

Foundations 8B Resurrection of the Dead and Rapture of the Church

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, **2** of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **3** And this we will do if God permits”. **Hebrews 6:1-3**

The resurrection of Christians occurs at the Second Coming of Jesus. This is also when the church is caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord.

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since by man (Adam) came death, by Man (Jesus) also came the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. **23** But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. **24** Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. **1 Cor. 15:20-24**

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words. **1 Thes. 4:15-18**

Notice the elements of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ found in 1 Thessalonians 4 and Matthew 24:

- a) the Lord Jesus descending from heaven
- b) the sound of a trumpet
- c) the gathering of the saints together in the clouds

The resurrection of the saints at the Second Coming of Jesus is also when the “catching away” of believers occurs.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. **Matthew 24:29-31**

The “catching away of the saints”, also commonly referred to as the “rapture” of the church occurs after the great tribulation period, at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ when the saints are “gathered together from the four winds”. Nowhere do the Scriptures teach a “pre-tribulation” rapture. Jesus, Paul, Daniel and John taught that the saints will be here on earth during the tribulation.

Please carefully note in the following passage of Scripture that Paul was encouraging the Thessalonian believers that they would get rest from all their tribulations at the Second Coming of Jesus (which occurs after the great tribulation period) when He comes with flaming fire to take vengeance on those who do not know God.

“so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations

that you endure, **5** which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; **6** since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, **7** and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, **8** in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **10** when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.” **2 Thes. 1:4-10**

When did Paul expect that the saints would get rest from all their tribulations? At the Second Coming of Jesus when He comes openly in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God. John also describes the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus as a time when He will come to “make war” and establish His kingdom on earth.

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. **12** His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. **13** He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. **14** And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.” **Revelation 19:11-14**

Jesus taught that saints would be resurrected on “the last day”, not 3-1/2 years before or 7 years before the last day, but on the last day (which is the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ).

“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” **John 6:40**

Neither Jesus nor Paul taught that there would be a pre-tribulation rapture of the church.

Jesus prayed: “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.” **John 17:15**

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, **22** strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” **Acts 14:21-22**

Because the saints will be here during the Great Tribulation period, Jesus said that those days would be shortened for the sake of the church.

“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” **Matthew 24:22**

The Greek word for “elect” that is used in the above Scripture is also used by Jesus, Peter, Paul and John in referring to the blood bought saints of God. The word “elect” in the New Testament is only used to refer to Jesus Christ or His blood bought church. The word “elect” is never used in the New Testament to refer exclusively to Jews. For the sake of His church, who will be here during the Great Tribulation period, God will shorten those days.

Many believers will be purified during the Great Tribulation period and made ready for the Second Coming of Jesus

In referring to the time of Great Tribulation, Daniel the prophet writes: “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” **Daniel 12:10**

John also saw the saints purified through the great tribulation. “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” **11** All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying:

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

14 And I said to him, “Sir, you know.”

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” **Revelation 7:9-14**

Those who know God will be strong and do exploits during The Great Tribulation

The prophet Daniel was speaking of the time that the antichrist was in power on the earth during the Great Tribulation. He wrote:

“Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” **Daniel 11:32**

When the greatest darkness is on the earth, during the Great Tribulation, there will be those in the church who arise and shine with an God's visible glory

“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. **2** For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.” **Isaiah 60:1-2**

During the Great Tribulation, if believers haven't learned already, they must learn to live holy and obedient lives, abiding in Jesus Christ. By abiding in Jesus, we live in the secret place of the Most High. The Lord Himself is our refuge.

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust.” **Psalms 91:1-2**

The Lord has promised to always be with us.

“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” **Isaiah 41:10**

For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
6 So we may boldly say: “The Lord *is* my helper; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?” **Hebrews 13:5b-6**

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. **1 John 2:28**

