if they do in fact come to know the day or the hour?

The "uncertainty" in these passages clearly apply, and will still apply, to those living during the Tribulation Period / 70th week.

And not knowing the day or the hour ("uncertainty") does not necessarily imply *imminency*. The former may be true without the latter, though not vice versa. The Rapture is imminent (may occur at any moment), thus it is obviously true that we know neither its day or its hour. The Manifestation of His Coming will not occur till very close to the end of the accomplishment of the 70th week, thus it is NOT imminent during the whole of the 70th week, though the day and the hour are, nonetheless, *uncertain* to any man.

Thus there is no reason why the Manifestation of His Coming in great power and glory may not actually occur shortly before or after the end of the 70th Week. As such, there is indeed uncertainty, with no man knowing the day or the hour of the Son of Man's Coming. It may take place a number of days prior to the expiration of the 70th Week or it may take place a number of days after the expiration of the 70th Week. There is certainly no scriptural reason to assume that the King of kings will or must return on the exact day on which the 70th Week expires, or on the 30<sup>th</sup> day thereafter. (One may possibly and accurately compute when the 70th Week will reach its end but such is not inherently coterminous with the Appearing of the Son of Man.) Thus there is no contradiction of Matt. 24:36, 42, 44 or 25:13. The inspired truth that they convey in regards to the uncertainty of the day and hour of His Appearing is preserved perfectly. And no Rapture of the Church is required to be read into them as a result.

**Supplemental Note related to the unknown day or hour of the Son of Man's Appearing:**

Some believe that the Two Witnesses of Rev. 11 prophesy during the *first* half of the 70th week. That may be the case. If so, then it is equally possible that the Manifestation of His Coming in great power and glory may actually occur shortly *before* the end of the 70th Week. Or it may occur shortly thereafter. Both are possibilities, if the ministry of the Two Witnesses occurs during the first half of the 70th Week. Thus there is uncertainty, with no man knowing the day or the hour of the Son of Man's Coming. It may take place somewhat prior to the expiration of the 70th Week or it may take place somewhat after the expiration of the 70th Week. If the ministry of the Two Witnesses turns out to be during the *second* half of the 70th Week, then those living at the time may be able to ascertain that His Appearing will not occur *before* the end of the 70th Week but sometime soon *after*, but still without knowing the day or the hour.

**The following is taken from R.A. Huebner's *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, Vol. 2, which assumes the 2<sup>nd</sup> half week for the ministry of Two Witnesses of Rev. 11 (a position held also by some, if not all, Pre-Wrath Rapturists, e.g., Marvin Rosenthal). Some important points are brought out in that connection.**

"The 70th week remains to run its course. It will commence after the rapture of the saints, when Christ comes to take His own to the Father's house (John 14:1-3). There may be a space of time following the rapture before the 70th week commences. There may not be. I am not aware that Scripture states either case."

"But there *will* be a short space of time between the end of Daniel's 70th week and the appearing of Christ. The last half-week is described in the following way, beginning from the "middle" (Dan. 9:27):

1. Time, times and a half-time: Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14;
2. Forty-two months: Rev. 11:12; 13:5;
3. 1260 days: Rev. 11:3; 12:6.

Yet, Christ will not appear on the 1260th day. We know this for at least two reasons:

1. The two witnesses lie dead on the street in Jerusalem for 3-1/2 days *after* the 1260th day.
2. The 7 bowls are the seven *last* plagues and there must be a short time in which they are poured out following the sounding of the seventh trumpet."

"The appearing of Christ, then, follows the seven bowls, or occurs with the pouring out of the seventh bowl. His appearing will be followed by a short period of time called 'the war of [that] great day of God the Almighty.' Armageddon is *symbolic*, not a literal place, and designates the awful slaughter that will occur during the war of the great day of God the Almighty, during which His Christ will deal with the chief enemies one by one."

"Posttribulationists connect the raising of the two witnesses with the appearing, (incorrectly) claimed to be on the 1260th day from the middle of the 70th week. They don't want saints raised before the appearing. But the two witnesses are killed right on the 1260th day (and therefore are not the souls under the altar (Rev. 6) or the martyrs during the tribulation) and are raised 3 ½ days later; i.e., on the 1263 ½ day. This *precedes* the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11). The two witnesses are certainly among the just. The time of their resurrection is *exactly* pinpointed. And they are raised and ascend in the sight of their enemies -- *after* [typo: the author means *before*] the seventh trumpet sounds. Thus they are raised and ascend before the appearing."

“To have the appearing of Christ occur on the 1260th day from the middle of the week means that the two witnesses, who prophesy for 1260 days and then lie on the street for 3 ½ days, means that their testimony will have to occur during the first half-week. But the truth is that they prophesy during the last half-week, the time of the Satanic power of the beast, and the worship of the Triad. Another alternative is to begin their 1260 days of prophesying 3 ½ days before the middle of the week. That does sound artificial, does it not?”

“Scripture says that there will be times, time and a half time (3 ½ years) until the accomplishment (Dan 12:7). It also shows that there will be 1335 days from the placing of the abomination (in the middle of the 70th week) until the full blessing (Dan 12:11, 12). Shortly after the end of the 3 ½ years, the Lord will come.”

“Note that at the 1260h day, the 70th week is over, but the Lord has not yet come. The two witnesses are killed and lie dead on the street for 3 ½ days, corresponding to the 3 ½ years of refusal of their testimony, by the apostates. And then they are raised and ascend to heaven, upon which further intense calamities occur. So the appearing of the Lord will not occur on the 1260th day, nor on the 1263 ½ day (when the two witnesses rise). It is in the subsequent interval, but no man knows the day or the hour.

“The point here is to show that there is some time after the close of the 1260th day. This leaves room for the statement: *But immediately after the tribulation of those days...* [Matt. 24:29]”

“The proper view of this is to see that Armageddon refers to the war of the great day of God the Almighty, which involves a sequence of battles. Then, finally Gog and Magog will be judged, and thereafter the kingdom will commence on the 1335th day from the middle of Daniel’s 70th week.”

“Furthermore, the two witnesses are not raised at the appearing of Christ in glory. It is only resistance to the multi-part, first resurrection that requires bringing in the appearing here. The fact is that the first resurrection is a class of persons (the just) and not a single point in time. It seems that the two witnesses have part in this resurrection but in their own appointed time.”

“They are raised 3 ½ days after the end of the 1260 days (cp. Rev 11:3, 11). **They will lie dead in the street one day for each year of their testimony.** So Christ does not appear on the last day of the 1260 days of the last half-week, that is, on the last day of Daniel’s 70th week. **Furthermore, at the end of the 3 ½ days Christ does not yet appear. Jerusalem will not at that point in time have been taken by the King of the North** (cp. Dan. 11:40-45; Isa. 10:5, 6, 24-27, 28; Zech. 14:1; Psa. 79, 83). Christ comes after this first attack, and thus after the two witnesses are raised.” (R.A. Huebner)

And, interestingly, the same author makes the following observation based on Marvin Rosenthal's "*The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*":

**"He [Rosenthal] believes that the two witnesses minister during the second half-week (p. 157). He has a chart (p. 112) showing the rapture taking place about the middle of the second half-week, i.e., about the middle (or whatever) of the period of the ministry of the two witnesses (before the seventh seal). It follows that they are [strangely!] left behind at the rapture. They must have been ministering for part of the 1260 days while the Christians were still in the world, and another part of the 1260 days after they are gone. They must have, therefore, a non-Christian testimony." [See more in this connection shortly!]**

- h) **Regarding those "taken" vs. those "left" in Matt. 24**, observe Zephaniah 3:11-13 in this connection, which fit together perfectly, and is *the exact opposite* of what occurs at the Rapture of the Church!

**"In that day** thou shalt not be ashamed for all thy doings wherein thou hast transgressed against me; for then **I will take away** out of the midst of thee them that exult in thy pride, and thou shalt *no more* be haughty because of my holy mountain. And **I will leave** in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of Jehovah. The remnant of Israel shall not work unrighteousness, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." (Zeph. 3:11-13)

"Then an eternal separation for both men and women will take place. Zephaniah 3:11-13, will be fulfilled; the transgressors will be taken away in judgment; the afflicted and poor people who trust in the name of the Lord will be left for millennial blessings, and these are 'the remnant of Israel.' " (F.B. Hole)

Moreover, our Lord's coming to Rapture His Body & Bride is *never* presented as "the coming of the Son of Man" (which is always characterized by earthly judgment first).

The fact is, the Rapture is not found anywhere in the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, Luke).

**Now Luke 17:37 absolutely confirms the understanding of "taken" away *in judgment*:**

"And answering they [the disciples] say to Him, Where, Lord [will they be taken, 17:34-36]? And He said to them, Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together [i.e., in *divine judgment* of that which is morally/spiritually dead, not *in blessing!*]."

**But the context of Matt. 24 itself clearly** tells us that all "taken" in the Flood were all taken in judgment, which **illustrates the fate of those "taken" by the coming of the Son of Man**, albeit a different word is used for "taken," which is not some technical phrase but one that may have a negative or positive connotation . . . context decides. (The two different words for "taken" in Matt. 24:39 and Matt. 24:40, 41 is accounted for by the

fact that the former is used in connection with a world-wide **non-discriminate** judgment upon **all** involved, while the latter is used in connection with a world-wide **very discriminate** judgment of the **particular** individuals involved.)

**Indeed, the same word for "taken" in Matt. 24:40, 41 is used, e.g., with a negative connotation of judgment, in Matt. 27:27:**

"Then the soldiers of the governor, **having taken** Jesus with them to the praetorium, gathered against him the whole band." (Matt. 27:27)

**Not only that, but the same word for "left" in Matt. 24:40, 41 is actually used with a positive connotation of blessing or avoidance of judgment, in Mark 14:6 and Luke 13:8:**

"And when he was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as He lay at table, there came a woman having an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly; and having broken the alabaster flask, she poured it out upon His head. And there were some indignant in themselves, and saying, Why has this waste been made of the ointment? for this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor. And they spoke very angrily at her. But Jesus said, **Let her alone**; why do ye trouble her? she has wrought a good work as to Me." (Mark 14:3-6)

"And He spoke this parable: A certain [man] had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit upon it and did not find any. And he said to the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none: cut it down; why does it also render the ground useless? But he answering says to him, Sir, **let it alone** for this year also, until I shall dig about it and put dung." (Luke 13:6-8)

**One more thought on those "taken" vs. those "left" in Matt. 24 . . .**

**If a rapture is seen in those "taken" and judgment seen in those "left," then this would entail two *impossibilities*:**

1) There will be no one saved during the 70th Week, or during the remainder of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week for the Pre-Wrath Rapture view. For those who are "left" (after believers are "taken" in the rapture) are **all** "left" for divine judgment not for salvation (as depicted in the Noahic Flood illustration as well as in the Sodom destruction illustration of Luke 17). But such a notion contradicts the revelation of God in His word.

And if **all** are "left" for divine judgment, what becomes of the Two Witnesses of Rev. 11, who are left behind after the supposed Pre-Wrath rapture?! What, moreover, becomes of the Judgment of the *living Gentile Sheep* and Goats (i.e.,



in their natural bodies—*no death and resurrection* involved in their appearance there), *when* the Son of Man sits down upon His earthly kingdom throne of glory (Matt. 25:31ff)?

2) There will be no one to enter and populate the Millennial Kingdom, in their natural (unglorified) bodies, upon its initial establishment. All of the saved will have been "taken" and gloried in the rapture, leaving **all** of the rest for divine judgment and no salvation (as depicted in the Noahic Flood illustration as well as in the Sodom destruction illustration of Luke 17). But such a notion also contradicts the revelation of God in His word (and runs up against the same unmovable obstacle of Post-Tribulationism). [Note: ONLY the saved will enter the Kingdom at its establishment on this earth (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:11-12, 30, 31-46; 24:13; 13:39-42, 49-50; 7:21-23; 18:3; Isa. 13:9; Ezek. 20:38; Zech. 13:8-9; Rom. 11:26-27); who will reproduce/have children during that blessed 1,000 Year Reign.]

### 3) The alleged "2 Thessalonians Problem"

The third alleged "problem" for Pre-Tribulationism, we are informed, is found in 2 Thessalonians 2, which conclusively proves two things which are summed up as follows (my comments in brackets):

"The first is that . . . here Paul blatantly says there are *two events* that must occur *first [i.e., before the Rapture (observe the not-too-uncommon sleight of hand!), which are]*, the rebellion (sometimes translated as apostasy) and the revealing of the man of lawlessness."

"The second problem for Pretribulationists is that at least one of the precursors mentioned here, the revealing of the 'man of lawlessness,' is an event that takes place at the *midpoint* of the 7-year period [*the timing of his 'revelation' being thereby conflated with his 'deification'*] . . . So, the coming of our Lord and our being gathered to Him cannot occur until *after* the midpoint of the 70th week."

In fact, according to Dr. Kurschner, "The most problematic passage in the Bible for Pretribulationists is 2 Thessalonians 2." Of course, absolutely nothing could be further from the truth, once we bow to God's Word rather than seek to force it to conform to our notions or desired outcome. *Everything* about 2 Thess. 2 supports the Pretribulation truth, including at least the following:

- the appeal of 2:1, "Now we beg you, brethren, **by** the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him" (the Rapture);

- the distinction in 2:1 and 2:3-4, between “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him” (the Rapture, 2:1) and the “Day of the LORD” (2:2);
- the distinction in 2:1 and 2:8, between “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him” (the Rapture, 2:1) and “the APPEARING [or MANIFESTATION] of His coming” (2:8);
- the implications of *that* which restrains and *he* who restrains the mystery of lawlessness “until he be gone out of the way” (2:6-7), which **only then** allows for the revelation of the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist.

**As will be demonstrated, the only true 2 Thessalonians problems are for all *non-Pretribulation rapture ideas, including the contrived Pre-Wrath Rapture scheme.***

First, refer back to the refutation of the first alleged problem, the “Precursor Problem,” as it answers a fundamental aspect of what Dr. Kurschner leverages here again to create a new problem in his mind, the “2 Thessalonians Problem.” And, among other things, that section confirms the true and full scope of the “Day of the LORD” epoch.

Now, as noted earlier, Dr. Kurschner not only mistakenly assumes that the Rapture must occur on the same day as the “Day of the LORD,” but to prop up his terrible misunderstanding of 2 Thess. 2, he goes on to contradict everything else he has set forth by actually ***equating*** the Rapture with the “Day of the LORD” (the day of God’s wrath):

“He [Paul] says, ‘**Now regarding the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him—**’ Let me just stop there. Well, Paul hasn’t made any connections here. He’s just saying, ‘Now I’m going to talk about this.’ Now, isn’t it sort of odd if he says, ‘**Now, I’m going to talk about the rapture and the *parousia*.**’ And then he doesn’t mention it ever again? Well, he actually does. **He’s unpacking what it means: The Day of the Lord. Prewrath solves this problem** by understanding that these two events [the apostasy and the revelation of the Antichrist] that will occur ***before the rapture and before the Day of the Lord***, and that **Paul is using both concepts interchangeably here as he often does in the New Testament.**”

The other critical blunder that Dr. Kurschner and company make here has to do with the proper understanding of the thrust of the first verse of 2 Thess. 2, which blunder then skews everything else they deduce from there.

2 Thess. 2:1 **by no means** indicates that the *subject* taken up in the following verses is the Rapture, though the things set forth therein do certainly bear on the preservation of the blessed truth of the any-moment Pre-Tribulation Rapture in our outlook and hearts.

**“Now we beg you, brethren, by [*or, for the sake of, in the interests of . . . not ‘concerning’*] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him [i.e., the Rapture].” (2 Thess. 2:1)**

Leon Morris (no Dispensationalist, by the way!) rightly notes:

“The preposition rendered "touching" is *huper*, which usually means “on behalf of.” Here it is more or less equivalent to *peri*, but it has its own particular emphasis. It signifies something like ‘in the interests of the truth concerning.’ Lightfoot (on Gal. 1:4) discusses these two prepositions and remarks that *huper* has “a sense of 'interest in,' which is wanting to *peri*.” This probably accounts for its use here.” (Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*)

William Kelly further elaborates for us:

“for [or, for the sake of]: No doubt the preposition may, and does often, mean ‘in regard to,’ or ‘on behalf of,’ a little stronger than *περί*. But the question is the meaning of *ὑπέρ*, neither in itself, nor in other constructions, but with such words of entreaty as *ῥωτάω*, as distinguished from *ῥωτάω περί*, where the sense of ‘in the place of,’ or ‘instead of’ is excluded, as here. To me it appears that the precise meaning of *ὑπέρ*, in such a case as the present, can only be ‘by reason of,’ or briefly ‘by,’ and, if motive be made more prominent, ‘for the sake of,’ or briefly ‘for.’”

**“For, as we have seen, false teachers naturally shake the righteous, instead of seeking to comfort and stablsh them.** On this occasion they contrived to excite no little panic and anxiety as if the day of the Lord had actually come. Not at all, says the apostle: do you not know that the Lord is coming to gather you to Himself? ‘We beseech you, brethren, by the coming (or presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind nor troubled.’ **He first [v.1] appeals to a known motive of joy and confidence in their hope and then [v.3] goes on to a prophetic reason, thus giving the idea a complete refutation.** But you may notice that it is never supposed that the saints wait for the day of the Lord to be taken up and meet Him in the air. It is the coming of the Lord they await for this. **‘The coming of the Lord’ and ‘His day’ [“the Day of the LORD”] are two quite different thoughts, often confounded by men.**”

“The coming or presence (*παρουσία*) of the Lord is a much wider term, embracing the day as well as what is just before the day. But the part of His coming that is called ‘the day of the Lord’ consists of the execution of His judgment on the earth and then of His reign. The first object is to gather home those He loves. Love would always secure the object of affection first. The coming of the Lord then is bound up closely with the gathering of the saints; the day of the Lord with the execution of judgment on His enemies here below. Hence we find here, ‘let no man deceive you by any means.’ It is evident there might be a great deal of mistake on this subject; ‘for that day shall not come except there come *the* falling away (or apostasy) first.’ *‘That day shall not come’* is an insertion of our translators, marked therefore by italics, though, I believe, substantially correct. **The ‘day’ [of the LORD] will come after the apostasy, the public abandonment of Christianity throughout Christendom.**”

“The distinction between these two, the παρουσία [2 Thess. 2:1] and the ἡμέρα of the Lord [2 Thess. 2:2], is the key to 2 Thess. 2. The whole chapter, not to say the entire province of prophecy, is embroiled in confusion where this is not seen. *For where would be the force or even sense of beseeching his Christian brethren by the presence or coming of the Lord not to be shaken by the rumour about His day [the Day of the LORD], if the day and His coming be the same?* Whereas it is thoroughly intelligible and pertinent to entreat them by a hope so full of good cheer as the presence of the Lord which is bound up with the gathering of the saints to meet Him above, not to be disquieted by the allegation, for which they falsely cited authoritative communications from the Spirit and a supposititious letter of the apostle himself, that His day — that day of judgment of the quick on the earth — was already present. **One corrective of the error is the recall of the Christian to his proper hope of joining the Lord at His coming [at any moment], so as to follow Him out of heaven for the day of His appearing. The other is the making known certain awful developments of evil, the apostasy and the man of sin brought fully out, before that day can come.**”

“Next the apostle turns to the source of their agitation. ‘We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled.’ *Assuredly, the consolation administered here is not that Christ's coming was a distant thing!* Can it be that theologian upon theologian has desired to make of this **fancied long and far-off absence of the Lord a balm for the tried and fearful?** Can it be that the poor church has but too willingly sipped the cup, and, heedless of His words, cheers herself on the delirious career of worldliness and folly, and of faithlessness to Him? ‘Lord, how long?’ ”

“Full well they [the Thessalonians] knew that His coming was to end their sorrows and crown their joys. Under apostolic guidance they had looked, and the Holy Ghost had commended their looking, for Christ. *Was it not the part of the evil servant to say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming? {Matt. 24:48}.* But Paul was a blessed faithful servant, and never says anything of the sort. *He uses the fact of the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him as a comfort against the anxiety created by the idea that the day of the Lord was already arrived—nay more, as a proof that such an idea was false.* His ground of entreaty is twofold. He urges [1] a reason connected with the Lord and heaven, and [2] a reason connected with earth and the man of sin. There must be our gathering above {2 Thess. 2:1}, and the falling away below {2 Thess. 2:3} *In the first place* the Lord was to come, and they were to be gathered together unto Him, in order that He and they might bring in the day and appear together from heaven. This had not taken place, and therefore they were not to be disturbed as if that day had come, or could come, previously. *In the next place* he presses the point that the evil must first be developed completely which that day is to judge. ‘Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come the falling away (or the apostasy, αποστασία) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or object of worship; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God’ {2

Thess. 2:3, 4}. But the apostasy was not then come, nor the man of sin revealed, and therefore the day of the Lord, the day of vengeance upon these evils, is yet to come. 'And now [if one may translate the apostle's word a little exactly] ye know what hindereth that he might be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that now hindereth till he be taken out of the way. And then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the appearing of his coming" {2 Thess 2:6-8}."

**"No! the Thessalonian believers were not mistaken in waiting for the Son of God [to come at any moment].** It is not wrong to believe that "the Lord is at hand," (ἐγγύς) as the apostle pressed upon the Philippians when drawing to the close of his career [Phil. 4:5]. It is not wrong to stablish our hearts because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (ἤγγικεν, James 5:8). Nor does the language of the Spirit in the passage before us depict excitement from a too eager anticipation of this glorious event — alas! that Christians should suppose we could too earnestly desire it. The expressions in v. 2 denote fright and agitation. **The enemy sought to instill the idea that the day, the judgment, was come,** and that they were obnoxious to its terrors. Where then was their hope to be caught up to the Lord and to come along with Him? Would it have been sorrow and fear if Christ had come and they had been translated to meet Him in the air? Rather would it have been their chiefest joy, as it had been the object nearest their heart since their conversion. Their faith was growing exceedingly, and the love of every one of them all toward each other abounded; and, far from weakening that which he had already taught, the apostle prays for them in the last chapter of the second epistle, that the Lord would direct their heart into the love of God *and into the patient waiting for Christ*. That is, he confirms them in their expectancy of the Lord."

**"But the deceiver had affrighted them, not of course by presenting the coming of the Lord as an imminent thing, which was what the Holy Ghost had done, and which is for the church a hope of unmingled comfort, but by the report that the day of the Lord was actually present—'**a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.' The apostle had already told them (1 Thess. 5) that they were not in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief. The tempter disturbs and confounds them with the thought that, as a thief, it was really come upon them; using it would seem some false spirit, or word, or letter {2 Thess 2:2}, to give to it the colour of the authority of Paul himself. And how does the apostle defend them from such assaults of others, and fears of their own? For, let it be repeated, it was not high-wrought feeling as though Christ were at hand, but **terror arising from their giving heed to the false representation *that the day of the Lord was present, and they in tribulation on earth,*** instead of being caught up to Jesus above. The apostle at once brings them back to the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him {2 Thess. 2:1} ***as their ground of comfort and protection against the alarms of the day of Jehovah.*** As if he had said [in effect]: the Lord Himself is coming, and you will be gathered to Him. **When His day comes, you will be with Him.** You are the children of the day: you will

come along with it, for you will come with Him who ushers it in. You therefore need not be troubled; be rather in peace. That day is not come. **You will go to meet Him whom the church knows as the bright, the morning star (Rev. 22:16, compared with Rev. 2:28); so that, when the day breaks and the Lord appears, you too will appear with Him in glory. You will introduce the day together—that day of retribution, when those who trouble you shall have trouble, and you, the troubled, shall have rest with us, when Jesus is revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance.”**

And as noted earlier, the Thessalonians were **shaken in mind and troubled** because they believed that they were then and there in the Tribulation/70th Week, by being misled into thinking that "the Day of the LORD is present." ***Which itself proves absolutely that the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto Him (2:1, the Rapture) can in no way be one and the same as the arrival of “the Day of the LORD” (2:2): for the former (truth) they eagerly and joyfully looked for, while the latter (deception) greatly troubled them.*** The anti-Pretribulation *error* of the then presence of the Day of the LORD is what the apostle, by the Spirit, masterfully disproves.

**Moreover, as also noted earlier, the apostle Paul clearly distinguishes between the Rapture and the times and seasons of the “Day of the LORD” in 1 Thess. 4 and 5 as well.** For it is possible to be very *“ignorant”* of vital details pertaining to the truth of the Rapture on the one hand (as per 1 Thess. 4:13, 15), while *“perfectly well”* knowing the times and the seasons connected with the “Day of the LORD” (as per 1 Thess. 5:1-2). ***“Plainly then they are two different things, quite distinct from each other.*** Were the rapture an essential part of the times and seasons, then to be wholly ignorant of it [*of the details of the Rapture of the saints*] would mean partial ignorance as to them [*of the times and seasons of the Day of the LORD*]. The Thessalonians however were *quite ignorant* as to it, while being *so well instructed* as to them that the apostle could say you *‘know perfectly’* and *‘have no need that I write unto you.’* " (F.B. Hole)

**Next, we call attention to the importance of the distinction in 2:1 and 2:8, between “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him” (the Rapture, 2:1) and “the APPEARING [or MANIFESTATION] of His coming” (2:8), which we touched on earlier under the alleged “Olivet Discourse Problem.”**

**“Instead of confounding Christ's Parousia and the connected gathering of the saints unto Him in 2 Thess. 2:1 with the Epiphany of His Parousia which annuls ‘the man of sin,’ the pointed difference of the phrase ought to have led him [Mr. B.] to distinguish them. If His coming to gather the saints together to Himself were necessarily visible, where is the force of adding the appearing of His coming when it is a question of destroying the Antichrist? But there is much more when we take in the light afforded by the second verse, and the context generally. For the error which the Thessalonian misleader taught was that ‘the day of the Lord was actually present.’ This the apostle**

dissipates, first, by beseeching them by, or for the sake of, the Lord's coming (παρουσία) and our gathering together unto Him; secondly, by the declaration that that day was not to be unless the apostasy first came and the man of sin were revealed, whereas a hinderer acted as yet till he should go. **Mr. B.'s confusion not only makes the added epiphaneia {v. 8} meaningless, if Parousia in itself is a display, but it renders the motive, urged in v. 1 against the delusion of v. 2, not only powerless, but unintelligible. For if the Lord's coming and His day coalesce, as they do absolutely in Mr. B.'s view, there is no sense in the passage;** whereas to recall the saints to their hope was calculated to guard them from the false rumor that the day had set in. Then we have the plain disproof that follows: the cup of Christendom's iniquity was not yet full, as it must be before the Lord Jesus judges it (not at His coming, but) at the appearing of His coming."

**"2 Thess. 2: 1-12 cautions us against the error of those who confounded the coming of the Lord to gather His saints on high with His day upon the lawless one.** The misleaders of the Thessalonian believers sought to alarm them by the false cry that the day of the Lord was already present (ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου). **This the apostle dispels, first, by a motive of consolation for the heart, as well as, secondly, by an express prophecy. First, he beseeches them, by the coming of the Lord and their gathering together to Him, not to be shaken or troubled by this pretense** (for which they feigned a revelation and even a letter of the apostle). **The first act of the Lord, bound up with His very presence, is the translation of His own beloved ones to Himself.** But, secondly, that day (mark, he does not say the Lord's παρουσία, but His day) should not come till the full development of the evil which His day is to judge. The mystery of lawlessness is now restrained: when he who hinders its outburst is withdrawn, then shall be revealed the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the breath of His mouth and annul by the appearance of His coming. **Observe the striking difference between the terms in vv. 1, 8. When it is a question of gathering the saints, the phrase is simply His coming or presence; when it is a question of His day or dealing in judgment with the lawless one, it is the shining forth of His coming — not παρουσία only, but ἐπιφάνεια τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ.** The real caution of the chapter would have preserved the querist from an error kindred in principle, though not in form, to that which wrought among the Thessalonians. **We are then to be continually expecting the Lord, apart from either external signs or the final great tribulation, which Scripture connects with others, not with us, after we have been translated to heaven."**

**"The presence (παρουσία) of Christ is His coming, or rather state of being present, in contrast with His absence, and is in itself equally compatible with being visible or not at His pleasure (as we see after His resurrection). The solution of the question depends on other scriptures and cannot be decided by the bare word 'coming' or 'presence.'** One of these scriptures is the comparison of 2 Thess. 2: 1 with v. 8. On the face of it, verse 1 binds together His coming or παρουσία with the gathering together of the saints to Himself. This is the motive for comfort against the terror of the day of

**the Lord, which the false teachers were seeking to bring on the souls of the Thessalonians.** The false rumour that His day was actually arrived, or present (ἐνέστηκεν), was effectually dispelled by the sweet information that that day of awful associations for the world should not be there before the . . . open display of that lawlessness, which was already at work in secret ways. **For the day of the Lord is ever the predicted period of judgment on man's evil,** which it is to [be] put down and cleared away, in order that the good of God's kingdom may be no longer hidden or hindered but shine out to His everlasting praise. Hence it is said that the lawless one (for so it will end) shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy, or annul, by the appearing of His coming [not] with the Lord's presence to assemble His saints to Himself, but with His judicial action on the Antichrist."

***"Plainly, the coming or presence of the Lord is the great general truth. It embraces indeed His appearing as one of its acts or characters, but it includes much more. Hence, when precision is sought (as here to counteract a false impression, which the enemy sought to endorse with the apostle's name), we have the παρουσία distinguished from the epiphany, or shining forth of that παρουσία. Now it is evident that, if the coming of Christ necessarily implies visibility to all the world, there is no force in the distinction; if, on the contrary, He might come to gather His saints without appearing to any beyond themselves, and then subsequently cause His coming or presence to be manifest in the destruction of the lawless one, nothing can be more appropriate or exact than the phraseology here employed."*** (W. Kelly)

Now in this connection, consider Col. 3:4 in relation to the Rapture and the Appearing. When Christ appears in glory, we will *appear together with Him in glory . . . at the very same time*. It is not: He appears *and then* He catches us up *and then* we appear with Him in glory. No, *precisely when He appears, we appear with Him in manifested glory*. That means we are already with Him. Thus we had to have been previously caught up unto Him (when He does not yet "appear" to the world) and then subsequently we all together with Him "appear in glory" to the world (i.e., first He comes without "appearing" or being openly "manifested" or "revealed," catches us up unto Himself, and then subsequently we "appear" together with Him in glory at the "manifestation" or "revelation" of His coming.)

" 'When Christ our life shall appear,' says the apostle addressing the heavenly saints, 'then shall ye also appear with Him in glory'. **Christ will not be manifested first, and the church be caught up subsequently; both are to appear together and at the same time in glory. But with the elect Jews the case widely differs.** 'And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other' **(Matt. 24: 30, 31)**. They are delivered and gathered after the Son of man has already appeared."



The church had not only been caught up before, but had come out of heaven along with Christ preparatory to His appearing (Rev. 19: 11-14)." (W. Kelly)

This brings us to the tremendous implications of *that* which restrains and *he* who restrains the mystery of lawlessness "until he be gone out of the way" (2:6-7), which *only then* allows for the revelation of the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist (2:8).

When we understand *who* the restrainer is and *that* which restrains, then we will see how, yet again, it is *absolutely impossible* to maintain the Pre-Wrath notions that: a) the Church will be persecuted by the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness; and b) whatever occurs before the "Day of the LORD" occurs before the Rapture.

In 2 Thess. 2:6-7 we see that *He* who restrains the 'mystery of lawlessness' (*now for the past 2,000 years*), thereby preventing the manifestation of *the* 'lawless one' (man of sin, Antichrist), must be "*gone out of the way*" (2:7) **before** the manifestation of the lawless one can occur. **That Restrainer must be none other than God, and specifically the Holy Spirit who is the Person of the Triune Godhead who is dwelling in the Church on earth.** And when He is "gone out of the way," the Church, necessarily, must go with Him (for He has been given to be with us *forever*, John 14:16). The fact is, the dwelling of the Holy Spirit on earth (in the *unique capacity* in which He arrived on the Day of Pentecost, cf. John 7:39 and Acts 19:2) *makes it impossible* for the mystery of lawlessness to culminate in the manifestation of the lawless one. Until the Holy Spirit "goes out of the way" (as no longer on earth in the *distinctive sense* in which He came at Pentecost, and thus requiring the Rapture of the Church), **there will be no Antichrist and no 70<sup>th</sup> Week—and thus no Pre-Wrath absurdity of the Antichrist persecuting the Church!**

"Lawlessness is the very essence of sin. It is the refusal of all controlling authority and restraint, and therefore in deadly opposition to God. The lawlessness, which has long been at work in Christendom in a mysterious or hidden way like a suppressed fire, is going to blaze forth in the lawless one. But this will only be when the [*heavenly*] saints of God are removed from the scene of conflict by the coming of the Lord for them. At present the forces of evil are under restraint . . . There is '**He** who restrains' [*masculine pronoun, v.7*] and also '**what** restrains' [*neuter pronoun, v.6*]. The former doubtless refers to the Holy Spirit of God, who is at this time personally upon earth as He never was before and will not be again. The latter, we believe, refers to the presence of the church on earth; the church being the house of God wherein the Holy Ghost is dwelling." (F.B. Hole)

In 2 Thess. 2:6-7, the apostle Paul affirms:

"And now ye know [*Gr. oida*] **that which restrains**, that he should be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness already works; only there is **he who restrains** now until he be gone."

There is vital significance to every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Let us thus note that the Greek word for "know" here is *oida* not *ginosko*. This has bearing on the identity of the Restrainer.

“Two Greek words are used for 'to know' in the New Testament - *ginosko* and *oida*. The former [*ginosko*] signifies objective knowledge, what a man has learned or acquired. The English expression 'being acquainted with' perhaps conveys the meaning. *Oida* conveys the thought of what is inward, the inward consciousness in the mind, intuitive knowledge not immediately derived from what is external [though it *may* have been first learnt from without]. The difference between the two words is illustrated in John 8:55, 'ye know (*ginosko*) him not, but I know (*oida*) him,' in John 13:7, 'What I do thou dost not know (*oida*) now, but thou shalt know (*ginosko*) hereafter,' and in Heb. 8:11, 'they shall not teach . . . saying, Know (*ginosko*) the Lord; because all shall know (*oida*) me.' The word *oida* is used of Christ as knowing the Father, and as knowing the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, of Paul's knowledge of 'a man in Christ,' and of the Christian's knowledge that he has eternal life. 'I know whom I have believed,' 2 Tim. 1:12 - I have the inward conscious knowledge of who the person is: see also 1 Cor. 16:15, 2 Tim. 3:14 and 15 - all of these refer to inward conscious knowledge. The difference between the significance of the two words is often slight and objective knowledge may pass into conscious knowledge, *but not vice versa*. The Greek for conscience is derived from *oida*: see [1 Cor.] ch. 4:4, 'I am conscious of nothing in myself,' that is, not conscious of any fault. In the present passage [1 Cor. 8], 'We know that an idol is nothing' is conscious knowledge [*oida*]: 'we all have knowledge' and 'knowledge puffs up' is objective knowledge [*ginosko*]. 'If any one think he knows [*oida*] (conscious knowledge), he knows [*ginosko*] (objectively) nothing yet as he ought to know it [*ginosko*] (objectively):' 'he is known [*ginosko*] (objectively) of him,' so 'knowledge,' ver. 10.” (J. N. Darby)

**With this distinction applied to the matter at hand, we have additional ground for identifying the Restrainer as the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church on earth. For why would these Christians *intuitively know* who the Restrainer is, if He is anyone other than God the Holy Spirit? And that, moreover, in the face of the attempted deception perpetrated by those who were seeking to corrupt the blessed hope in the hearts of the Thessalonian saints. They intuitively knew who the Restrainer is, the very One who, in omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal power, prevents Satan from bringing forth his man, the Antichrist, onto the scene before his own time as determined by God. (Based on what they had been taught of God and of distinctive Church truth, they intuitively knew the *only One* who could be the Restrainer, without needing the apostle to here spell it out.)**

Again, the Holy Spirit departs out of the world with the Church, solely with respect to the *special manner* in which He arrived and commenced His *unique ministry and residency* on the Day of Pentecost, after the Lord Jesus ascended in heavenly glory at the right hand of God, to form the heavenly people—Christ's Body & Bride, in which the Spirit of God dwells corporately and individually.

The Holy Spirit will, of course, be at work during the Tribulation Period/Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, in much the same way He was in OT times, working faith and divine life in the souls of elect Jews and Gentiles, and enabling, equipping, authenticating ministry in speaking forth the Word of God, etc.

**“Having the declaration that the Lord should come and gather them together to Himself before that day, and being themselves still on earth, the Thessalonians had, by this very fact, a proof that the day was not yet present.”**

**Verses 3, 4. Here is another proof.** The one who will be the object of the Lord's judgment in that day was not yet on the scene. As long as, on the one hand, those who are to be on the seat of judgment are not gathered together (the saints above), and while, on the other hand the criminal is not brought to the bar, there can be no judgment.

**Verse 6.** ‘What withholdeth.’ It is not in order to prevent the revelation of the lawless one that God has put a restraint; it is **to prevent his being revealed before his time.** The adversary is always ready for evil. In the day that God takes away the bridle, Satan will immediately shew himself at work to drag men into apostasy.”

**“[T]he hindrance [that which restrains and he who restrains] is, at the bottom, the presence of the church and of the Holy Spirit on the earth.”** (J. N. Darby)

**Next, as noted earlier, observe that in 2 Thess. 2,** the apostle Paul does not correct the Thessalonian saints by telling them that the Day of the LORD could not be present *unless the Son of Man is revealed*, but that it could not be present *unless the man of lawlessness, the son of perdition is revealed!* Which he will be when the Restrainer and that which restrains be gone (2:6-8a), and he is thus revealed when the covenant is confirmed for seven years by the head of the revived Roman empire with the mass of apostate Israel in the land **at the onset of the 70th Week** (Dan. 9:27). **The fact of the matter is that 2 Thess. 2:3-4 does NOT say that the man of lawlessness will be revealed only when he “sits down in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,” during the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. Verse 4 is simply a description of the *character and objective* of the man of lawlessness.**

“Let not any one deceive you in any manner, because it will not be unless the apostasy have first come, and the man of sin have been revealed, the son of perdition; **who [not when he]** opposes and exalts himself on high against all called God, or object of veneration; so that he himself sits down in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess. 2:3-4)

**Finally, with regard to the “the apostasy”** (2 Thess. 2:3), it indeed does not refer to the Rapture, but to the wholesale abandonment of Christian Truth, which takes the form of Mystery Babylon, the Anti-Church, during the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, and then (with her

destruction, making way for) the worship of the Antichrist during the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.

This apostasy, "THE apostasy," entails the total abandonment of the Christian faith. While the true Church is on earth, that is impossible. While the true Church is on earth, there will never be a wholesale abandonment of Christian Truth, for God always has His remnant on earth who constitute the Body and Bride, till the Rapture. "THE apostasy" is coming, and is encompassed by the "Day of the LORD." Once the Church is gone out of the way—with the Holy Spirit, in the same sense in which He arrived on the Day of Pentecost—then there will briefly be no believers at all on earth, the apostasy being present. But then, in the midst of that total apostasy, the Lord will start to call out a godly remnant of Jews and Gentiles (who form no part of the already completed and raptured heavenly Body and Bride of Christ).

"The idea is still quite widely held that the Lord will not return until the world has been prepared for His advent by the preaching of the Gospel and the conversion of most, if not all, its inhabitants. There is no support for this idea in the passage we are considering, but quite the contrary. **The fact is, that what will precede His advent in glory is a total abandonment of the faith by those who formerly professed to hold it. This apostasy will pave the way for the revelation of a great personage, who will be the direct representative of Satan, called here 'the man of sin,' for in him sin will find its highest expression.** This man will be marked by the most arrogant self-exaltation. He will oppose God by claiming himself to be God. **A claim such as this would be impossible amongst people calling themselves Christian** — it would merely excite ridicule — were the way not prepared for it by the apostasy. **The apostasy then will be of such a nature that the minds of men will be prepared to accept such gigantic claims on the part of a mere man as quite possible and reasonable. The deification of man will be the logical and reasonable outcome of the movement.** This throws a flood of light as to what the main drift of the apostasy will be. God will be dethroned and man will be enthroned [from man's perspective]!" (F.B. Hole)

#### 4) The alleged Book of "The Revelation Problem"

According to Dr. Kurschner and company, the Church is found on earth during most of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (the 1<sup>st</sup> half and part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half) **in several passages of the Book of Revelation**, undergoing persecution by the Antichrist, suffering through the Great Tribulation, and then raptured *before a single judgment or any wrath of God is poured out, which commence with the arrival of the "Day of the LORD."*

As will be demonstrated, there are indeed a number of insurmountable problems when it comes to the Book of the Revelation, *but all on the side of schemes that deny or obscure dispensational truth.*

First, refer back to the refutations of the first three alleged problems, the “Precursor Problem,” “Olivet Discourse Problem,” and the “2 Thessalonians Problem,” to avoid further repetition, as those sections answer a number of foundational errors inherent in the invention of this fourth problem, “The Revelation Problem.”

We are told by Dr. Kurschner and his associates that:

“The 5th seal is an interesting one, and this is where many Prewrathers begin their argument that **these seals cannot be a part God’s Wrath.**”

“The martyrs that are depicted in the revelation at the fifth seal, in my opinion, is **one of the strongest arguments for the Prewrath position.**”

“Pretribulationists claim that the seals on the scroll, the seven seals scroll, **the seals are all God’s Wrath, but that’s contradicted by the fifth seal.**”

“The problem of course is that the plain reading in both the Greek and English of **this phrase [in Rev. 6:10], “How long before you judge and avenge our blood?” means that no judgment of any kind has begun at that point.** This is reiterated in the next verse when God tells them to wait a little while longer until the full number of **Christian martyrs** are killed. Both grammatically and contextually, **God has not begun his judgment on the wicked at this point,** which is probably why we found so few Pretrib commentators willing to try to explain this passage at all.

“**This causes another problem for Pretribbers, because if God’s wrath has begun by this point as they say, it would mean that these Christian martyrs in the 5th seal had been going through God’s Wrath, which contradicts the doctrine that Christians will not go through the Wrath of God** derived from 1st Thessalonians 5:9 and other places, a doctrine that is agreed upon by all sides of this debate.”

“One of the strongest arguments for the Prewrath position” . . . strong words! But if this is one of their own self-proclaimed “strongest” arguments, we have been graciously granted a self-disclosure of how feeble their forced scheme really is (yet again).

Notice, by the way, that these Pre-Wrath men call the martyrs under the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal “*Christian*” martyrs, and thus simply read into the passage what they wish, what they desire, to see in the passage. Neither here nor anywhere else in the Book of the Revelation does God’s Word state that “Christians,” those “in Christ,” “the Church,” members of His “Body” and “Bride” (or believers under any other distinctively Christian designation), are still on earth after chapter 3 (rather, precisely the contrary! . . . more on this shortly), including those pictured as coming out of the Great Tribulation in Revelation 7.

Now to their argument put forth as one of their “strongest” . . .

It is unabashedly claimed that the words of the martyrs in heaven in Rev. 6:10 (“How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou *not judge and avenge our blood* on them that dwell

upon the earth?") imply that ***"no judgment of any kind has begun at that point*** [of the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal]."

To take those words as implying any such notion is to pit Scripture against Scripture (which we demonstrated at length that such is precisely what the Pre-Wrath system does)—far be such a thought as to His God-breathed word! Moreover, since the next seal, the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, is thought to be *the commencement* of the outpouring of *God's wrath* according to their system, then with the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal we have *the completion of the Great Tribulation through which the Church is said to pass*, that unique time which Scripture depicts as follows:

"When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which is spoken of through Daniel the prophet [***in connection with the 70<sup>th</sup> Week at its midpoint, Dan. 9:27***], standing in what is a **holy place**, (he that reads let him understand,) then let **those who are in Judaea** flee to the mountains . . . **But woe** to those that are with child, and those that give suck **in those days**. But pray that your flight may not be in winter time nor **on sabbath: For then [at that time] shall there be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.**" (Matt. 24:15-16, 19-21)

**"For those days shall be distress such as there has not been the like since the beginning of creation which God created, until now, and never shall be."** (Mark 13:19)

"And I said to him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they who come out of **the great tribulation** [*lit. 'the tribulation the great one'*], and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14)

We are supposed to swallow the camel of the thought that **during said Great Tribulation after the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week** (not to mention the "birth-pangs" of the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, Matt. 24:6-8, or the first 4 Seals of Rev. 6:1-8), ***"no judgment of any kind has begun at that point"?! THAT*** is what we are to glean from the outcry of Rev. 6:10? **THAT** is *"one of the strongest arguments for the Prewrath position"???*

***That which proves too much proves nothing at all but its own disproof.***

Perhaps there is a very good reason why Pre-Wrath men have "found so few Pretrib commentators willing to try to explain this passage at all." Perhaps it is because *it has never occurred to sound interpreters that anyone would ever derive such an absurd thought from that passage.*

I suppose, then, that we should equally glean from Heb. 9:27 ("it is the portion of men once to die, *and after this judgment*"), that there is no judgment of any kind *prior to* death? That not even death itself is a form of judgment on the wicked, natural man?

There is likewise absolutely no basis to take the terrified cry of the earth-dwellers during the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal of Rev. 6:12-17 as pointing merely to a *yet-to-be* expression of God's wrath rather than to

what *has been and already is underway*: “And they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and have us hidden from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and **from the wrath of the Lamb; because the great day of his wrath is come**, and who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16-17)

“How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou **not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?**” (Rev. 6:10)

Perhaps a somewhat sounder and a tad more spiritually sane understanding of Rev. 6:10, which would commend itself to those thus minded, is that these Jewish Tribulation martyrs (cf. “*underneath the altar*” symbolically, and the **imprecatory** nature of their language) are crying out for **full and complete** judgment of the “earth-dwellers” (“them that dwell upon the earth,” see note below), **clearing them all out, in vindication** of their death and for the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. For which these Jewish Tribulation martyrs are waiting. They were removed from the earth by persecution of death; they now, in the intermediate state, await the utter vanquishment of the “earth dwellers” from it (and then the institution, by the Sovereign Ruler, of His Kingdom of righteousness and peace, and their place in it).

To be clear, the opening of each of the seals of the 7-sealed scroll **by the Lamb** (Christ) denotes the bringing to pass certain events and judgments, which prepare the way for the Lamb to take the inheritance of all creation (the scroll itself representing, not judgments, but the title deed to that inheritance of all creation) in order to reign over it in His kingdom glory. And with regard to the first 4 seals, note that the 4 “living creatures” are involved in each of these, once **the Lamb** opens them. As the 4 “living creatures” are symbolic—signifying the attributes of providential power in the execution of judgment in the earth—then when each living creature is represented as saying “Come” at the opening of each of these seals by the Lamb, the “Come” indicates Christ’s providential power to bring these actions and judgments to pass, His providential command to cause these events to take place. (And they are all part of the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, as are, in fact, **all** of the first 6 seals, which are the beginning of the “birth pains” of God’s outpoured wrath; cp. Matt. 24:8 with 1 Thess. 5:1-4, 9 and Isa. 13:6-8.)

“And I saw when **the Lamb opened** one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as a voice of thunder, Come: And I saw: and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon it having a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth **conquering and that he might conquer**.

“And when **it [the Lamb] opened** the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come: And another, a red horse, went forth; and to him that sat upon it, to him it was given to **take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another**; and there was given to him a great sword.

“And when *it [the Lamb] opened* the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come: And I saw: and behold, a black horse, and he that sat upon it having a balance in his hand. And I heard as a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A choenix of wheat for a denarius, and three choenixes of barley for a denarius: and do not injure the oil and the wine.

“And when *it [the Lamb] opened* the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come: And I saw: and behold, a pale horse, and he that sat upon it, his name was **Death, and hades** followed with him; and authority was given to him over **the fourth of the earth to slay with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth.**” (Rev. 6:1-8)

We referred above to the *imprecatory* nature of the outcry of the martyrs in Rev. 6:10. Why is this important? Because that serves as *another* key to the true identification of these Tribulation martyrs, thus preserving us from the gross error of misapplication. It shows that they are distinctively *Jewish* (part of the godly Jewish remnant of that time), not “Christian” or counterparts above with respect to “Christians” still living on earth during the Tribulation Period. To apply this to Christians, to place in the mouths of Christians an imprecatory prayer is to Judaize. “The imprecations are appropriate during the future Apocalyptic Week, when the prayers of Ps. 79 and 83 are also in order and suitable for the Remnant, as other Psalms [e.g., Ps. 94:1-3; 109:1-20; 69:23-25; 149:5-9] will also be. To make these things proper Christianity is, therefore, to Judaize.” (R.A. Huebner) Contrast the imprecatory prayer of Rev. 6:10 and those of the Psalms with the posture, attitude, and ministry set forth, e.g., in 2 Cor. 5:18-21 and Rom. 12:14—as well with the prayer of the first *Christian* martyr, Stephen, expressed in Acts 7:59-60—and see if they can be reconciled as both applying to the mindset of heavenly saints (Christians)!

“Who are these saints that appeal to God's vengeance? It is not the church in this case, one can answer with the utmost confidence. It could not be indeed; for the church had been already removed to heaven. But, besides, **is the church ever said, in scripture, to call upon God to judge and avenge the blood of saints shed on the earth? It would falsify the very design of God in the church, and in the individual Christian too.** We are the epistle of Christ, called expressly to show out His glory in Christ, and His grace towards the world ever since the cross. And as God has allowed men to put to death His own Son, and, so far from judging the guilt, has only made it an occasion for showing more grace still, so the church is called to suffer, and if need be even to death, for His name's sake, **without such a thought or wish as calling for vengeance.**”

Take a plain and signal example of this in Stephen. He was most grievously trodden down. they cast him out of the city and stoned him. But he kneels down and cries, ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.’ It was with a loud voice too, for it was not a thing that his heart did not feel earnestly; and the Holy Ghost desired that those who were round him should know his heart's desire about them, guilty as they were of his blood. Was



this calling upon God to avenge his blood? The very contrary; and so all through. Look at the apostles Peter and John, who when they were beaten depart from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Look again at the first Epistle of Peter; and what do you find there? **This is the principle: 'If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called.'**

On the other hand, the world could not go on for a day on such a around as this; it must go to pieces, if evil were not to be punished, and those who did well and suffered wrongfully were merely to give thanks. ***But such exhortations were not intended for the world. And there is the mistake so often made. Men forget that the church was called to be a witness of heaven — was meant to express the mind and grace of Christ, while walking upon the earth.***” (W. Kelly)

#### **Note on “those that dwell upon the earth”**

“[T]hose that dwell on earth (Phil 3:19; Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8 & cp. 14:6). They are like those of Noah’s day which was characterized by two things: a. Violence and corruption. b. Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage -- without God, and as if they would dwell on earth forever.” “Those that dwell on the earth stand in moral contrast to *those who dwell in heaven*, whom the beast blasphemes (Rev. 13:6). The Philadelphians will be among the dwellers in heaven [via the Rapture] . . . The hour of trial, then, will come upon those under the sway of the beast.” (R.A. Huebner)

**As to Revelation 7**, there is absolutely no reference to the Church or its Rapture therein. In fact, there is nothing akin to being taken up in the air or to heaven, no gathering together unto Him from the earth to heaven of any group at all! Nor is there even the slightest hint of glorification of bodies taking place, let alone a catching up of the believing dead. That is, NO RAPTURE.

“And one of the elders [***one of the “24 Elders,” who as a fixed group represent the glorified Church in heaven (see comments in the section that follows below)***] answered, saying to me, These who are clothed with white robes, who are they, and whence came they? And I said to him, My lord, thou knowest. And he [***one of the 24 Elders***] said to me, These are they who come out of the great tribulation [***alive, not through death and resurrection!***], and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God [***in acceptance and righteous standing, not in physical location . . . contrast this with the “24 Elders” who are actually located “round the throne” in heaven (Rev. 4), in closest association therewith, and clearly distinguished from this group “who come out of the Great Tribulation”***], and serve him [***in worship***] day and night in [***in connection with***] his temple [***His Millennial Temple on this present earth***], and he that sits upon the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. [***In Millennial Kingdom glory of righteousness and peace:***] They shall not hunger any more, neither shall they thirst any more, nor shall

the sun at all fall on them, nor any burning heat; because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:13-17)

Moreover, we have seen that the Great Tribulation is indeed part of the time of God’s wrath, from which time the Church is uniquely and entirely exempted. Thus neither the martyrs of Rev. 6:9-11 nor the redeemed of Rev. 7 could possibly be Christians, the heavenly people of God. Incredibly, we are told the following by one of Dr. Kurschner’s colleagues:

“This causes another problem for Pretribbers, because if God’s wrath has begun by this point as they say, it would mean that these Christian martyrs in the 5th seal [*and the ‘Christians’ coming out of the Great Tribulation in Rev. 7*] had been **going through God’s Wrath, which contradicts the doctrine that Christians will not go through the Wrath of God** derived from 1st Thessalonians 5:9 and other places, a doctrine that is agreed upon by all sides of this debate.”

First, the promise of 1 Thess. 5:9 *et al.* is for **Christians, the heavenly people of God, the Body & Bride of Christ, alone**. They are the only group of saints promised this special and entire exemption from any exposure to God’s outpoured wrath. Such is not so of subsequent earthly Jew and Gentile believers reared during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. But if 1 Thess. 5:9 and other passages are applied indiscriminately, the question arises: Does this mean that the Pre-Wrath system has no believers living or brought about during their self-designated time of God’s wrath?

**1) Will there be no one else saved during the remainder of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, so that they are not exposed to God’s wrath? For those who are "left" (after all believers are "taken" in the rapture), are there none who get saved before the Lord returns to establish His kingdom?**

**2) If all are “left” for divine judgment, what becomes of the Two Witnesses of Rev. 11, who are left behind after the supposed Pre-Wrath rapture?!**

**3) How will there be anyone left to enter and populate the Millennial Kingdom, *in their natural (unglorified) bodies*, upon its initial establishment, if no group of believers live and survive during the time of God’s wrath?**

**[Note: Only the saved will enter the Kingdom at its establishment on this earth (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:11-12, 30, 31-46; 24:13; 13:39-42, 49-50; 7:21-23; 18:3; Isa. 13:9; Ezek. 20:38; Zech. 13:8-9; Rom. 11:26-27); who will reproduce/have children during that 1,000 Year Reign.]**

**4) What becomes of the Judgment of the living Gentile Sheep and Goats (i.e., in their natural bodies—*no death and resurrection* involved in their appearance there), *when* the Son of Man sits down upon His earthly kingdom throne of glory (Matt. 25:31ff), if no group of believers live and survive during the time of God’s wrath?**

5) Who are those who have “endured to the end” (Matt. 24:13, 14), if no group of believers live and survive during the time of God’s wrath and through to “the end”?

6) If this system allows for the existence of a group of Jewish and Gentile saints after the “Pre-Wrath” rapture after all, then how does that mesh with the implication of those who are all said by them to be “left” for divine judgment in Matt. 24 and Luke 17?

7) If this system allows for the existence of a group of Jewish and Gentile saints after the “Pre-Wrath” rapture, *then so much for their application of such passages as 1 Thess. 5:9 to those in Rev. 6:6-11 and Rev. 7!*

*In light of ALL the forgoing, it is clear that there is not the slightest “Revelation Problem”—not, at least, for Pre-Tribulation truth!*

Now the following represents a set of *real insurmountable problems* involved in all anti-Pretribulation Rapture errors, including Pre-Wrath notions. These are not even remotely touched on in Dr. Kurschner’s 2+ hour video, of course.

### **The Structure of Revelation**

After the Church “*things that are*” (now) in Revelation Chapters 2-3 (**cf. Rev. 1:19 and its divinely given outline of the Book of Revelation**), the Church is seen in Heaven beginning with Rev. 4 and “*the things that must take place after these things*” (after these Church things that are now; cp. Rev. 1:19c with 4:1c)—the Rapture thus implicitly taking place between the end of Rev. 3 and the start of Rev. 4 (the *occurrence* of the Rapture of the Church being nowhere explicitly recorded in the Book of Revelation, though **Rev. 3:10-11** of course speaks of the certainty of that heavenly hope which keeps us entirely out of the *time* of the world-wide trial of the Tribulation Period). As such, the glorified Church is seen in Heaven as a result of the Rapture and prior to the onset of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week, and during the course thereof:

- *As the 24 Elders*
- *As the Tabernacle in Heaven*
- *As the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife*

The structure of the Book of Revelation *requires* the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. **The divinely given outline of the Book is given in Rev. 1:19 which is key**, with the “*things that are*” (now) comprising the present Church period pictured in Rev. 2-3, and the “*things that are to be after these things*” comprising the heavenly events of Rev. 4-5 and the earthly Tribulation Period/Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week and beyond starting with Rev. 6—*where the Church is never again seen on earth* (until after the visions close in Rev. 22, and we have the yearning cry of the Spirit and the Bride for the coming of the Lord Jesus in Rev.22:17). Rather, the glorified Church is specifically seen under the symbolic representation of *the 24 Elders in Heaven* (Rev. 4:1-4, 10-11; 5:5-11, 14; 7:11-14; 11:16-17; 14:3; 19:4); and of *the Tabernacle in Heaven* (Rev. 13:6, “His

tabernacle, even those who [now] have their tabernacle in the heaven” [cp. Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:5]); with the former representation continuing until the glorified Church is seen in Rev. 19 as ***the Wife of the Lamb in Heaven, complete and ready***, at the Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb which take place in Heaven (Rev. 19:7-9) *prior to* the Manifestation of His coming at the end of the Tribulation as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11ff), when He comes victoriously and we with Him in glory as ***His armies out of Heaven*** (Rev. 17:14 and 19:14 & 19, “the armies which are in the heaven [who] followed Him upon white horses, clad in white, pure, fine linen,” even “they that are with Him called, and chosen, and faithful”). And observe, too, the conspicuous absence of the oft repeated phrase “he that has an ear, let him hear ***what the Spirit says to the churches***” *after* Rev. 2-3 (cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; and contrast with the expression in 13:9 relating to the Great Tribulation period).

### **Supplemental Note on the Judgment-Seat (Bema) of Christ for Members of the Body & Bride of Christ**

The Rapture facilitates the immediately following presence of *each and every* member of the Body & Bride of Christ, individually, in their glorified state, before the Bema or Judgment-Seat of Christ *in heaven* (which in turn prepares and makes “ready” the Bride for the heavenly Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb, see below).

**At or pursuant to the Bema**, every glorified saint in Christ will receive some praise and rewards: cf. 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 4-5 (*the 24 Elders all crowned, see below*); Rev. 19:7-8 (the Wife of the Lamb dressed in her wedding gown of fine linen, which is the ‘righteousnesses’—righteous acts, as an outflow of the divine nature, wrought in the power of the Spirit— *of all heavenly saints, see below*).

**Note also** that our session before the Bema is ***entirely completed in heaven before the start of the Tribulation with its divine judgments, before the opening of a single seal in Rev. 6, as the glorified Church is seen already crowned with her victor’s reward crowns under the symbolic representation of the 24 Elders in Rev. 4-5 (see below)***. See **Rev. 22:12; 1 Cor. 4:5; 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12; 1 John 2:28; 4:17-18; John 5:24**.

### **Supplemental Note on the Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb**

The Rapture and the immediately following Judgment-Seat of Christ facilitate the presence of the complete and “ready” Bride (Rev. 19:7) at the Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb *in heaven*, BEFORE the Manifestation of His coming with us in glory at the end of the Tribulation as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The heavenly Bride is, indisputably, all who compose the Church which is His Body (cf. Eph. 5:22-33; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7: 1-4; Rev. 21:9ff; 22:17). As the Bride is *in heaven, complete and “ready”* (Rev. 19:7)—nothing lacking—while the Tribulation Period/Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week is

transpiring on the earth, a Post-Tribulational Rapture of the Church is an impossible scenario. His coming to Rapture His heavenly people and the Manifestation of His coming to establish the Kingdom must be distinguished and separated in time. The former must precede, so as to facilitate, the latter.

**Further note that the *heavenly Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb* take place immediately after the destruction on earth, under God's judgment, of *Mystery Babylon, the Great Harlot* (Rev. 17-18; cf. also Rev. 2:22 and 3:16, the culmination of the church of Thyatira and of Laodicea)—*the False Church, the False Bride*—at the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (Rev. 19:1-3) [which makes way for the worship of the Beast during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (Rev. 13)]. Thus this rules out a Pre-Wrath Rapture occurring sometime later during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.**

### **The 24 Elders**

The 24 Elders are seen in heaven in Rev. 4-5 for the first time, after the Church "*things that are*" (*now*) in Rev. 2-3, who collectively represent the glorified Church after the Rapture as king-priests, as a royal priesthood (cp. Rev. 5:8, 10 with Rev. 1:6 and 1 Pet. 2:9), seated and enthroned around and in closest connection to the throne of God, acting in their *priestly* capacity (cf. Rev. 5:8, "having each a harp and golden bowls full of incenses, which are the prayers of the [Jewish and Gentile] saints" on earth). They are all crowned with *victor's* crowns (Gr. *stephanos*, Rev. 4:4, 10—not *royal* crowns, Gr. *diadema*, and thus they are not yet reigning), awarded as a result of appearing before the Judgment-Seat (*Bema*) of Christ (the number of victor's crowns awarded to each is left unstated).

And note that the 24 Elders are no longer seen as such once the glorified Church is shown forth as the armies out of Heaven and as the Wife of the Lamb appearing in glory with Christ in His Manifestation to the earth.

The 24 Elders in heaven (Rev. 4:1-4, 10-11; 5:5-11, 14; 7:11-14; 11:16-17; 14:3; 19:4) derive their symbolic significance from the 24 courses (shifts or divisions) into which David the king divided the representative heads of the Levitical priesthood in the OT (1 Chron. 24:1-19), which *represented the whole* priesthood. The term "*elder*" itself, moreover, conveys the thought of: spiritual maturity (1 Tim. 3:6); intelligence in divine things (Tit. 1:9); government (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1); and representation rather than solely individual capacity. And observe that the 24 Elders *are not and cannot be any form of angelic creatures*, from whom they are consistently and carefully distinguished in the Book of Revelation (cf. Rev. 5:11 and 7:11). Consider:

- Angels always stand, and are never seated or enthroned, *before or in the presence of God* (cf., e.g., 1 Kings 22:19; Dan. 7:9-10; Zech. 6:5; Luke 1:19; Rev. 7:11; 8:2; and contrast with John 20:12, where two angels are seen seated in the *empty* tomb of our risen Saviour!), whereas the 24 Elders are indeed thus seated and enthroned (being

perfectly at home in perfect rest and peace in God's presence, as a result of their so-great heavenly salvation in Christ—in accordance with their position in Him in the heavenlies now, Eph. 2:6)

- Angels always speak or shout (even in praise), and never sing (cf., e.g., Luke 2:13-14 and the Book of Revelation throughout; Job 38:7 being no exception and better translated as the morning stars 'cried out' in praise), whereas the 24 Elders do thus sing (as a result of and in connection with their redemption in Christ) [cf. Rev. 5:8-10, and note that in the Greek it is the 24 Elders alone who are said to be 'having each a harp' and to thus 'sing a new song']
  - The fact that the song which the 24 Elders sing in Rev. 5:9-10 speaks of "them" and "they" (in the third person) rather than "us" and "we" (v. 10), in no way implies that they sing not of their *own* blood-redemption (for they sing *as representing the entire* glorified Church, not merely of themselves as individuals)—no more than, e.g., the Israelites sang not of their own redemption in the first recorded song of Scripture in Ex. 15:1-18, when they were redeemed out of Egypt and sang of themselves in the third person (cf. "the people" and "them," Ex. 15:13, "your people" and "the people," Ex. 15:16, and "them" (twice), Ex. 15:17)
  - Accordingly, the song of the 24 Elders indeed speaks of themselves ***as redeemed by blood*** (that of Jehovah-Jesus), of their being made ***kings and priests*** (partaking of the offices of Christ Himself, the King-Priest), and of their forthcoming ***reign over the earth*** (with the Lord Jesus, beginning with the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, Rev. 5:10; and cp. Rev. 1:6; 3:21; 2:26-27; 20:4, 6; 22:5; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1:10-14, 21-23 (and cp. 1:21 with 2:6); 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:9)—***none of which***, clearly, is true of angelic creatures (see also Heb. 2:5, "for He has ***not*** subjected to angels the habitable world [Millennial world] which is to come")
- Angels are known for excelling in strength (2 Pet. 2:11; Ps. 103:20), *not* wisdom, and never age or grow to maturity and thus are never referred to as "elders," a term used only of men and particularly in connection with leaders in the local assembly (which itself is a *representative* office) who were appointed by the apostles or their delegates; whereas the 24 Elders are seen demonstrating their spiritual wisdom, intelligence and intimate familiarity with the mind of Christ and the counsels of God (cf. Rev. 5:5, 9-10; 7:13-14; and cp. John 15:15; 1 Cor. 2:16)
- Angels are never crowned; whereas members of the Body & Bride of the Son alone are promised victor's crowns (Gr. *stephanos*) as rewards (cf. Rev. 4:4, 10; and cp. 1 Cor. 9:25; James 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10)—thus showing that the Judgment-Seat (Bema) of Christ has already taken place in the heavens before the opening of the Tribulation Period on earth

### Rev. 3:10-11

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, ***I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial [and not only out of the hour of God’s “wrath”!], which is about to come upon the whole habitable world***, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ***[How will we be kept out of that time of world-wide Tribulation? By His coming and our gathering together unto Him! For:] I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast***, that no one take thy crown.”

We are told in **Rev. 3:11** how we will be kept out of ***the time*** of the coming world-wide Tribulation judgment of **Rev. 3:10 (and not solely kept out of God’s “wrath,” as important as that is)**, i.e., by way of His imminent coming for us (“*I come quickly*”)! Now let us consider more precisely ***how*** the believers who comprised the Philadelphian church (and the other six churches, “for he that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to *the churches*”) will actually ***be ‘kept out of’ the time of this world-wide judgment to come***: Will they be *preserved through it*? If such is the case (which is a complete misunderstanding of the text), then these believers, who have been absent from the body and present with the Lord for the last 2,000 years, *will have to be brought back to this earth to undergo the Tribulation Period so as to be “preserved through it”!* Contra such an absurdity, the true saints of the Philadelphian church (and the other six churches) ***have clearly been and will continue to be*** kept entirely out of the 7-year ‘hour of trial to come upon the whole habitable earth.’ Now this promise is not for the Philadelphian saints alone (or the saints of the other six churches). **This promise of exclusion and exemption from the time of the Tribulation is for *all* heavenly saints comprising the Body of Christ from Pentecost to the Rapture—just as all salvation promises and blessings in every NT Epistle apply to all believers, and not merely to the original recipients of those Epistles.**

Thus we have established that: **1)** Rev. 3:10 could not possibly mean ‘preservation through’ the Tribulation Period for the Philadelphian saints; rather, it conveys exclusion and exemption from the time of the Tribulation Period altogether; and **2)** the promise of Rev. 3:10 applies to us today in the same exact sense (i.e., it cannot mean exclusion and exemption from the time of the Tribulation for the Philadelphian saints but ‘preservation through’ it for us). ***How***, then, will those of us who are ***alive*** when the Tribulation is set to start be kept out of (excluded and exempted from) that Period? How, I ask, other than by a Rapture-Translation removing us from this world before the world-wide Tribulation Period commences? No other explanation is possible or given to us in Scripture. **And Rev. 3:11, in fact, explicitly connects that very exclusion and exemption with His blessed coming for us: “I come quickly!”**

**Note:** for those who misinterpret Rev. 3:10 as ‘*preservation through*’ the Tribulation (and thereby confuse the heavenly Church with earthly Jew and Gentile saints passing through the Tribulation Period), what kind of ‘*preservation through*’ it do the myriads of *martyred* Tribulation saints actually experience, being put to death during that Period and *not preserved through it at all?* (cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 11:3-9; 13:10, 15; 14:12-13; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4).

“This leads us to consider the Lord's promise to the church in Philadelphia, as recorded in Revelation 3:10, ‘I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.’ Mr. Reese spends pages over this passage commencing with page 199 [of his book]; his argument being that the preposition translated ‘from’ does not necessarily mean ‘out of,’ so that it may merely mean preservation *through* the tribulation. Says he, ‘The preposition *ek* may possibly mean immunity from, but more probably it means *out of* in the sense of being ‘brought safe out of’.

His reasonings as to *ek* are very much open to question, but we shall spend no time on them, since the falsity of his interpretation of the passage is better shown by emphasizing two words that he seems to practically ignore — ‘keep,’ and ‘hour.’ How can the promise mean ‘bring safe out of’ when it does not say ‘Save from,’ but ‘Keep from.’ And not only keep out of tribulation, but out of ‘*the hour of temptation*,’ that is, out of *the period of time* in which the trial takes place. He quotes Rev. 12:6, 14, to prove that saints may be kept out of tribulation, while being still left on earth. Yes, but the Philadelphian church is to be *kept out of the hour of world-wide trial*. **This cannot be by being placed in some earthly shelter while *passing through the hour*. Being kept out of, or from, the hour must mean being translated into a region outside every hour into which time is divided.**

If any would say to us that this exemption is only promised to the Philadelphian church who had kept the word of Christ's patience, and therefore may only apply to saints of special devotedness, we should have to reply by pointing out that things promised to the seven churches must not be understood as special and exclusive to those to whom the promise is made. Verse 11 of chapter 2 is a very clear example. The saints at Smyrna are not the only ones to be exempted from the second death.” (F.B. Hole, *The Approaching Advent of Christ. A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing this title*)

## 5) The alleged “Imminency Problem”

The “Imminency Problem,” according to Dr. Kurschner and company, is simply a cold, blunt denial that Scripture anywhere teaches that the coming of the Lord Jesus for the Church, His heavenly Body & Bride, ought to be looked for as possible at any moment, apart from the fulfilment of any preceding signs or prophetic events. As such, it is a “problem” . . . because, in their minds and in their own words:

“[T]he concept of an imminent rapture is a **totally new, fraudulent doctrine** that needs to quickly be **abandoned for the good** of the Church.”

**As we have already shown, the “Imminency Problem” is entirely the making of those with an ill-devised intent (a self-disclosed intent) to do away with the any-moment expectation for the coming of our Beloved from the hearts of His heavenly people. Being forced to do so solely for**



***the sake of maintaining their own system of ideas. Their perverse diversion is to look for and expect anything but the any-moment coming of our Bridegroom! That is the only true "Imminency Problem".***

As to the "newness" component of the "Imminency Problem," this is dealt with under the seventh and final problem raised by Dr. Kurschner and his Pre-Wrath colleagues, which they label as the "Early Church Problem."

With that said, our dealing with this saddest of sad issues (denials) may be kept comparatively brief, and easily dispensed with, that is, for any heart subject to His Word in all things concerning the blessed hope.

***"And the Spirit [indwelling the Bride here on earth] and the bride [the Church, all heavenly saints collectively waiting for the Bridegroom] say, Come. And let him that hears [the individual saint in Christ] say, Come . . . [And in the last utterance of the breath of inspiration:] He that testifies these things says, Yea, I come quickly. [To which our hearts correspondingly and longingly call out in return:] Amen; Come, Lord Jesus [that is, come now!]." (Rev. 22:17a, 20)***

Interestingly, these blessed verses of Scripture are **nowhere to be found** in Dr. Kurschner's 2+ hour video presentation, or in this section in particular on his imagined "Imminency Problem." ***Yet they crystalize and convey the true and only manner in which all scriptures should be understood which speak of the Church waiting and looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto Him.***

**If these simple yet profound verses in Rev. 22 do not, in no uncertain terms, set forth the imminency, the any moment expectation of the coming of our Lord Jesus, then no conceivable inspired language would or could.** In fact, I submit that any minds that could conceive that such a Spirit-engendered call for the coming of the Lord Jesus is actually a call for Him to come, not NOW but, *at least 4 or 5 years later*—i.e., after His Bride passes through the first half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week and then the Great Tribulation portion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week—I submit that such minds would not bow in heart to the Word of God even if the Scriptures stated it verbatim as *"the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Bride is imminent, it may occur at any-moment."* For such minds would conceive a way to yet explain it away, with perhaps something to the effect of: "Yes, His coming is 'imminent,' but only once the Antichrist is revealed and has persecuted the Church!"

The truth is, His heavenly Bride is not to be looking for any "signs," whether the revelation of the Antichrist or otherwise. Nor is our Lord's coming simply "soon," and made *sooner* by the manifestation of "signs." The coming of the Lord for His Bride is imminent. He may come to rapture us to our heavenly home NOW. ***For the Church, the time of the end is always at hand*** and has been since the truth of the Rapture was revealed over 2,000 years ago. "Little children, ***it is the last time***" (1 John 2:18). "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7). (See more on this below.)

Scripture, in fact, nowhere directs the Church, those in Christ Jesus, His Body and Bride, to *be looking for* any precursors, signs or other prophetic events/persons (certainly not the Antichrist or persecution from him!) as intervening prior to His blessed coming to translate us to the Father's house. Precisely the contrary!

“ ‘For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.’ [Matt. 24:7] Mark the difference in the language of scripture. **Do we ever find the apostles saying, *The end is not yet, for us [heavenly saints]? On the contrary,*** it is said of us (1 Cor. 10), ‘upon whom the ends of the world [ends of the ages] are come.’ So again, speaking about the cross of Christ, it is written (Heb. 9:26), ‘Now once, in the end of the world [end of the ages]’; [Again, it is said as to us, the heavenly people of God: ‘Little children, *it is the last time*’ (1 John 2:18), and ‘*The end of all things is at hand*’ (1 Peter 4:7)]; **whereas, when the Lord is predicting about the Jewish remnant, ‘the end is not yet.’ And this, because many things must yet be accomplished before the Jews can come into their blessing. But for Christians, all things are ours in Christ even now; the blessing is never put off, though we await the crown at His coming.**” (W. Kelly)

God's heavenly people, the Church, has been *divinely placed in an expectant posture, which she ought always to give true heart-expression:* toward the imminent (possible at any moment) coming of her Beloved to take her everlastingly unto Himself to the Father's house (Pre-Tribulational/Pre-70th Week Rapture).

“For they themselves relate concerning us what entering in we had to you, and how **[1]** ye turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and **[2]** to await his Son from the heavens **[and that alone—nothing else and no one else intervening first, be it sign or prophetic event or person]** whom he raised from among the dead, Jesus, **our deliverer from the coming wrath.**” (1 Thess. 1:9-10)

“For our citizenship has its existence in the heavens, **from which also we await [only one Person and Him alone first]: the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour**, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory, according to the working of the power which he has even to subdue all things to himself.” (Phil. 3:20)

“Let not your heart be troubled *[at my approaching departure, and in light of that which is far superior to the earthly kingdom which is postponed, i.e., the heavenly blessings of Christianity];* ye believe on God *[whom you cannot see]*, believe also on me *[equally, and whom you likewise will not be able to see for the time being once I depart; cf. 1 Pet. 1:8 and Gal. 2:20]*. In my Father's house **[in Heaven]** there are many abodes *[many dwelling places of nearness to the Father, not merely one dwelling place for Me alone!]*; were it not so, I had told you: for I go to prepare you a place *[by virtue of my entrance and place there; cf. Heb. 6:20]*; and if I go and shall prepare you a place, **I am coming again and shall receive you to myself [speaking of them representatively, of us who are alive waiting for Him here below; nothing else is left before our hearts as our proper and blessed hope, which is thus an imminent hope; and His coming so is stated in the**

*present tense to further characterize and impress upon our souls the expectation of its imminency, to be waiting and looking for no one else and nothing else to intervene, nothing else required to be fulfilled prior to His coming to receive us to Himself. Hence our Beloved is essentially saying: ‘Yea, I come quickly’; and in response our hearts shout out in love: ‘Amen; Come, Lord Jesus!’ Come now!], that where I am [in My Father’s house, in Heaven] ye also may be.”* (John 14:1-3)

“**But not** any nor all these things [subsequent to the Rapture, including those blessed things connected with the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom, etc.] are our proper hope, which is to be caught up and to meet the Lord Himself {in the air and to be taken to our home} in heaven.” “But the passage in John's Gospel has nothing to do with Jerusalem, nor the earth, nor earthly circumstances. John never speaks of a special tribulation for Jewish disciples at a particular time and place, but of the constant tribulation we should count upon in the world at all times (John 16:33). ***So the coming is not merely deliverance to a persecuted Jewish remnant on earth, but to receive us to Himself in heaven, without one hint of time, place, or circumstance.***” (W. Kelly)

“***Maranatha!***” (1 Cor. 16:22b)

The coming of the Lord Jesus is imminent at all times *to the not-of-this-world Church*. That being so, then **everything that will come to pass thereafter** may likewise be said, *as a whole*, to be imminent, at hand. “Little children, ***it is the last time***” (1 John 2:18). “The end of all things is at hand” (1 Peter 4:7). For the blessed hope and truth His any-moment coming to catch up His heavenly people—to remove them from this world unto their home with Him in heavenly glory—***triggers the onset all of subsequent events***. That being so, we may also be said to be **awaiting glorious events that occur after, even long after, the imminent Rapture of His Bride (such as His Revelation in 1 Cor. 1:7, and the Day of God with the creation of New Heavens and New Earth in 2 Pet. 3:12-13)**. And while the Manifestation of His coming occurs after (at least 7 years after) the blessed hope of His any-moment coming to gather His heavenly saints unto Himself and into the Father’s house, we wait for and long for that Appearing as well because:

In the Revelation or the “Manifestation [Appearing] of His coming” (2 Thess. 2:8, as distinguished from “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,” 2:1), He will establish His Millennial reign ***as a moral necessity in vindication*** of the faithfulness of God and the personal glory and rights of Christ—in the very realm where, coming in meekness and lowliness, He was rejected and cast out by the world—Who will then be revealed to the world in glory *with His Bride (Col. 3:4)*, which “manifestation” is when ***we also will be openly vindicated in association with Him, in public display (cp. Rom. 8:17-19), having served and suffered with and for Him here below***. (This public display/vindication happens **not** in connection with the Rapture but the Revelation.)

To reinforce the truth set forth above, we offer a few choice words from W. Kelly and J.N. Darby:

“Next the apostle [in 2 Thess. 2:1] turns to the source of their agitation. ‘We beseech you, brethren, by [*for the sake of the truth of*] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled.’ ***Assuredly, the consolation administered here is not that Christ's coming was a distant thing!*** Can it be that theologian upon theologian has desired to make of this **fancied long and far-off absence of the Lord a balm for the tried and fearful?** Can it be that the poor church has but too willingly sipped the cup, and, heedless of His words, cheers herself on the delirious career of worldliness and folly, and of faithlessness to Him? ‘Lord, how long?’”

“**Full well they [the Thessalonians] knew that His coming was to end their sorrows and crown their joys. Under apostolic guidance they had looked, and the Holy Ghost had commended their looking, for Christ.** *Was it not the part of the evil servant to say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming? {Matt. 24:48}.* But Paul was a blessed faithful servant, and never says anything of the sort. He uses the fact of the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him as a comfort against the anxiety created by the idea that the day of the Lord was already arrived—nay more, as a proof that such an idea was false.”

“**No! the Thessalonian believers were not mistaken in waiting for the Son of God [to come at any moment].** It is not wrong to believe that “the Lord is at hand,” (ἐγγύς) as the apostle pressed upon the Philippians when drawing to the close of his career [Phil. 4:5]. It is not wrong to stablish our hearts because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (ἤγγικεν, James 5:8). Nor does the language of the Spirit in the passage before us depict excitement from a too eager anticipation of this glorious event — ***alas! that Christians should suppose we could too earnestly desire it.*** The expressions in v. 2 denote fright and agitation. **The enemy sought to instill the idea that the day, the judgment, was come,** and that they were obnoxious to its terrors. Where then was their hope to be caught up to the Lord and to come along with Him? Would it have been sorrow and fear if Christ had come and they had been translated to meet Him in the air? Rather would it have been their chiefest joy, as it had been the object nearest their heart since their conversion. Their faith was growing exceedingly, and the love of every one of them all toward each other abounded; and, far from weakening that which he had already taught, the apostle prays for them in the last chapter of the second epistle, that the Lord would direct their heart into the love of God *and into the patient waiting for Christ.* That is, he confirms them in their expectancy of the Lord.” (W. Kelly)

“But I would not dwell further upon these points of contrast, only praying that we may remember, day by day, that **our place, the church's only right and befitting place, is to wait for Christ from heaven. It is not judgments that we expect to be in;** it is not the hour of temptation we have to await and dread (Rev. 3: 10), for we shall be kept out of

it in the grace of Christ. **Our business is to wait, as a heavenly bride, for our heavenly Bridegroom. Those who link the church with earthly circumstances will be misled in their ways now, and at times pass on miserably disappointed. *Not so the hearts which the Spirit directs, animates, and sustains in the longing cry, Come, Lord Jesus.*** May it be so with us, beloved, increasingly as the moment, unknown to us, draws nearer! Amen." (W. Kelly)

“ ‘The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.’ Such is the normal position, such the primary testimony which the church renders. After that, it can turn towards others and say, ‘And let him that is athirst come,’ for living waters already flow there; ‘and whosoever will,’ etc. **But for Christians this is the Spirit's last behest to the church pointing out her true position. Her sentiments are based upon her relationships to Christ, and the Spirit demands that those who hear should be in unison with this desire of His heart.** Is it wrong to engage those who have heard the voice of the good Shepherd, to **take the position of the bride and to join in the cry, ‘Come’?** But the doctrines of the presence of the Holy Spirit here below in the Church, and of the return of Christ, are identified with its unity upon earth, with the position of bride, or rather of her who here below is espoused to be presented as a chaste virgin unto Christ, and with ***the desire of His coming, which detaches us from all that is not of Him, and attaches us entirely, exclusively, to Himself.***” (J.N. Darby)

"In Daniel's time, expressly to Daniel himself, the book was to be sealed [Dan. 12:4], and even the old oracles were sealed then: not so John's. 'And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand' [Rev. 22:10]. In Daniel's time it was not at hand. But now Christ is come [First Advent], and is dead, risen, and glorified. **To the church the end is always near. In her own course, and in the matters of her portion, the church does not know time at all. All that instinctively belongs to the body of Christ is unearthly and unworldly. The church is heavenly; and in heaven are no times or seasons. There may be lights of the heaven to mark times and seasons for the earth; and to the lamp of prophecy we do well to pay heed. But the church consists of souls called out from the earth, and is not of the world: consequently to the Christian the time is always at hand.** When Christ at God's right hand was announced even from the very beginning, He was ready to judge the quick and the dead. **He remains in this condition of readiness from the time when He sat at God's right hand till the present. The church goes on according to the will of the Lord, who might according to His own purpose lengthen or abridge the space. It is entirely in God's hand, and in none other's.** Whereas for the [earthly] Jew, there are necessary dates and momentous changes that must take place; and hence, as Daniel represents the Jew, we have the difference kept up. To the Christian this book [of Revelation] is not sealed. All is opened, and this because we have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; 'for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.' ” (W. Kelly)

"But he [John] adds more [in Rev. 22:10], and a very important thought it is, practically, for God's children. You may remember in the last chapter of Daniel it is written (verse

4), 'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' **Now mark in what a wonderful place God has put His church**, as we gather from comparing Revelation 22.

“He was sending His word to the most favoured man that could be found among all the favoured prophets of the Old Testament—'a man greatly beloved.' But although there had been given him so plain and distinct a prophecy of Christ's coming and death, other words were added, as to which it was said, 'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end.' Here the same Spirit addresses John, and says to him, 'Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand' (verse 10). **How comes this to pass? *The whole calling of the church is at the time of the end. From the day that the church began its actual existence here below, it was the time of the end; and all through her history, still it is the time of the end.*** Of course I do not mean that it is distinctively the time of the end for the Jews, who must wait for the development of all on the platform of literal facts; but therein lies **the peculiarity of the church's calling. She is above times and seasons, though she knows them** [cf. 1 Thess. 5:1]; **she has nothing to do with dates, or signs, or outward events, any more than with the world**, of whose history they are the natural and necessary accompaniment. ***The church is lifted up above such a scene; she is heavenly. Such is the place where we are put by the grace of God, entirely outside all the computations which refer to the government of this world.***

"As for the Jew, of whom Daniel was the type, he must wait till the time of the end is historically come, till the knowledge is given by God to those who have understanding then. **Until that time all is sealed up for Israel. This is not the case with the church represented by John. To him it is said, 'Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book.'**

“But here is the error made by many excellent persons. Sir Isaac Newton, a man of the highest reputation in human science, applied this shutting up and sealing of the book in Daniel to the church. The consequence was that he gave it up as a thing that could not be understood till the time of the end. Had he compared the passage in Daniel with the closing words of St. John's Revelation, he would have learnt that the very words that were hidden from the Jewish prophet are expressly opened to the Christian. If Daniel was to seal, John is expressly told not to seal. And why? Because Christ had come, and is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, ready to judge quick and dead; ***He was rejected, and from that moment it is morally the time of the end. And so the New Testament writers speak.*** The apostle John says, 'Little children, it is the last time;' Peter writes, 'The end of all things is at hand;' James, 'The Judge standeth before the door.' So wrote St. Paul: 'Now all these things happened unto them as ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come' {or ends of the ages are met}. And so Heb. 9:26. Thus you have substantially the same great truth from the Epistles of Paul, of Peter, and of James, down to the Revelation." (W. Kelly)

## Supplemental Note on a Certain Line of Anti-Pretribulation Objection Raised against the Scriptural Doctrine of the Imminency of The Rapture

“To apply this to the matter in hand, it is undeniable that the apostle Paul (to say nothing of others) invariably speaks of the coming of the Lord to take the church to Himself as that which might be at any moment, however He might tarry. **But no necessary detention — no chain of occurrences involving a period virtually — no certain lapse of time — is ever presented to the church as keeping Him in heaven.** On the contrary, if he writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15), it is ‘Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.’ Admitting that ‘we’ is a **representative** word, not the persons addressed merely, but **those standing in the same privileges**; still will any one say that the apostle or the Corinthian saints knew that the moment would be deferred till they had fallen asleep? **\* Was it not calculated, beyond all cavil, to keep them in simple, constant expectancy of the Lord?”**

“\* Nothing, it has been observed, more strongly proves the church's constant expectation of the presence of the Lord for it, uncertain when this was to be, than the fact that **it needed a particular revelation to individuals (such as to Paul and Peter), about their departure first, which so far modified their individual apprehensions. The general expectation of the church was not affected thereby.**” (W. Kelly, *The Hope of Christ compatible with Prophecy*)

“The Lord [in John 21:18-24] . . . makes known to Peter that he should die a martyr's death, thereupon Peter turns around and asks what about John. ‘If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee; follow thou Me,’ replied the Lord. **Thus we see that unless the Lord reveals otherwise to His people they are left as a people waiting for Him.**”

“The Lord revealed His will concerning Peter, which was that he should die a martyr's death. **But His will, not being revealed concerning the others, left them looking for His return.** Hence when Peter, having the revelation about himself, asks what about John, he is told that that is a matter of the Lord's will whether he tarryes till He comes or not, which will was not revealed. Therefore, most decidedly, the Lord left His disciples waiting for His return. It was their one great comforting hope.”

“Death then cannot be the hope of the believer; for we may or may not fall asleep in Jesus. Certain it is that some will not. No one knows whether any of us will die or not. God has not told us; but he did make it known **by a special revelation to Peter, and Paul knew also that he would fall asleep. They needed this special instruction about themselves, because the general teaching of scripture was, that believers were to wait for Christ's return from heaven.**” (J.H. Burridge, *The Coming of Christ*)

**“Just as long as Peter lived, no word went abroad among the disciples that the Lord had said he must necessarily seal his witness with his blood. The Church at large knew nothing of it, for no one must be able to say, ‘The Lord cannot return yet, for Peter has to die first, and he still lives.’ But many years after Peter’s actual decease, John wrote that last chapter of his Gospel, and, then, what he says interposes no barrier whatever to the hope, for Peter *had gone!*” (F.C. Jennings, *Revelation*)**

**“Now I do not deny that **particular revelations** may have been made to individuals [e.g., 2 Pet 1:14], which shewed them that they should depart first, and so far **modified their individual apprehensions**. And I do not doubt that a saint may have a just and true conviction that his service is not yet finished, and yet be always waiting because he knows not when the Lord may come. **But this does not the least affect the general state and expectation of the church. And is there the least analogy between such a particular revelation, and putting a whole train of events on earth as necessarily to happen before the church can expect the Lord?**”**

**“Note, moreover, that a particular revelation to an individual about his death is the strongest possible proof that the ordinary doctrine of the Lord to the church as to His coming was such, that it could not be expected that such persons should so die before it, and that this ought not to be expected, *since it required a special revelation to make them think they would*. ‘I must shortly put off this tabernacle as the Lord hath shewed me.’ Was it not curious that there should be such a revelation of an individual’s death, if the sanctioned [constant] expectation was, not that they were not to expect it [death], but the Lord’s coming in their life-time? Though it was never said positively when. Hence the apostle says: ‘We which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord.’ **And this expectation was so vivid that, while he sanctions it by saying “we which are alive,” etc., he has to reassure them by explaining that those deceased would be raised first, and enjoy the same coming and glory.**” ( J. N. Darby, *A few brief remarks on "A Letter on Revelation 12"*)**

Observe that special revelation made by the Lord to His apostles and prophets concerning certain things that either they in particular would do or that would be done in particular to them (with no fixed time period revealed for its accomplishment) **necessarily implied a temporary suspension, as far as their individual apprehension was concerned, of the imminency of His coming** (e.g., in regard to the apostles Paul, Peter, John)—and **only** in the expectant posture of **their own individual cases, and no further**. Only the particular apostle in question would have any sense of such a suspension, which itself might have been over shortly or imminently for him. And by the time that such temporary, personal revelations were recorded as scripture, the events in question had long since transpired! Also observe that such *temporary, personalized* suspension is an **inevitable result** of having special, divine revelation (which, of course, is no longer occurring during the heavenly parenthesis of the Church, not since apostolic times). In fact, such anti-Dispensational objections to the imminency or Pre-70<sup>th</sup> Week coming of the Lord for His Bride **inherently rule out** even the **possibility** of the **co-**



*existence of any such* special, divine revelation with the any-moment expectant posture of the Church—regardless of how clearly God makes such blessed truth known to us in His Word. **And it would be so, even if the truth of imminency were stated in the precise terms that these objectors would demand.**

Finally, prophecy of the destruction of Israel’s Temple (fulfilled in 70AD) is sometimes raised to serve as another objection in the same vein. **But this is easily disposed of, by the simple observation that while the Temple thus had to be destroyed, nothing required it to be so before the Rapture (or that the Church should have been looking for it as a sign or looking for its fulfillment before the Lord’s coming for us), but simply that it had to be destroyed some time before the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom, and before the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week with the worship of the deified Antichrist in the rebuilt Temple.** Indeed, its destruction could have taken place during the possible gap or transition period between the Rapture and the start of the 70th week—during which a number of developments may occur as preparing the way for the start of the 70th week.

## 6) The alleged “Church and Israel Problem”

This Pre-Wrath Rapture theory—*this variant amidst all delayed/postponed rapture theories*—has God pursuing two distinct programs on earth simultaneously, one with His earthly people and one with His heavenly people, during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. Dr. Kurschner and company contend that demonstrating this creates a “problem” for Pre-Tribulationism because it undermines one of the foundational planks thereof (since the latter rightly asserts that such a notion is impossible, and would bring about nothing but chaos and error). Hear the Pre-Wrath claim in their own words (bracketed comments mine), which tell us all we need to know about the root of the rot at work:

“Prewrath teaches that God has only **relatively postponed** his dealings with Israel during this Church Age, **not absolutely** [*like being half pregnant!*], and that God can, and has **worked with** [*what a bait and switch word, for in that mere generic sense of ‘working,’ God is always, e.g., providentially at work!*] **both** the Church and Israel during the Church Age [*why not also add ‘Gentiles’ to the mix, and say that God has ‘worked’ with all three? Because that would make the switcheroo employed quite evident, and expose the whole ‘problem’ for the hollowness that it is*], and that He will **continue to** do so in the final 7-year period [*in truth, the Church had no part in the first 69 of the 70 Weeks decreed for Daniel’s people Israel (Dan. 9:24), and the Church will have no part in the last, i.e., the 70th Week/7-year Tribulation Period.*”

**Once again, the only real “Church and Israel” problem is for all who deny Pre-Tribulation truth.**

As we can see, these Prewrath men use a sleight of hand when trying to “prove” this absurdity by appealing to examples where some event has affected the nation of Israel (**which, be it noted, has no standing before God today according to their earthly calling**), as with the destruction of their temple in 70AD . . . as if that were somehow equivalent to God pursuing His earthly program with Israel while pursuing His heavenly program with the Church! That is simply dust being thrown in the eyes. God is, of course, always at work both providentially and in setting the stage for the eventual fulfilment of His plan and purpose for earthly Israel under Jehovah-Messiah. No one denies that. **But that is not God working directly and dispensationally in pursuing two distinct programs on earth simultaneously, one with His earthly people and with His heavenly people.**

**“Does he hold that God carries on the church on earth at the same time that he works savingly in that nation as a distinct object? Surely this were confusion and error.** That God should save Gentiles as such, simultaneously with His renewed dealings with the chosen people, is exactly what the Rev. [the Book of the Revelation] attests; ***whilst all this time the church is never spoken of as on earth, but its symbol is seen in heaven. Here all is harmony.***” (W. Kelly)

**“As long as the church goes on here below [*before being caught up to Christ and translated to heaven*], it is impossible, morally speaking, that God could accomplish these events of a wholly contrasted character. For it is contrary to all analogy that God would act upon two opposite principles at the same time.** For instance, how could God both give and withhold outward honour for a Jew? **How form the church at the same time that He [*forms a distinctly godly Jewish remnant during the Tribulation Period in whom He ultimately*] restores and owns Israel [*upon the completion of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week*]? If a Jew were to believe now, he, baptised by the Holy Ghost, becomes a member of Christ's body; whereas what we find in the prophets is, that a godly Jew in the last days remains a Jew.”** (W. Kelly)

What a mass of confusion is on display in the following words of one of Dr. Kurschner’s colleagues (with my comments interspersed), showing a complete lack of understanding and obscuring of dispensational truth:

**“Take for example, the so-called ‘Tribulation Saints’ idea.** Whenever a Pretribber reads in the Bible about Christians [???] existing within the last 7-year period (which is a very frequent occurrence [*apparently only in the Pre-Wrath’s mind*]) they call those people Tribulation Saints, people of various nationalities left behind after the rapture who become Christians [*no, they do NOT become “Christians,” saints “in Christ,” members of the Body & Bride of Christ, the Church*]. Well if God won’t work with the Church and Israel at the same time, how do they explain these Tribulation Saints? [*What has that got to do with the absurd notion of God pursuing two distinct programs on earth concurrently? Did the Church exist in the OT? No. Yet somehow OT saints were saved without the existence of the Church!*] Are they not saved? [*Certainly they are. There is a*

*willful refusal at work, however, to see that Tribulation saints are saved Jews and saved Gentiles, not members of the Body and Bride of Christ, the Church.] Do they not have the Holy Spirit? [No, not in the distinctive sense of being “indwelt” by Him as “Christians” alone are, individually (temples of God) and collectively (the temple of God), forming the heavenly Body and Bride of Christ.] Are the Gentile believers among them not the Church? [Absolutely not!] Is God not working with them because He won’t work with them and the Jews at the same time? [God “working” to save Jews and Gentiles, as Jews and Gentiles before God, during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week is not the same as, and does not require the presence of, the Church on earth, no more so than it did in OT times.]”*

Not to be outdone, Dr. Kurschner himself showcases the same mass of confusion with added desperation, in woefully and blatantly twisting Scripture to force it to say what he wills it to say (bracketed comments mine):

“This next one cuts to the very core of the matter, since if you can show that God in the future, works with both Israel and the Church, *specifically during the final 7-year period*, you have refuted the very foundation of this odd doctrine. And while there are many ways to show this, ***there is one in particular that I like the best since it is so ironclad. And it is found in Revelation 12*** [how embarrassingly sad that Dr. Kurschner’s “best,” that which is “so ironclad,” is illustrative of nothing but the extent of the havoc that a humanly-devised system can wreak on one’s perception of simple statements of prophetic truth once we willfully refuse the truth] which says [which actually says nothing of the kind]:

‘But the woman [which gave birth to Christ (Rev. 12:5) is Israel (Rom. 9:3-5), Israel as viewed before God according to His purpose and calling for the nation, according their future earthly kingdom glory, and represented here by the godly Jewish remnant in the land at the time] was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. Then the dragon became furious with **the woman** and went off to make war on **the rest of her offspring [or ‘the remnant of her seed,’ i.e., of the same ‘woman,’ thus they are of the same nature as the Woman and her seed whom the serpent initially sought to persecute and destroy, the latter believing remnant here apparently residing elsewhere (outside the land)],** on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus [‘the testimony of Jesus’ meaning ‘the spirit of prophecy,’ as we are told in Rev. 19:10].’ (Rev. 12:14-17).

Here we have a picture of events squarely within the last 7-year period [very true!], and yet we read that after the dragon becomes furious at his inability to get to the representative of Israel i.e., the woman, **he then goes after the Church [where??? a complete fabrication out of thin air],** i.e., those that hold to the testimony of Jesus [thus

*Dr. Kurschner's total ignorance of the true nature and calling of those who compose the Church, the members of the heavenly Body and Bride of Christ— nowhere mentioned on earth in Rev. 12—is made unmistakably manifest; for to him the Church is nothing but those who 'hold the testimony of Jesus'! Which would mean, to him, then, that the Church began not on the Day of Pentecost after the death, resurrection, ascension of Christ into heavenly glory, and upon the arrival of the Holy Spirit on earth, but during Jesus' earthly ministry when a number of disciples, including His 11 apostles, believed on Him and 'held the testimony of Jesus.' Thus does error beget error . . . and systematic error systematically obscures the truth]."*

And this, so easily disposed of, exemplifies—so we are told in no uncertain terms—that which is his very “best”(!) and “ironclad”(!!) ground for his self-induced “Problem” #6, placing the Church on earth during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. If such is indeed the case, what value could there possibly be in his “other” supposed “ways” that he is holding in arrears (others that are not as equally great and impregnable)?!

"The apostle Paul brings out with admirable fulness and precision, not only the call of the Gentiles, but the formation of those that belong to Christ into the church of God. **It is not simply a people who have the gospel preached to them, or who confess His name and are baptized, but really united to Him as members of His body by the Holy Ghost who is given to this end.** These are waiting for the Lord Jesus, but not to govern them on the earth; for this is not their relationship to Christ. They await Him to take them out of the earth to be with Himself in heaven. It is not denied that they will reign with Christ over the earth; but I say that their **own proper home - the home of their hearts, and the sphere in which they will have their brightest glory - will be with Christ in heavenly places. Such is the teaching e.g. of Ephesians 1.**" (W. Kelly)

"There are No Instructions For Christians in the Tribulation . . . In Matthew 24:16-26, and in the other references to the Tribulation, those who are told to flee are clearly Jews, and not Christians. If Christians are to pass through the Tribulation, why are there no instructions given to them as to how to prepare for it? The obvious answer is that there will be no Christians in the Tribulation. It is true that thousands will turn to God in faith during that time (Rev. 7:9), but they are not Christians. They will be born again and will share in the blessing of Christ's kingdom on earth, and will populate the millennial earth (Rev. 7:10-17). Christians, on the other hand, have been called out of both the Jews and the Gentiles by the gospel to spend eternity with Christ in heaven." (B. Anstey)

There is no doubt that Dispensational truth is absolutely necessary for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture to have any sense, that is, a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of *His heavenly people, "the Church, which is His Body."* Pre-Tribulationism cannot exist apart from Dispensationalism. For a consistent and absolute distinction between Israel and the Church is just as essential to Pretribulationism as it is to Dispensationalism as a whole.

**“But the revealed truth is that the heavenly people will be on high, and the earthly people on the earth. All is perfect order in the mind of God as usual; and when the Lord will have finished His heavenly work He will come back as Judge of Israel. He is now Head of the church. On earth He will be the Messiah of the Jews, who will then resume their own earthly standing, instead of being absorbed into the church, as believers from among them are now . . .** Not to maintain the distinctively earthly glory to Israel, as their future hope under Messiah and the new covenant, invariably undermines Christianity and the church, which flourish only in proportion to firmly holding Christ and union with Him in heavenly places. The danger of the Gentiles thus becoming wise in their own conceit, and forgetting that the natural branches are only broken off in part for a season from their own olive tree, is strongly laid down in Rom. 11. Hold fast the new and heavenly glory for us with Christ dead, risen, and glorified, and you keep the promised earthly supremacy for Israel, who will (not reign with Him on high, but) be reigned over by Him when He appears again in glory, the undisputed Head of all things, heavenly and earthly. (W. Kelly)

**“The doctrine of the church is clearly at the root the ONE HOPE, which is found in the intermediate part of the New Testament. For along with the truth of the peculiar calling of the church, as the body commenced by the descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and thenceforward guided and perpetuated by Him — along with this truth, it will be found that the peculiar aspect of the coming of the Lord, for which I have contended, stands or falls . . .** None of them [*including the early church fathers*] therefore has an adequate idea of the new and heavenly work which God began at Pentecost by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The consequence is that, if they read of saints in Daniel, in the Psalms, or in the Revelation, they are at once set down as of the church. If they read of ‘this gospel of the kingdom’ in Matt. 24, or of ‘the everlasting gospel,’ — it is to their minds the same thing as what Paul calls ‘my gospel,’ the gospel of the grace of God preached now. Hence follows, and quite fairly too, a denial of any specialty in the walk and conversation of the saints since Pentecost, and a general Judaizing in doctrine, standing, conduct and hopes.” (W. Kelly)

**“The chief source of difficulty and hindrance is the system which assumes that Christianity is a final condition for the earth, and that the testimony [*in the future 70<sup>th</sup> Week*] will be as now . . . the Jews being at length brought in among the rest. It is another thing with those who believe that there is another age to follow the present, characterized by the salvation of all Israel *as such*, with the Gentiles largely blessed also, *but not brought into the one body as we know now*. . . and the spared Gentiles, not possessed of exactly the same privileges, for Israel will then have the better place, but all blessed richly under Jehovah Messiah. *As it is quite a different state of things from Christianity, so there will then be two distinct positions, heavenly and earthly, instead of one and the same as now.* (W. Kelly)**

This brings us to the vital distinction between *the Gospel of the Grace of God* and its results (during the period of the heavenly parenthesis of the Church) and *the Gospel of the Kingdom* and its results (during the future 70<sup>th</sup> Week):

**“The Fact That the Gospel of the Grace of God Will Not be Preached in the Tribulation Shows the Rapture Will Have Taken Place**

“ ‘The gospel of the grace of God’ (Acts 20:24) that is preached today and ‘the gospel of the kingdom’ (Matt. 4:23; 24:14) that will be preached by those in the Tribulation is entirely different. **They are two distinct gospels preached for two distinct purposes. The gospel of the grace of God calls people out for heaven: the gospel of the kingdom calls people for blessing on earth. The gospel that is going out today holds out a heavenly hope, calling and destiny for those who believe (Col. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:4; Phil. 3:20; 2 Cor. 5:1-2; Heb. 3:1), whereas the gospel of the kingdom that will be preached in the Tribulation holds out an earthly blessing under the reign of Christ in the Millennium (Matt. 24:14; Psa. 96).**

“The gospel of the kingdom announces the good news that the kingdom promised in the Old Testament (2 Sam. 7:16; Dan. 2:44-45; 7:9-27) is about to be set up, and those who receive the King in faith will have a part in its earthly blessing. It was first preached by John the Baptist at the time of the Lord’s first coming (Matt. 3:1-2). The Lord and His disciples also preached it (Matt. 4:23; 10:7). Their preaching was to call the nation to repentance so that it would be in a state to receive the King, and had they received Him, He would have established the kingdom as promised by the Old Testament Prophets. But sadly, Israel rejected their King, and thereby forfeited the opportunity of having the kingdom set up in all of its power and display. When Israel rejected their King, the gospel of the kingdom was no longer announced . . . God, instead, has sent out the gospel of His grace to the Gentile world to call out of them a people for His name (Acts 13:44-48; 15:14; Rom. 11:11). This gospel is still being preached today.

**“The gospel of the kingdom will be preached again by the Jewish remnant after the Church has been called away to heaven. At that time, God will pick up His dealings with Israel where He left off almost 2000 years ago. Israel will be saved (that is, a remnant among them — Rom. 9:6-8; 11:26-27) in that day, and the kingdom will be brought in by power (Rev. 11:15).**

**“The point we need to see in this, is that there is no mention of the gospel of God’s grace being preached during the Tribulation. The obvious reason is because this gospel calls believers to be part of the Church, and since the Church will not be in the Tribulation, it will not be announced. *God will not send out two different gospels at the same time.* It would be confusion, and would be confounding the heavenly calling with the earthly calling with their respective hopes and destinies. If we understand the gospel of God’s grace that’s preached today, we would know that it is impossible to have the Church and the believing Jewish remnant in the Tribulation period at the**

**same time. Scripture indicates that those who believe the gospel of the grace of God are taken out of both the Jews and the Gentiles (Acts 15:14; 26:17) and put into the altogether new and heavenly thing, 'the church of God.'** Hence, there are presently three major distinctions among men on earth; the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32). The cross of Christ has terminated the distinction between Jew and Gentile for believers of the gospel (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). Those who believe this gospel are no longer part of the two companies they formerly were in, but are now a part of the Church. Each time a Jew believes the gospel [today] he becomes part of the Church [the heavenly people of God] (Rom. 11:5; Gal. 6:16 — "the Israel of God"). How then could there be the believing [earthly Jewish] remnant of Jews at the same time? This shows that there cannot be the Church and the believing [earthly] Jewish remnant on earth at the same time." (B. Anstey)

Note: the purpose of the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel during that year covered by Acts 1-7 was to demonstrate, to prove, that the stumbling, the fall, the blindness of Israel, had indeed taken place. *It was a year of exposure of the state of Israel, with respect to the rejected One now in the glory of God.* There was thus no saving of souls as earthly Jews (and earthly Gentiles) for the earthly kingdom glory as was, and will be during the Tribulation, with the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, but solely the saving of souls as heavenly people for heavenly glory. **Thus there were not two programs of God, with two different salvation callings, going on at the same time during Acts 1-7, nor will there be during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week.**

In light of all the forgoing (especially the disastrous confusion exhibited by Dr. Kurschner and company), it would be most profitable for us to briefly review and reinforce what exactly the Church is (including its origin, nature and destiny), according to Scripture, along with the *status* of Israel before God while the Church is still on earth and not yet completed and gathered up to the Lord Jesus in heavenly glory.

*"Give no occasion to stumbling, whether to Jews [group one], or Gentiles [group two], or the Church of God [group three, which came into existence on the day of Pentecost and alone includes those who are saved while it remains on this earth through completion]."* (1 Cor. 10:32)

*"[Teachers of dispensation truth] have always taught . . . that there are on earth now at the present time three companies in God's reckoning. They are the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God. They base this on 1 Cor. 10:32. **Before the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) there were only the first two: Jews and Gentiles; and after the Rapture (1 Thess. 4) there will again be but those two.** The Church was formed on earth by the descent of the Holy Spirit consequent to the Lord Jesus Christ having, not only been raised from the dead, but ascended and glorified (John 7:39). There could be no body on earth without its living Head being in Heaven."*

*"Well, what is the Church? It is the body of Christ. What, or rather Who, has formed the body of Christ? The Holy Spirit. Now, the Holy Spirit has been sent down from heaven. 1*

Peter 1:12 tells us so; Acts 2 describes the event. In 1 Cor. 12:12, 13 we read how, in the power of the Holy Spirit, all the members here on earth, where the Holy Spirit is, were baptised into the one body to form one mystical man called 'The Christ'."

"It has already been pointed out that there are three companies in God's dealings [from Pentecost to the Rapture] according to ch. 10:32, viz., the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God . . . members of the body of Christ have **ceased** in God's eyes to be either Jews or Gentiles (Eph. 2)."

"This is the Church of God, purposed by God in eternity past (Eph. 1), heavenly in its origin, character, blessings and destiny, yet on earth since the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and until the Rapture (1 Thess. 4). It is the body of Christ, the fruit of His work at Calvary, deriving its character entirely from Him as the risen, glorified Man in Heaven, and, though at present on earth, will be with Him as His fulness for eternity as viewed now in the counsels of God. Hence members of the body of Christ are **no longer seen by God according to the divisions that pertain to men in the flesh, and the Church of God is thus distinct from Jews and Gentiles.**"

"The Church of God is composed of those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by divine calling (1 Cor. 1:2), purchased with the precious blood of God's own Son (Acts 20:28). It is a company distinct from Jew and Gentile (1 Cor. 10:32) and, as that which Saul of Tarsus persecuted (1 Cor. 15:9), is the body of Christ. It is thus united to the risen Christ in glory by the Holy Spirit who was sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1:12) consequent to the Lord Jesus having ascended there. See Acts 2. The Church as the body of Christ could never have come into existence without its living Head being enthroned in glory. **Where Jew and Gentile previously existed according to men in the flesh, both have now been reconciled (those that believe, that is) in one body by the Cross (Eph. 2:14-16).** 'By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body.' (1 Cor. 12:13.) It will be on earth until the Rapture (1 Thess. 4). As the body of Christ it is a unity (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12), and there is only the one body (Eph. 4:4). All saints form the body of Christ (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12); they are members of His body (Eph. 5:30)—the only membership for Christians—set in their place in the body by God Himself (1 Cor. 12:18). **As the body of Christ, the Church was a secret hidden in God throughout all time before it was revealed to the Apostles, in particular Paul (Eph. 3).** Yet, it was ever in the mind of God from eternity (Eph. 1). Although on earth at the present time, the Church is eternal and heavenly in character, having its origin and destiny in heaven." (M. Best)

**"I have thus sought to establish from Scripture that the Church of God is a new thing, 'one body,' and peculiar to this dispensation; that it began to be formed on earth by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, who baptized believers, and still baptizes them, into one body. This, I repeat, is going on, and will continue to go on, till every member is united to the Head, and the body fully formed.** As far as we know the body may now be well nigh completed. **When it is completed, the Lord will come from heaven for us; and when the Church is removed, He will deal again with Jews and**



**Gentiles as such.** This subject is immensely important, as giving us a knowledge of what God is about now, and fellowship with Him by the Spirit in it. **How impossible it is for a believer to understand according to God's mind what is going on in the present day, if he has not this key which God in His great love has given!** But not only is the subject important as giving us intelligence concerning God's present ways, but it influences immensely the practical ways of Christians in testimony for the Lord, in conduct to one another, and in service to Christ. Satan has certainly wrought a most impoverishing work amongst Christians, in robbing them of the plain Scripture teaching of the peculiar calling, characteristics, and hope of the Church of God **as distinct from** Gentiles and Jews. It is evident that what Satan is about, and what many Christians are connected with and helping on, to their great loss and the Lord's dishonour, is a mixture of heathenism, Judaism, and Christianity. Bear with me, beloved friends. Look at the ecclesiastical architecture of the day. What is it? Is it not often an imitation of heathen temples that were once of such magnificence and grandeur in eastern parts? And if you search into a good deal of the religiousness round about us, (I speak with the greatest respect and love for every Christian; it is the system only that I speak against,) you will find that it is more or less connected with what is legal and Jewish, but, of course, blended with some truths of Christianity. But you cannot be connected with a mixture of this kind without terrible damage and loss. **If you are a true believer in Christ, you are not now a Gentile nor a Jew. Being united to a risen Christ, you have lost your Gentile standing or Jewish standing; for you are in Him. You are formed by Him into a new thing.** You belong to the 'one new man' — the body of Christ — the Church of God . . . there are three things at this moment in the world, — Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God . . . All those who are not Jews are Gentiles, if they are in their sins; and those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, whether before Jews or Gentiles, are united to Christ, and because they are united to Christ they belong to the Church of God . . . Scripture teaches that you cannot belong to the Church of God unless by union with Christ. No ordinance, be it baptism or anything else, will give you a place in the Church of God. 'By one Spirit {that is, by the Holy Ghost} are we all baptized into one body.' " (H.H. Snell)

"The Gentile blessing of which the OT spoke will be fulfilled in the Millennium—when the Jewish-Gentile distinction will be in force again *[as it will be as well during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week]*. **Meanwhile God is doing another work, a work called the 'one new man' (Eph. 2:15). This is new, not having existed before. It is not an earthly work because in an earthly work the distinction of Jew and Gentile is maintained.** The present work concerning the one new man does not bring Gentile believers into the (external) nearness of Israel spoken of above. Rather, **presently, both the believing Jew and the believing Gentile have been elevated, brought into a spiritual place of nearness, in Christ, before God, as 'one new man.'** *They are removed out of their respective places (Jew and Gentile; 1 Cor. 10:32) into a new place (the assembly of God; 1 Cor. 10:32).* And this involves fellow-citizenry of saints, and of the household of God (Eph. 2:10). **All this denotes equality and sameness, not distinctiveness of place and ethnicity for certain of the fellow-citizens of the saints** *[as in the 70<sup>th</sup> Week and Millennial Kingdom].*

See also Eph. 2:21, 22. So, this is an **extraordinary** work of God. **It is of a different character than what will be true [in the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, and then] in the millennium concerning the saved Gentiles and the saved Jews, where the Jews will have Jewish distinctives and place, which they do not have now."**

*"[Since Pentecost and until the Rapture:] The Gentile Christian was not elevated to the level of a Jew, saved or unsaved, nor made an Israelite, nor made a spiritual Jew. No, both Jew and Gentile were lifted up to "sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:16). God formed the two, in Christ, into "one new man" (Eph. 2:15). It was new, for it never existed before. Indeed, silence had been maintained regarding such things (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3). Though not recognized by so many Christians, or by many Messianic Jews, **God is doing a heavenly work now, forming a heavenly people** (1 Cor. 15:48) [who by the Holy Ghost sent down are one with Christ at the right hand of God, the great high priest, gone in through the rent veil], who, as strangers and pilgrims here (1 Pet. 2:11), have a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Covenants are for the earth; this present work of God [this unique, heavenly work of God] is outside of the covenants of promise – which covenants belong to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh (Rom. 9:3-5), i.e., to ethnic Jews, not Gentiles. We know from such Scriptures as Rom. 11:26ff, that eventually God will have a saved nation of Israel composed of ethnic Jews to whom He will make good the covenants of promise (Abrahamic, to Phineas (priesthood), Davidic (kingship), and the New Covenant)." (R.A. Huebner)*

"Also, let me remark, that it is a very important point practically for all Christians; for there is nothing more common, for instance, than to speak of Christ as if He were the king of the church: even our fine and commonest hymns say so, - as 'my Prophet, Priest, and King.' Do I doubt that he was an excellent man who wrote it? I have not a word to say against him, but very much to urge against the thought. We must not consecrate grave errors under the shelter of the best of names: least of all does the time allow it now. It is a moment when everything is shaking, - when a great deal that is good is put in question by the bad, but (I am thankful to God) a great deal that is bad by the good. It is therefore a time when no soul can afford to treat slightly the truth of God. His children will soon require it all; they will need firm support for their feet. **I repeat, then, that the relation of king is true for Israel, but is not true for the Christian or for the church. Christ is the Lord of the Christian - the absolute Lord of all He has bought. Therefore it is not in the smallest degree to weaken subjection to Christ; for, contrariwise, the relationship of a father with his child is a closer one than that of a king with his subject. Again, take the relationship of a husband and wife: what can be so intimate as this? Such is the relationship of Christ and the church; and, therefore, to take the old notion of Christ being the King of the church is just unwittingly to be Judaized; it is to be drawn aside by a notion.** It is that which is perfectly true for an Israelite, and so will be accomplished by and by; **for Christ will not in the same way espouse them. In a vague general way Jehovah will be their Husband. It is used in this way in the Old Testament; but in no sense will it be true of them that they are**

***'members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.'* He who says so is merely imagining vain things. He has no scripture for it.**

"The word of God brings in, then, this near and blessed relationship, and along with this a hope suited to it. **The hope is, that He who is our Head and our Bridegroom will come for His Bride, and receive those who are so closely united to Himself.** Thus when He does come, **it is not to reign over them as His people [Israel] in their place, but to take them as His bride** (and you can see, I may assume, that it is suitable, and must be so) **to His place.** Surely, when we think who Christ is, and what the home of Christ is in the Father's house, we can understand that more is due to the Son of God, than merely to beautify this poor world, or to banish the elements of evil out of it. That is all true, and will be for His people on earth; but He has got a home of love He has known before the earth was founded, and into the Father's house He will not be ashamed to bring those He is not ashamed even now to call His brethren." (W. Kelly)

With regard to the present status of Israel before God, until He resumes His dispensational dealings with them during their 70<sup>th</sup> Week:

***"God does not recognize Israel as having a standing now. The nation is cast away (Rom. 11:15) [which is a sentence that is NOT reversed while the Church, His Body, is on this earth being formed!]. The believing Jewish remnant now is not part of that; they are part of the presently recognized people of God (see 1 Pet. 2:10; Heb. 11:25; Tit. 2:14).*** That believing remnant is not today a part of Israel though ethnically they are of Jewish origin. Believing Gentiles are not part of the Gentiles though ethnically they are *goyim* concerning their origin . . . **All** Christians are in the third group in the text [of 1 Cor. 10:32], and **only** there, *spiritually*, though they are in one of the other ethnically . . . With the formation of the body of Christ, a third entity was created . . . i.e., the church."

"The fact is that Israel, *the nation, as such*, has been excised from the olive tree (Rom. 11:15) [*representing the place of external privilege and blessing before God*]. That is Israel's present condition. It means, in fact, that they are, for the present, put away."

"The fact is that Paul does state in Rom. 11:15 that Israel is cast away. Paul does speak of 'their casting away.' Verse 1 shows that the discussion is about 'his people.' **This refers to the nation, not to individuals** . . . The subject is about the fallen nation, as such, and its future in relation to *the national election* (Rom. 11:26). Rom. 10:21 shows that Israel is the people; i.e., it is the nation that is in question, not the reception of individuals."

"The word in Greek for cast away in Rom. 11:1 is different than in v. 15. In v. 1 it involves repudiation, rejection, refusal—as if this is Israel's *final* position before God. No, that is not the case, and Paul cites himself as a proof that Israel is not definitively rejected in a final sense and that as God has had a remnant in the past He has one now [*the only nation, in fact, in which God always maintains a believing remnant*]. In v. 15 the thought

is that Israel is presently put aside from present, national favor. *Of course* that people is put aside as a nation. But that is not such a casting away as an utter and final rejection; and, there is a remnant meanwhile. That is the point in Rom. 11:1, 2 concerning ‘cast away.’ *It would be absurd to base on vv. 1, 2 a notion that Israel, as a nation, is a recognized people of God at present.* Rom. 11:11 helps us here. The word for ‘fall’ in v. 11, in this context, has the thought of falling so as not to regain the former place. The answer to the question, ‘Did Israel stumble so that they should irrevocably lose their national place?’ is *no*. The second time the word ‘fall’ appears in v. 11, it means a trespass, a moral trespass, a misdeed—that trespass [*the rejection of their Messiah*] is the occasion on which salvation is brought to the nations at the present time. Rom. 11:15 is clear: the casting away refers to the nation, certainly not to all individuals. Verse 15 speaks of the nation’s reception again [in the future]. Verse 26 shows that this reception involves all Israel being saved. That will be the new Israel. [*Composed of all-believing, all-righteous, all-saved Jews, the godly Jewish remnant that, after the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, will be brought under their New Covenant and compose the nation of Israel, the new and true spiritual Israel with the law written in their hearts, in the Millennial Kingdom (see, e.g., Isa. 60:21; 66:8-9; Jer. 31:31-40; Rom. 11:26-27.)*] **Presently** it is a time of ‘blindness in part is happened to Israel’ (Rom. 11:25).” (R.A. Huebner)

As observed previously, the Church had *no part* in the first 69 of the 70 Weeks decreed for Daniel’s people Israel (Dan. 9:24); the Church will likewise have *no part* in the last, i.e., 70<sup>th</sup> Week/ 7-year Tribulation Period. **That final Week clearly represents the resumption of God’s dispensational dealings with Israel—in a way wholly distinct from, and incompatible with, His present dispensational dealings with His heavenly people, the Church.**

"It is only by the rapture of the heavenly people that God is free, as it were, again to take up His [dispensational] dealings with His people on the earth. **Thus when a well-known writer, a strong advocate of the ‘Delayed-Coming Theory,’ says: ‘Side by side with converted Israel, the Church goes through the Great Tribulation to the end,’ he certainly has not the slightest justification, for it is simple confusion. As long as believers in the Son of God, whether Jew or Gentile, are ‘of the same Body,’ and, in Him, cease to be either Jew or Gentile [before God, being positionally neither earthly Jew nor Gentile—with no distinctions in regard to our position and blessings in Christ; rather being equal, new creation and heavenly in Him; cf. 1 Cor. 5:1; 9:20; 10:32; 12:2, 13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:28; 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 2:11, 14-16; 4:17; Col. 3:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:5; John 15:19; 17:14; Acts 26:17], there cannot be the two distinct and opposite operations going on side by side.** From the day of Pentecost, as soon as a Jew was ‘converted’ he really ceased to be a Jew . . . and although God’s mercy lingered over Israel, so that offers of restoration were made to that people, and the doctrine as to the Church was not at once proclaimed, yet converted Israel and the Church have never, as yet, gone on side by side. When will they *begin* to do so? **At what moment will a Jew being ‘converted,’ or new-born, be separate and distinct from another Jew; like Paul, for instance, or Adolf Saphir; so that one believing Jew is a member of the Body of Christ; and as such has his mind set on Christ and the things above, whilst side by side**

**with him another believing Jew, not a member of His Body, has his thoughts on God's dwelling on the earth?** What will cause this strange difference? **One convert, or child of God, turns away from earth and looks for deliverance by being caught up to meet his Lord in the air, and only prays for his enemies, whilst at the same moment and 'side by side' with him another convert longs only for God's 'righteous judgments to be abroad in the earth' (Isa. 26:8-11); and only looks for deliverance by the destruction of his foes!** Surely there are many things 'clearer than' this (to use the words of this same writer) in the Bible!" (F.C. Jennings, *Studies in Revelation*)

"The first thing that strikes us here [*in Rev. 11*] is that there are worshippers in the temple at Jerusalem; and, moreover, that they are *inside* worshippers, not worshippers of the outer court, and are *recognised as such by God*. This leads us definitely to the conclusion that the temple will have been rebuilt in Jerusalem, and used for Jewish worship. It is called '**the temple of God**' in four different classes or divisions of scripture:—1st, In the Old Testament prophets (Mal. iii. 1). 2nd, In the gospels (Matt. xxiv. 15—and here the holy place is named). 3rd, In the epistles (2 Thess. ii. 4). And 4th, In this book of the Revelation (chap. xi. 1). **Different Characters of Worship. In John iv.** the Lord says that the hour was coming, nay, had then come [*anticipating His death, resurrection, and Ascension, and the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost*], when neither in Jerusalem nor in the mountain of Samaria should men worship the Father. It is plain, therefore, that this [*Rev. 11*] **is not the worship of the present time**, nor can it be the worship of apostates. **It is therefore the time when worship will be again restored in Jerusalem, and accepted by God from those [godly/believing] Jews gathered there as Jews. These two modes of worship are totally different, and could not exist on earth at the same time;** and this is one of the strongest arguments to show that the Church with its worship in spirit must be taken out of the way to make room for that which is according to form and ritual." (F.C. Bland {a convert of CHM}, *Twenty-One Prophetic Papers: A Suggestive Outline of the Whole Range of God's Dealings with the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God*)

"**It is plain that all would be confusion if these two purposes of God were both in operation at the same time. Supposing, for instance, a Jew converted now, if God were forming both an earthly and a heavenly people together, might he not say with reason, 'These two callings perplex me sorely; I do not know which to choose. On the whole it seems to me that a heavenly place would be better than an earthly. At the same time an earthly place is what all my fathers have been waiting for; and so I am not exactly sure which I ought to close with.'** **But in the wise goodness of God there is no such confusion; for now that the earthly calling is vanished, it is a question of heaven or hell. But, more than this, such a direction would introduce the utmost doctrinal ambiguity, because the manner in which God calls the heavenly people to walk is on a different footing from that of such as are called with an earthly calling.** You can understand it from your own households. You do not teach your children to do exactly what you tell your servants to do – at least I hope not. You do not put them under the same regime There is not only a difference of relationship, but a different line of

conduct suited to each relationship. **And let me lay it down as a weighty truth, which you will find verified in scripture and indeed in morality, that all our duties flow from our relationships. Consequently the first question is to find what is my relationship, because then I have to act accordingly.**" (W. Kelly)

**"[Some] hold that God carries on the church on earth at the same time that he works savingly in that nation [Israel] as a distinct object [in forming a godly Jewish remnant] . . . Surely this were confusion and error. That God should save Gentiles *as such*, simultaneously with His renewed dealings with the chosen people, is exactly what the Rev. [the Book of the Revelation] attests; *whilst all this time the church is never spoken of as on earth, but its symbol is seen in heaven. Here all is harmony* . . . [But there is] the blinding error of putting the church, instead of Christ, as the object of the divine counsels in scripture. **Take Christ as the true center of all, and room is left for the Jews, and the Gentiles, as well as for the church of God, each in its own time and true relation to Him. Then Zion is Zion, and the church is itself.**" (W. Kelly)**

"The Christian is even now in title blessed in the heavenly places. Thence he will reign over the earth. The Jews then gathered and converted will be in their own promised land and city, on which the eyes of Jehovah rest continually; for it is the truth of God that He never withdraws a gift, and never repents of a promise . . . **But if God chose Israel or the church, He repented of neither, though both have been unfaithful; for He meant to bless, He does bless, and, no matter what the difficulty, He will bless for ever. This we have to hold fast: the purpose of God shall stand.** Changes in man and the earth may be, but the counsel of God must yet be accomplished. Hence the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. He gave the land of Israel to their fathers. He gave the promise to make their seed a blessing. He connected His own Son with Israel after the flesh, that, **spite of their sin in Christ's cross, in virtue of His grace therein an immovable basis of blessing might be laid, when they shall be raised to such a pinnacle of greatness on the earth as is reserved for no other people here below.** When the Lord will come to reign, He will have [prior to the 70<sup>th</sup> Week] removed to the Father's house the heavenly people. He will have raised the dead from their graves, and changed the living into the likeness of His own glory. For this all Christians should be looking, as their expectation. **When they are caught up thus, then the earth is clear for the Holy Ghost to work among the Jews. *The Spirit of God does not operate to two different ends – a heavenly and an earthly – at the same time.*** But here [during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week] we find Him at work among the Jews who are not caught up to heaven, as we expect to be, but [at the end thereof] are blessed under the Messiah on the earth. **Our Lord then having first come and removed the Christians dead and living to be with Himself above, will next begin to act upon the Jews and prepare them as His people when He reigns."**

**"Thus the believing Jews of that day will utter the song in evident reference to their experience of the faithfulness of God. *They do not address God as Father in the Spirit of adoption, for they are not Christians; they will be believers, but believing Jews. It is***

**gross ignorance to talk of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, David, or Daniel as Christians.** They were all saints, but none then were Christians. Not merely was it after Christ came that the disciples were first called Christians, but the place into which believers were at length brought by the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit differs essentially. **There is hardly a worse error for a believer now; for it alike tells upon the present and the future and the past, merging all the various displays of God's mind in confusion. This blunts the edge of the word, hinders the full blessing and testimony of the church, and by its ignorance mars the glory of God as much as man can,** who is not an open adversary.

“Now, no doubt, **in presence of the cross, and the Holy Ghost sent personally on earth, the old distinctions of Jew and Gentile fade** before their common ruin in sin and death morally. **But when the Lord comes, He will prepare the Jewish people to receive Him according to the prophets; and they will be made the witnesses of His mercies no less than of His glory here below; as now they are the most obstinate enemies of the gospel and of His grace to the Gentiles.** Whereas in this chapter [of OT prophecy] we hear the proper language of Jews. **If a Christian were to address God as Jehovah, it is of course in itself true; but it is a very unintelligent title in our worship.** To us there is one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ. Jehovah is the name of God looked at as a governor that maintains His kingdom; whereas Father is that name which first came out in connection with His beloved Son, and now, by virtue of redemption, is true of us who believe in Him.

“Hence, as often noticed, the very day that Christ was raised from the dead, He says, ‘Go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’ (John 20:17). **Christ, by His death and resurrection, has brought us into the same place with Himself.** This the Lord always had in view when He was here, so that He never addressed God as Jehovah, because the New Testament presents Him in view of Christianity. But the Old Testament shows that the Lord will have a people, and that they will know Him and the Father *as Jehovah*. This suffices to indicate the difference; and these remarks have been made to show that another class of people are here spoken of, *not Christians, but Jews*, who recognise God by that title which God gave Himself in relation to Israel of old. When God chose Moses, He bade him go and make Himself known to them as Jehovah, telling them that He was not so known before. Thus was it ordered at the commencement of the public dealings of God with His people, and throughout their national history it was as Jehovah He appeared. It was not that the name did not previously exist, but He never took it before for His recognised title as the God of Israel.”

“Plainly therefore a new state of things must have come in. The prophecies may take us down to the change; but how is the change itself to be brought about? **By more tremendous judgements on Israel, and especially on their enemies, than the world has ever witnessed;** not only on a great nation, but on the east and west, their old enemies, represented in their descendants. All nations of the earth, in short, will have their

representatives there and then. The result will be that God will judge all the nations, at length blessing His ancient people according to the promises He had assured to the fathers, then accomplished to the children. In order to bring about this change, not only must there be an execution of judgement, but also the removal of the heavenly saints to be with the Lord above. **As long as the church goes on here below, it is impossible, morally speaking, that God could accomplish these events of a wholly contrasted character. For it is contrary to all analogy that God would act upon two opposite principles at the same time. For instance, how could God both give and withhold outward honour for a Jew? How form the church at the same time that He restores and owns Israel? If a Jew were to believe now, he, baptised by the Holy Ghost, becomes a member of Christ's body; whereas what we find in the prophets is, that a godly Jew in the last days remains a Jew.** The Lord will quicken his soul, no doubt; but he will be found [ultimately] in his own land, where, instead of suffering, he will [after the 70<sup>th</sup> Week] be blessed in earthly things. Thus it is an altogether different state here below. **To this the New Testament supplies the key. Before Jehovah begins thus to work in Israel, the church is removed to heaven.**

“Hence in the Revelation the great initiatory lesson is taught, that when ‘the things that are’ (or the seven churches) terminate, when those that truly believe now are seen glorified with the Lord in heaven, *then* (Rev. 7) God takes up a new work among Israel and the Gentiles, who will be, both of them blessed, but even so, presented as distinct from each other. Without doubt the Jews will return to their land in unbelief, and Satan will induce them to install a man as their Messiah who will draw them by degrees to worship himself and an idol in the temple of God. Some might think it strange to assert that these civilised and christianised nations, which count it impossible that the educated could worship idols or the Antichrist, should fall into these very snares. But scripture is explicit, that those who now boast of progress, knowledge, and religion will at that time fall into idolatry and the anti-Christian pit. All western Europe will be drawn into perdition with the mass of the Jews. **God will have previously translated to heaven all properly called Christians. Then the apostasy will take place, though in the midst of this fearful evil the Spirit of God will work, specially among certain of the Jews, who will go through this scene faithful to God, some being killed for the truth, and others surviving in the flesh — a remnant God will reserve to Himself to make of it the nucleus of a new Israel.** The Lord Jesus will appear in the midst of this lawlessness, and will execute judgement upon the ungodly, preserving the spared remnant who thereon become the chosen means of spreading the knowledge of Jehovah's glory for the millennial age.” (W. Kelly)

Let us hear Dr. Kurschner and company one more time in relation to what they deem a prime example (**a present-day fulfillment of Ezekiel 37**) showing that “God is also working [*note the use of that mere generic ‘working’ again*] with **both** the Church and Israel at the same time in the present.”



**“God is working** with Israel in the present age . . . by **God regathering** Israel back to their homeland.”

“In 1948, Israel became a nation again. It’s fulfilling... these are the dry bones, of course. The flesh, the flesh part of the prophecy has not been fulfilled. That’s going to be the spiritual regeneration of Israel. That will happen *at the end* of the 7-year period. But the ‘dry bones’ part of the Ezekiel prophecy—by the way, Ezekiel’s prophecy was made to Israel, but it’s being fulfilled during the Church Age.”

Before supplying the proper understanding of Ezekiel 37, we would first observe here that Scripture, of course, nowhere suggests that this present-day “regathering” (even with their misapplication of Ezek. 37) *had to be “fulfilled” during the mystery period* in which God is forming the Church as the heavenly Bride for His Son, nor does Scripture anywhere give it *as a sign or prophetic event for which the Church should have been looking and watching* as to its “fulfilment” prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Bride.

**That being said, the following represents what is actually the scripturally correct and wholly futurist understanding of the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37:**

“Ezek. 37 speaks of the uniting of the two houses of Israel, i.e., Judah and Ephraim. Ezek. 37 is a very important statement and the efforts to explain it away on the part of amillennialists show its importance . . . The end of Ezek. 36 also speaks of the regathering of Israel. In Ezek. 37:1-14 resurrection is used as a figure for the restoration to national life as caused by God. Isa 18 is a previous regathering of Judah, chiefly, by man. **The resurrection to national life concerns ‘the whole house of Israel’ (v. 11)** being placed in their ‘own land’ (v. 14). Though Israel had to say, ‘Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off’ (v. 11), Jehovah says, ‘Behold, I will open your graves . . . and bring you into the land of Israel’ (v. 12). Thus when Israel speaks in such a way of itself, we can plainly see that resurrection is used as a figure for the time when God takes them out of their graves (the nations into which they were dispersed) and brings them into the land of Israel.

“The bones were ‘very dry’ (v. 12). Long has Israel been dead nationally. ***In the sight of God Israel still is dead nationally [the sentence of Rom. 11:15 has not and will not be reversed while the Church, His Body, is on this earth being formed; see previous discussion above]. The present nation (since 1948) is the result of man’s effort [under God’s providential ordering] (per Isa. 18). [Whereas] Ezek. 37 is Jehovah’s [direct, dispensational] work. This restoration to national life of ‘the whole house of Israel’ (v. 11) means that Judah and Ephraim must be reunited.*** This reunion is described in Ezek. 37:15-27. The teaching of this passage is that there was a division and yet **the two parts will be made one**. Verse 21 connects this with the regathering to the land. ‘They shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all’ (v. 22). And David, i.e. Christ, shall be king over them when they dwell in the land given to Jacob (v. 25). See also Isa 11:11-14.”

“Ezek. 37 uses resurrection as a figure for what would happen. **Israel once had a national standing, lost it, and will be reinstated [after the Church is completed and raptured out of this world].** We can understand resurrection used as a figure for this, which implies former life, then death.” (R.A. Huebner)

**We close this section by way of supplementation of important truths connected to God’s dispensational dealings with Israel, particularly as to the godly Jewish remnant whom God raises up during the Tribulation Period along with Israel’s *Lo-Ammi* status before Jehovah.**

Even some otherwise sound Pre-Tribulationists make confused and incorrect statements when speaking of Israel's "conversion" *upon the Lord's return in manifested glory*. For the idea that any ungodly/unbelieving Jew will be "converted" *at His Appearing* is entirely fallacious (it will be too late at that point!). Such an unscriptural notion is really a required contrivance of Post-Tribulationism, including that of the so-called Pre-Wrath variety under review.

There are two important matters that need to be reckoned with in this regard: (1) the truth of the godly Jewish remnant and their status throughout the Tribulation period; and (2) the truth of Israel's national restoration and national salvation at the Manifestation of His Coming, at the end of the Tribulation period, along with the associated subject of *Israel's earthly "calling" and "government."*

"The teaching of Scripture, and of JND, is that the godly Jewish remnant is composed of souls who are born again while going through the tribulation period. But they will not have the peace of consciously known forgiveness of sins and acceptance until they are brought into that by the returned Messiah. Saints of the present period will have been raptured previous to God’s forming this godly Jewish remnant with which, and through which, God will work, in that epoch; and finally they will form the saved nation under the new covenant." (R.A. Huebner)

Post-Tribulationists, on the contrary, necessarily hold the position that Jews will be converted at the Lord's Appearing—which means a denial of a godly Jewish remnant who are born of God during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, but holding to a so-called "remnant" that is preserved *in unbelief* until the Lord Jesus Appears . . . not understanding that the national repentance of the Jews at the Manifestation of His Coming is that of the remnant who have already been born of God during the Tribulation but who do not enter into the consciousness and fullness of their salvation under Jehovah-Messiah and the new covenant until He thus returns and pours out the Holy Spirit, etc.).

"For I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, that ye may not be wise in your own conceits, that ***blindness in part is happened to Israel, until*** the fulness of the nations be come in; and so *[in the following manner]* all Israel shall be saved *[according to His sovereign grace]*: According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins *[in a coming Millennial day, when*

*'all Israel will be saved'; that is, the new nation of Israel under their Messiah and their new covenant will, in sovereign grace, be composed of all all-believing, all-righteous, all-saved Jews—as the new and true spiritual Israel with the law written in their hearts (cf. Isa. 60:21; 66:8-9; Jer. 31:31-40)—no longer merely a remnant within Israel comprising those who are saved].'* (Rom. 11:5-10, 25-27)

"When already its branch becomes tender and produces leaves [*i.e., this points to the time when God is calling and preparing the godly Jewish remnant during the Tribulation Period*], ye know that the summer is near. Thus also ye, when ye see all these things happening, know that it is near, at the doors [*i.e., the end of the age, and the beginning of the next under their Messiah and their New Covenant, wherein the godly Jewish remnant will form the new and true spiritual nation of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom*]. [*Even so, and therefore,*] Verily I say to you, This generation [*this ongoing moral class of Christ-rejecting, unbelieving, stubborn and rebellious generation of Jews*] will in no wise pass away **until** all these things take place [*this generation of Jews as a whole will then indeed pass away, when Christ appears in glory and executes judgment on them, and will be displaced by the new class or generation of Jews—the new and true spiritual Israel in the Millennial Kingdom (all Israel will then be comprised solely of those who are righteous . . . those who are saved), under their Messiah and their New Covenant, with the law written in their hearts; see, e.g., Isa. 60:21; 66:8-9; Jer. 31:31-40; Rom. 11:26-27*]." (Matt. 24:32-34)

The apostle Thomas (already born of God) illustrates the godly Jewish remnant of the Tribulation period being brought into **fulmess of faith and national repentance** upon seeing the returning Jehovah-Jesus appearing in glory, their risen Messiah whom they as a people had rejected and crucified.

"On the resurrection-day the Apostles were not all present. 'But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples said [began to say], therefore, to him, We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will in nowise believe' (verses 24, 25). His state of soul coincided with his absence on that day. He resisted the blessed news of the Resurrection, and did not join the gathering of the disciples to share the joy of the Master's presence in their midst. Slow of heart to believe, he missed the early taste of the blessing, and abode in the darkness of his own unbelief, whilst the rest were filled with gladness. He becomes, therefore, no unmeet type of the Jew, not of the *ungodly mass* who receive another coming in his own name, but of the poor sorrow-stricken remnant who cleave to the hope of the Messiah in the latter day, and will enter into rest and joy only when they see Him appearing for their deliverance." (W. Kelly)

Moreover, it is critical to a right understanding of dispensational truth to observe that Israel as a nation is *God's publicly owned and recognized people (Ammi)* **only** when they have **both** the earthly "calling" and the earthly "government." In that connection, "the Times of the Gentiles"

(Luke 21:24) are an intercalation into the earthly "government" (such having been handed over to the Gentiles), and thus Israel has since been reckoned as "*not My people*" (*Lo Ammi*), not publicly owned and recognized of God. However, notwithstanding her *Lo Ammi* status, God continued to work dispensationally with Israel as a nation under her "earthly calling" *until the Cross*. But then that suspended earthly calling was intercalated by the "heavenly calling" of the Church formed on the Day of Pentecost. Thus Israel was set aside, suspended at the Cross while God's mystery/heavenly purpose is being carried out. The "earthly calling" will resume after the Rapture when the heavenly calling is completed. But since the "earthly government" will not be restored to Israel as a nation until the Appearing of the Son of Man in great power and glory (for the Times of the Gentiles continues on till the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week), Israel as a nation is still *Lo Ammi* during the whole of the Tribulation Period, not being publicly owned and recognized *nationally* before Him as His earthly people. But the "earthly calling" will be at work in calling out the godly Jewish Remnant at that time. And under the reign of Messiah Jehovah-Jesus and their New Covenant, that Jewish Remnant will constitute the nucleus of the new and true spiritual Israel, *Ammi*, My People, when the Millennial Kingdom is established on this earth.

"Though government was introduced with Noah, **the administration of God's direct government in the earth through kingship began with David** . . . The throne of David (B.C. 1011) and Solomon (B.C. 971) was called the throne of Jehovah (1 Chron. 29:23). **This was the seat of God's direct government in the earth** . . . The capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar [in B.C. 605/604] was used by God to bring to an end God's *direct* government in the earth through Israel . . . This period has been called a 'parenthesis' because it is a period of time during which God's 'reign' in Israel is in abeyance . . . [It is] the Gentile parenthesis of judgment upon Israel ['the times of the Gentiles' (Luke 21:24)]."

"Israel will be at the center of God's display of His glory in Christ in the 'earthly places' during the millennium. The setting aside of Israel and **the removal of God's throne from Jerusalem** is an interruption in the development of God's ways in the earth."

**"During the interval of its absence [i.e., the absence of the Shekinah, Ezek. 10:18; 11:22] the heavens rule rather than God exercising direct government in the earth in Israel."**

" 'The Gentile parenthesis of judgment' . . . is a time of Gentile dominion brought as a chastisement, a judgment, upon Israel, but it will come to an end when God establishes His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psa. 2). **This will end the period when God is not directly exercising government in the earth in Israel.**"

"They [Israel] were declared to be Lo-Ammi (not my people) in Hos. 1:9, 10. God had taken away government from that people and gave it to the Gentiles, for the period depicted by the image of Dan. 2, namely, *the times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24). When the smiting stone of Dan. 2 (Christ) smites the image, Christ will set up the kingdom on earth and Israel will again be acknowledged as the people of God."

"The period from B.C. 605/604, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem until the time of the appearing of Christ to smite the Gentiles is the period our Lord called 'the times of the nations' (Luke 21:24) . . . during which God's direct reign in Israel is in abeyance. [After] B.C. 605/604, God continued to work with Israel, though they were not owned outwardly as His people, being under the sentence of Lo-ammi, until that work ceased in connection with the rejection of Christ. This brought about another parenthesis, from Pentecost to the rapture. After the rapture, God will commence dealing with Israel again, though they still will not be outwardly owned, the heavenly parenthesis that interrupted such dealing with Israel having terminated at the rapture. Thus there is a parenthesis within a parenthesis; a heavenly parenthesis within a wider earthly parenthesis."

"Israel is God's nationally recognized people - *Ammi* - only while they have both [earthly] Calling and Government given to them [the earthly Calling actually began with Abraham, before there even was an Israel, a *nationally* recognized people]. The reason why God continued to work with the people of Israel after declaring them *Lo-ammi* is because they still had [the earthly] Calling. This Earthly Calling [was suspended with the rejection of Christ and is] restored in the 70th Week, when Jehovah works with the [godly] Jewish remnant to form them to receive Messiah. And when He reigns, Israel, as His nationally recognized people - *Ammi* - will again be the center of His earthly seat of government." (R. A. Huebner)

## 7) The alleged "Early Church Problem"

In an effort to manufacture their last "problem," Dr. Kurschner and company argue that the any-moment, Pre-70<sup>th</sup> Week rapture is not to be found anywhere in the writings of the early church fathers, whereas there is support for non-imminent, *intra*-70<sup>th</sup> Week, "Pre-Wrath" rapture ideas or arrangements therein. In that vein, we are told the following (with my remarks inserted throughout, so as to clear away the cobwebs):

*"The writings from the early church fathers date back to the first century, and of course, **we should never take their writings as proof of one doctrine over another. The Bible is always the ultimate source for our doctrine** [a good statement as far as it goes, but it still falls quite short. For in truth, the Bible is not only the 'ultimate' source for our doctrine, but it is the ONLY source! Sola Scriptura! Nonetheless, had they only stopped here and went no further . . . but then where would their "Early Church Problem" be? Unfortunately, they proceed to entirely undermine even their moderately framed principle, apparently showing how superficially it is held, at least when it comes to the truth of our blessed hope] . . . At the very least [however,] these writings provide insight into what the earliest Christians believed about certain subjects whether those beliefs were right or wrong [so what value does this have as to the scripturalness or non-scripturalness of rapture schemes? Is the truth of a doctrine strengthened or weakened*

*depending on antiquity and what the majority of such professing Christians held and expressed outside of His all-sufficient God-breathed Word? Is time or antiquity the interpreter of Scripture rather than the Spirit of God leading souls into the truth of His Word alone?].”*

“In conclusion, Pretribblers know they can’t find anything close to Pretribulationism in the early church fathers *[In other words, it doesn’t really matter even if Scripture itself teaches Pretribulation truth, because outside of its inspired walls it cannot be found?!]*. The early church almost without exception taught that the rapture would take place at some unknown time after the Antichrist arrived and began persecuting Christians. *[Which tells us that, the earlier and more pervasive error is, the more weight it carries in the minds of Pre-Wrath men! Or so they contend when it comes, at least, to the truth of the blessed hope].”*

As we are aptly cautioned by W. Kelly:

***“[O]ne must frankly allow that no importance whatever should be attached to early tradition. Scripture, and scripture alone, is the only sure arbiter, the sole reliable source of the pure truth of God; and the children of God should be the more jealous on this score, as we see around us the unmistakable results of recurrence to tradition in the revived Judaism [or Judaizing] of our day.”***

If Pre-Wrath Rapturists wish to go outside the all-sufficient Word of God and appeal to early church history as a fig leaf to prop up their weak and beggarly scheme, that only reveals *their own self-consciousness* about the lack of any true **Scriptural basis** for their ideas (for confessedly **all** early church fathers held erroneous views on the rapture). Though, in actuality, the earliest views outside of Scripture simply depart in one way or another from the Pretribulation truth and fall along a spectrum of mid and post-70<sup>th</sup> Week rapturism, or mid and post-Tribulationism. *Nothing to boast about! . . . but rather to seek mercy and light from the Lord to be delivered therefrom.*

**If the blessed hope of the any-moment, Pre-70<sup>th</sup> Week coming of the Lord Jesus for His Church is an “Early Church Problem,” then all *non*-Pretribulation Rapture views have a “Scripture Alone Problem” . . . the Scriptures, I might add, *which predate any “early church fathers”*.**

The appeal to what the so-called Apostolical Father's taught or did not teach is truly foolish. Apparently none of them held the true doctrine of justification by faith; and all of them to a man held baptismal regeneration. So much for the Church Fathers and historical arguments. The fact of the matter is, all sorts of false doctrine crept into the Church even during the days of the apostles, as the NT Epistles amply attest (including errors on the rapture itself!). The true doctrine of the Church, its mystery nature with its heavenly calling and hope—wherein is neither Jewish nor Gentile position before God, and absolutely separate and distinct from Israel

and its earthly calling and hope—was among the first things to be lost and buried, and with it the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Body and Bride of Christ.

“Most pointed too in the bearing on our subject is [1 Corinthians] chapter 15, which proves how little ‘early christian belief’ can be trusted; for some among them questioned a resurrection, though it does not seem that they doubted the immortality of the soul. . . . **Notably again the Epistle to the Galatians calls for a few words in proof that what the early Christians held is not the smallest guarantee for the truth.** For the apostle writes to the assemblies of that considerable region in Asia Minor, where he had himself planted the gospel, to reproach them sadly and solemnly with having **so quickly changed** from him that called them in Christ's grace **to a different gospel** which is not another. It was truly a perversion of the gospel of Christ. *If saints, after the best of all preaching in that early day, could so soon follow judaizers, and fall from grace into legalism as the apostle affirms, can any thoughtful mind be surprised that they might soon slip into defective views and even error about the Second Advent? But we need not assume this. The Epistles to the Thessalonians prove doubly the fact, and not the danger only.* For the apostle, in instructing them more on that glorious truth, had in the First to correct, at least as soon, their mistake about their deceased brethren, and in the Second to expose a still wider and worse error about the day of the Lord for living saints. How plainly the mystery of lawlessness was already at work!”

“The doctrine of the church is clearly at the root the ONE HOPE, which is found in the intermediate part of the New Testament. For along with the truth of the peculiar calling of the church, as the body commenced by the descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and thenceforward guided and perpetuated by Him — along with this truth, it will be found that the peculiar aspect of the coming of the Lord, for which I have contended, stands or falls . . . None of them [including the early church fathers] therefore has an adequate idea of the new and heavenly work which God began at Pentecost by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The consequence is that, if they read of saints in Daniel, in the Psalms, or in the Revelation, they are at once set down as of the church. If they read of ‘this gospel of the kingdom’ in Matt. 24, or of ‘the everlasting gospel,’ — it is to their minds the same thing as what Paul calls ‘my gospel,’ the gospel of the grace of God preached now. Hence follows, and quite fairly too, a denial of any specialty in the walk and conversation of the saints since Pentecost, and a general Judaizing in doctrine, standing, conduct and hopes.” (W. Kelly)

As far as the value of early church fathers goes in terms of the validity or non-validity of doctrine to be held fast, we can do no better than conclude with the following set of observations:

“The marvel is that any man of spiritual judgment who has read them [the so-called apostolical fathers] with care should count them of the least weight, especially on such a matter. They have indeed a sorrowful interest, *as they attest the rapid departure and profound downfall from apostolic teaching.* Can anything be conceived more evident or

striking than the immeasurable distance which severs these earliest writings from the scriptures? The Apocrypha, merely human as it is, does not so startlingly differ from the O.T. as do Barnabas, Clemens Rom., and Hermas from the apostles Paul, Peter, and John. Yet these productions were read like the scriptures to Christian congregations in early days; and Clemens Alex. quotes the most heterodox and nonsensical of the three as scripture! Even the Sinaitic Uncial has appended to the N.T. Barnabas and Hermas, as the Alexandrian has Clemens Rom. What a contrast these and all the rest from the dignity, holiness, love, and authority of the inspired Epistles! **These early relics are merely the word of man, betraying not only weakness but trumpery. If able and learned men have lauded them to the skies, it only proves that tradition has blinding power, and that all have not faith.**"

***"These early writings are most defective and, through ignorance of the scriptures, often opposed to the truth;*** and so are moderns. Scripture alone is the standard; and the Christian is not left without a divine Guide dwelling in him to lead into all the truth. Let us believe God's word as a whole, and not accept one part while we omit another."

***"But the principle of looking to 'the early belief' is a false one,*** the *ignis fatuus* of the Tractarian movement, and the fully developed lie of Popery; which, if there is to be an interpreter, demands and professes to have an infallible one in itself, the Holy Catholic church, and now indeed the Pope. This of course when plainly stated the Protestant abjures. The Christian, the church, believing in the ever abiding presence and operation of the Holy Spirit sent forth on and since Pentecost, has what the latter confessedly lacks, what the former vainly and madly professes. The Spirit dwells here below to guide into all the truth, and makes this good in the measure of our faith and spiritual state. For He is here to glorify Christ, not the saint or the church; who are only right in awaiting Christ's coming for our glory with Him. Now is the time for lowly service, unworldly devotedness, and self-renunciation, yea for sharing His rejection and suffering. It is no time for reigning without the apostles, and without Christ; it is the time for entire dependence on Him in separation from the world, content ourselves to be meanwhile reviled, persecuted, and defamed like our betters for Christ's sake. ***The scripture is the standard; in no way what the Christians may have believed, thought, said, or done, even in apostolic days.*** Hence the saints in Rome are warned not to be high-minded but fear; and we have already seen why. It was the very snare which misled them and all Christendom to deny God's faithfulness to Israel, and to claim the succession to Jewish power and honour now on earth, which could not be without forfeiting present rejection and future glory on high with Christ."

***"It is the scripture that we accept, not only as the source of divinely given truth but as its criterion.*** The Holy Spirit is the sole unfailing interpreter, just so far as we look to Christ's glory. If we seek our own things, calling them perhaps the church's glory or right, we have no promise from God and no security for ourselves; but on the contrary we shall have to learn our folly." (W. Kelly, *The So-Called Apostolical Fathers on the Lord's Second Coming*)



**“Here, as is known, the so-called Fathers fell into the most serious error, even such as looked for the return of the Lord and His future kingdom over the earth. *But not one of them . . . bore witness to the future national restoration of Israel to the promised land.* They on the contrary embraced the further error of supposing that the risen saints would be in the earthly Jerusalem: **thus ignorantly were the best of them agreeing to blot out the distinctive hopes of both Israel and the church; and so rapid was the departure of the early Christians even from plain prophetic facts. Still earlier had they lost sight of our heavenly relations to Christ, and of the capital truth of the Spirit's presence and action in the assembly here below. The consequence was that then was consummated the fatal scheme of treating the church systematically as Israel improved. Maintain simply and firmly the literal restoration of Israel as wholly distinct from Christianity, and you have a bulwark against pseudo-spiritualism, and a groundwork, if rightly used, for seeing our special and heavenly privileges.** The Fathers thought that Jerusalem during the millennium would be the city of the heavenly saints, that the Jews would be Christians, and that all would be together, risen and uprisen, reigning in glory [an incongruous mixture of things heavenly and earthly]”.** (W. Kelly)

“Christ is the centre of the counsels of God, and hence of prophecy, which treats of the earth and of His government of it for His own glory. Hence the importance of Israel, of whom, as according to the flesh, came Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever. They are His people by a choice and calling which cannot fail in the end, though there may be and has been a fall and a long continued disowning of them in God's righteous judgment of their apostasy. But mercy will restore them ere long, humbly, joyfully welcoming the Messiah they have so long rejected. **This had been feebly seen, nay, generally denied, throughout Christendom for ages. Scarcely any error is more patent throughout the Fathers than the substitution of the church for Israel in all their system of thought. Every Father, whose remains have come down to us, is a witness of the same allegorizing interpretations;** not only the Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen, but Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and the Pseudo-Barnabas. The Latins followed in the same wake, not Augustine and Ruffinus and Jerome only, but Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius. ***Not one held the restoration of Israel to their land, converted nationally; the millenarian portion expected that the risen saints would reign with Christ in Jerusalem rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged, not that the Jews would be restored and blessed in the land.*** The medieval writers naturally adopted the same view: so did the Reformers, as far as I am aware, without an exception. **All fell into the error of putting the church into the place of Christ, and so of leaving no room for His earthly people, besides His heavenly saints and glorified bride.** They neglected the warning of the Apostle Paul, and assumed that the Jewish branches were broken off that the Gentiles might be grafted in, and take their place gloriously and for ever. They did not pay heed to the prophetic word, as Peter exhorts, but applied systematically the predictions of Israel's blessing in the last days to the Christian church: still less did they appreciate the day dawning or the daystar arising in the heart. Catholics, papists, Protestants, had no real light, no spiritual intelligence, as to the hopes of Israel as distinct from those of Christians.

***“Is it not as solemn as it is startling to see thus beyond just question the immediate, universal, and lasting departure of the Christian profession from prophetic truth? But so it is and must be. For the divine glory in Christ as the center for all things in heaven and on earth being the revealed purpose of God (Eph. 1: 10), when this is forgotten, false hopes spring up. Man, self, becomes the end, instead of Christ; the true light is lost, and darkness ensues in the just retribution of God. The effort to make the church all, instead of preserving the real dignity of the church as the heavenly spouse of Christ, lowers her to the position of Israel, a people reigned over, not reigning with Him, His inheritance, not heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ . . . **Yet no maxim of interpretation can compare with this most misleading identification for importance, antiquity, or widespread reception. Since the apostles, perhaps beyond every other tradition, has this been accepted always, everywhere, and by all.** Fathers, Romanists, Reformed, have alike applied it habitually in their comments, as well as in practice.”***

“He [‘Mr. Shackleton’] is also surprised that **truth [as that of the pre-70th Week rapture] so important should only of late have been learnt from scripture.** How could Mr. Shackleton expect such a thing in **the early fathers**, if he is really acquainted with their writings? **Which of them escaped the Galatian leaven?** Now it is remarkable that **this Epistle {Galatians}**, which aims at clearing the churches of that country from a **misuse of the law — the bane of the patristic writings generally, is precisely that in which the apostle never speaks openly of the Lord's second coming. What was the use to those who had lost the virtue of His first coming?** The Reformers were too absorbed in contending for justification, as well as against Popery, to search into prophecy or the church. And what real advance has been made since? I fear there has been in general a departure from much that was then recovered. **Our appeal must therefore be to scripture only. The fathers invented the miserable system of expunging Israel and Judah from O. T. prophecy: for them, all was ‘the church’; and so with most Anglicans, and almost all ‘Dissenters,’ to this day. Their lucubrations [the writings of the early fathers] therefore about the Antichrist and the great tribulation are worthless.** The Protestant [or Historicist] scheme went farther astray in denying the individuality of the Antichrist, as well as his literal place in the temple at Jerusalem in the consummation of the age, and converting the days into nothing but years. But both alike **Judaized the church by blotting out Israel's true hopes, through misappropriating Jewish scriptures; and Mr. S. is not clear of this error, through which he is bitter against those who would distinguish what is Christian from Jewish.**” (W. Kelly)