

The rapture of the Church

Written by Chris Perver
Saturday, 16 June 2007 12:22

This article lists some of the reasons why many Christians believe in a pre-tribulation rapture, which view I share. I wasn't originally intending to write about the Rapture. On other pages in this website I have simply expressed my belief that the Rapture of the Church will happen before the tribulation period begins, a view less and less commonly held in these last days. But because more and more people have been asking me to explain why I believe this, I decided to put it up here on the internet for you all to read (and to save my fingers!).

Firstly I would like to say that this is simply my understanding of Scripture. I would not seek to argue with anyone who believes something entirely different. Everyone is entitled to hold to what they believe. Here, I am simply stating my reasons for believing in a pre-tribulation Rapture.

For those who don't know what the Rapture is. The Lord Jesus told the disciples in John 14 that He was going away to prepare a place for those who had trusted in Him as their Saviour. He gave this promise...

John 14:3

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

A brief description

The word "Rapture" is not in the Bible. The word comes from a Latin verb meaning to "catch away". But this is not a valid reason for believing there is no "Rapture". The word "Trinity" is also not found in the Bible, yet we know for certain God exists in "three persons", and that the working of all three of these Divine Persons is required for salvation.

There are numerous Scriptures which describe the Rapture of the Church. The Lord Jesus, according to the book of 1st Thessalonians, will come to the air. The bodies of all those who have trusted in Christ as their Saviour will immediately be transformed into a new body. This new body will have several characteristics, most notably that it is incapable of sin (and therefore fit to live in heaven), and it will not suffer sickness or death. At this same time, the bodies of all those who have died since trusting Christ will also be resurrected from the dust, and their bodies will be changed into immortal bodies. These bodies will then be reunited with their souls (the real person) which was in heaven. These believers will then be "caught up together with Christ" into heaven, where they will stay until the end of the tribulation period. 1st Corinthians states that these events will happen within "the twinkling of an eye", almost instantaneously.

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1st Corinthians 15:51-52

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Daniel's seventy weeks

It's important to understand that God's prophetic calendar centres completely around the nation of Israel. In Daniel chapter 9, the angel Gabriel told Daniel that God had determined (appointed) 70 weeks of years upon his people the Jews.

Daniel 9:24

Seventy weeks (490 years) are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (Jesus Christ).

Daniel 9:25-26

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks (69 weeks total): the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come (Romans) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (Jerusalem and the Temple); and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The seventy weeks started with the proclamation to rebuild the Temple after the Babylonian captivity. This is significant, for the Temple is God's dwelling place on Earth. There are never two Temples described as existing simultaneously in Scripture. But that Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, and Christ said regarding it, "your house is left unto you desolate", Luke 13:35. The current abode of the Lord is in the "Temple" of the believers' bodies (1st Corinthians 6:19). The 70th week of Daniel will also commence with a peace agreement that will see the restitution of Temple sacrifices, subsequent to the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple. But this Temple will be defiled by the Antichrist, and so is not counted as God's dwelling place. This is why you will read in the book of Revelation that the true Temple during the tribulation period will be in heaven.

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Revelation 11:19

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

The prophet Daniel predicted the exact date of the arrival of the Messiah into the city of Jerusalem, and describes how He would be "cut off" after the 69th week. Following the end of that week, there was a 40 year period (40 in Scripture always speaks of judgement) after which the city and sanctuary were destroyed by the armies of Titus in 70 AD.

Daniel 9:27

And he (Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many (nations) for one week (seven years): and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it (the Temple) desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel's 70th week describes the arrival of the Antichrist, and his peace agreement with many nations which should last for seven years (but only lasts for 3.5 years). But we know the Antichrist has not yet come, neither has any Jewish Temple existed for 2000 years, so there must be an explanation why these events have not happened yet... After the nation of Israel rejected the Messiah, God's prophetic clock stopped. Israel was scattered among the nations, and God turned to the Gentiles. The Church was formed, and now all those who believe in Christ are justified through faith in Him. One day God will again take up the nation of Israel. We can see that happening today. Daniel's 70th week will commence once the Antichrist confirms the covenant with many nations. But what has all this to do with the Rapture?

Daniel's 70 weeks were determined upon "his people" - the Jews, and the "Holy City" - Jerusalem. The seventieth week therefore is not determined upon Christ's Church. Part of the reason why seventy weeks were determined upon Israel were for Israel to finish the transgression and make an end of sins. Christ has already made an end of sins for the Church at Calvary. Christ also made reconciliation for iniquity, has brought in everlasting righteousness, and in the Church's eyes is anointed King. Until Israel recognizes Jesus as Messiah, the prophecy of all these things coming to pass for Israel will not be "sealed up" (or fulfilled).

If the Church was only created after the 69th week, after God had set aside Israel, it makes

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sense if, when the 70th week of Daniel begins and God once again takes up Israel, that the Church is also removed from the scene.

Israel and the Church

Some people get confused over the timing of the Rapture because of a failure to distinguish between the Church (Bride of Christ) and Israel (Wife of Yahweh). A lot of Christians today sadly believe that God has cast off Israel permanently, and that the Church has somehow stolen all Israel's blessings. Not only is this contrary to Scripture (Romans 9-11 and many other passages), it also calls into question many of the prophecies concerning the last days. God still has a plan for Israel.

Jeremiah 31:35-37

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

As we saw earlier, the Church really doesn't fit into Old Testament prophecy. In fact, out of the 39 books of the Old Testament the Church is not mentioned once. And yet the return of Christ to Earth is mentioned hundreds of times. Why?

Ephesians 3:5-6

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

The Church was hidden in Christ. The Church exists in a special period of God's grace in which the Lord would pour out His blessings on the Gentiles. This why it is also important to make a distinction between the Church and Israel. Christ's Second Coming to Earth will fulfill the earthly promises that were given to Israel (Luke 1:32-33). But the Church was never promised an earthly kingdom. Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world, lest would my servants fight" (John 18:36). As Christians, we are not specifically looking for Christ's Second Coming to Earth, but for Christ's Coming to the air, where we will be caught up to meet Him. These are two distinct events in Scripture.

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Zechariah 14:4

And **his (Christ's) feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives**, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

1st Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, **to meet the Lord in the air**: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The Rapture in the New Testament

There is a lot of confusion over certain New Testament Scriptures regarding the Rapture of the Church, mainly because of the failure to distinguish the times when Christ is speaking specifically of Israel (which as a nation will endure the tribulation), and when Christ speaks of the Church.

Matthew 24:38-42

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

I once believed that the above verses were references to the Rapture of the Church, until someone pointed out to me that the "taking away" here was to do with judgement, not the Rapture. I never really understood why until I read the corresponding passage in Luke.

Luke 17:33-37

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. **And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the**

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body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

"Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together". These people that are "taken" are destined for judgement, not the Rapture. From what I understand their bodies will lie unburied for the birds of the air to scavenge. Revelation contains a similar description of this event...

Revelation 19:17-18

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

Another passage concerning the Tribulation that is often misunderstood, refers specifically to Israel. The Church isn't mentioned.

Matthew 24:16-21

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The Lord Jesus is speaking specifically of those living in the locality of Judea during the time of the tribulation, he is not speaking of the Church in this passage. These Jews will suffer such terrible persecution, that will come upon them with such speed that they will literally have to drop everything and run for their lives. The prophetic passage Christ is referring to is found in Revelation 12 and in Zechariah 14 (at the end of the Tribulation), concerning the persecution of Israel by Satan through the Antichrist.

Revelation 12:13-14

And when the dragon (Satan) saw that he was cast unto the earth (By the war with the holy

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angels in heaven), he persecuted the woman (Israel) which brought forth the man child (Jesus Christ). And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time (3.5 years), from the face of the serpent.

Zechariah 14:4-5

And his (Christ's) feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye (Israel) shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

No mention of the Church on earth past Revelation 3

The book of Revelation was penned by the Apostle John to the seven churches in Asia (now called Turkey). The Lord told John that He would tell him to write of things past, present and future (Revelation 1:19). Chapters 1 to 3 deal specifically with things that were past and present, while chapter 4 onwards deals with the future. We find that the Church is not mentioned in the book of Revelation past chapter 3, until you reach chapter 19.

Jesus Christ gave specific promises to the 7 churches mentioned in the book of Revelation. It is commonly believed that these 7 churches, although they were literal assemblies of believers that lived during John's day, are generally representative of 7 different periods of Church history. It is believed that we are currently living within the time period of the last of the 7 churches, the Laodicean church age. That can be plainly seen in the following verses.

Revelation 3:16-17

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

One of these promises Jesus Christ gave to the Philadelphian church, the only church in Revelation that Christ didn't have a single word of condemnation for.

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Revelation 3:10

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

The Greek word "from" in this verse means "out of". It's the same word used by Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed for the Father to "save Me from this hour

" John 12:27. Christ wasn't intending to keep this church through the hour of temptation (trial), which would come upon all the world, He was literally going to remove them from it. But the church of Philadelphia no longer exists, so this promise must be applicable to the Church as a whole today.

1st Thessalonians 5:7-10

For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to (Divine) wrath, but to obtain (physical) salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake (are alive) or sleep (or dead), we should live (Rapture) together with him.

Another verse confirms this again in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. We who are of the day are not appointed to be there for the Divine wrath that will be poured out on the whole world, but we shall obtain physical salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Physical salvation, because we have already obtained spiritual salvation when we were saved. And the verses immediately following this passage are concerning the Rapture of the Church.

24 elders cast down their crowns

In chapters 4 and 5, John sees a group of 24 elders wearing crowns. What is the identity of these men? Angels are never crowned in the Bible. The Greek word for "crown" in these verses is "stephanos", meaning "to twine or weave together". These crowns are not the type worn by kings (royal crown) or priests (holiness), but the type of crowns or wreaths that are awarded at the Olympic games (rewards). This helps us understand why in chapter 5, the elders cast their crowns at Christ's feet, acknowledging that He is the only one worthy of praise. The only ones promised these types of crowns were five distinct groups of people, the victor's crown (1st Corinthians 9:25), the shepherd's crown (1st Peter 5:4), those watching for Christ's coming (2nd Timothy 4:8), the overcomer's crown (Revelation 2:10) and the soul-winner's crown (1st Thessalonians 2:19). So here we have a group of 24 believers who have obtained crowns, and are casting them down at Christ's feet during the tribulation period. We will not obtain our crowns until the Judgement seat of Christ (2nd

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Timothy 4:8), so the Rapture of the Church must have already occurred by chapter number 5. Many Christians believe the Judgement seat of Christ will take place in Heaven during the Tribulation period. Concerning the Rapture, many also believe chapter 4 verse 1 is a picture of this, where the Lord commands John to "Come up here";.

144,000 Jews

Throughout John's description of events on Earth during the Tribulation period, the Church is never mentioned. But Israel is frequently mentioned. In chapter 7, we read how God commands the angels to not hurt the Earth until He has sealed 144,000 Jews with His Holy Spirit. These 144,000 witnesses, 12,000 from each tribe of Israel, will go throughout the world in the last days and preach the gospel of the kingdom. If the Church remains on Earth during the Tribulation, then why is the Lord recruiting Jewish believers to do the work He commanded the Church to do in Mark 16:15? The Rapture must have occurred before the start of the Tribulation period for this reason. After the Rapture, the Church will no longer be able to witness for Christ on Earth. God can't be without a witness to men, and we know that there will be an untold multitude saved during the Tribulation period (Revelation 7:9). So a remnant of the House of Israel is sealed with the Holy Spirit to be a witness to the world of impending judgement and the need to turn to God for salvation.

144,000 killed during the tribulation period?

Some say that the 144,000 Jews are the remnant of Israel that will survive the tribulation, and that the Church at this time will still be witnessing on Earth. This following information is something I just noticed recently in discussion with a good friend of mine, so correct me if I'm wrong. I believe that Israel as a nation will not be saved until they recognize their Messiah, at the end of the tribulation period (Zechariah 12:10) when Christ comes. The 144,000 Jews are saved at the start of the tribulation period, and are killed for their witness by the Antichrist (Revelation 13:7). In Revelation 14, the 144,000 are in heaven, which implies that they were all killed for their witness.

Revelation 14:1-3

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song **before the throne**, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were **redeemed from the earth**

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The fact that these 144,000 are in heaven before Christ's Second Coming, and the resurrection of Old Testament Saints which happens after the tribulation period, is explained in verse four. The 144,000 Jews are called the "firstfruits unto God"; The Feast of Firstfruits was when the Israelites offered the food they gathered at the beginning of the harvest for a thank-offering to God. Firstfruits also speaks of resurrection, and Jesus is described as being the "Firstfruits from among the dead", or the first Man to be resurrected in a new body, never to die again. So the 144,000 are the Firstfruits of the salvation of Israel, and of the resurrection of Old Testament Saints.

Revelation 14:4

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the **firstfruits unto God** and to the Lamb.

1st Corinthians 15:20

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the **firstfruits** of them that slept.

After the 144,000 are slain, God is still not left without a witness. In the following verses, several angels take up where the 144,000 left off, and preach the gospel to the whole world.

Revelation 14:6

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Arrayed in fine linen, white and clean

In chapter 19 we read that the Church will be arrayed in fine linen, white and clean, a picture of the Bride of Christ making herself ready for the Marriage.

Revelation 19:7

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: **for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**

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Marriage of the Lamb

There is further evidence that a pre-tribulation rapture is the correct viewpoint according to Scripture. The timing of the Rapture as set forth in Scripture uniquely parallels that of the traditional Jewish marriage. The Jewish tradition is described in Matthew 25, in the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins. Note, they were all virgins (professors), but only five brought oil, which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (only five were possessors). This is in keeping with the Scriptural teaching of the Rapture, that only those who are Born Again Christians (as opposed to nominal "Christians" who never experienced the new birth) will be caught up to be with Christ in heaven. Also note, these verses can't be used to teach a partial rapture theory, in which only some "worthy" Christians will be raptured, while the foolish ones will endure the tribulation period. The Bible states that while the Bridegroom tarried, they *all* slumbered and slept. There were none that were watching for His coming. The virgins (professing Christians) who were shut out of the marriage, knocked the door demanding entrance. The reply came back from their Lord, "I know you not"; Matthew 25:12. This Scripture proves that the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins does not teach a "partial rapture"; for the Lord could never say these words to one of His own. The Lord said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me";

According to the Jewish wedding tradition, the husband goes away to prepare a home for His bride. Once the home is prepared, He will come to the Bride's house at an unexpected hour, and take her to His own house, where they will have the honeymoon.

Matthew 25:10

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

After the wedding, there is usually a seven day honeymoon period, which according to [Rapture Alert](#) and [Favor Minded](#), links up nicely with the seven year tribulation period on Earth.

The Marriage Supper

If I am correct, the Marriage Supper usually occurs at the Bride's home. This therefore, may

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take place on Earth, during the Millennial Reign of Christ.

The attire of the Church is fine linen, white and clean, which reminds us of how Christ's blood has washed away our sin, and made us accepted in God's eyes. The next time we read of fine linen, white and clean is a few verses down the chapter. This chapter describes the Second Coming of Christ to the earth.

Revelation 19:11-14

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he (Jesus Christ) that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. **And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**

If Scripture interprets Scripture, then the armies which were in heaven must be the Church. For it could never be said that angels were arrayed in clean linen, for they have never been redeemed. So if we, the Church, ride out of heaven with Christ at His Second Coming to Earth, the Rapture must have already occurred.

The Last Trump

1st Corinthians 15:51-52

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The Apostle Paul states in 1st Corinthians 15:52, that believers will be translated to be with Christ at the "last trump". There are seven main feasts that the Lord instructed the children of Israel to observe.

The Feast of Passover (Pesach - Exodus 12:1-14)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah - Exodus 12:15-20)

The Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-11)

The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot or Pentecost - Exodus 34:22)

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The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah - Leviticus 23:24)
The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur - Leviticus 23:27)
The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot - Leviticus 23:34).

The first four feasts, the Spring feasts, have already found their fulfilment in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Passover was literally fulfilled when Jesus Christ - the Lamb of God (John 1:29), was sacrificed for the sins of the world upon that same day (Matthew 26:2). Immediately following this comes the Feast of Unleavened Bread, during which the Jewish people were to eat bread without yeast, which is symbolic of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ's body was in the tomb during those days, and as the Scriptures state, His body saw no corruption for there was no sin in Him (Psalm 16:10). On the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Jews celebrate the Feast of Firstfruits - the beginning of the barley harvest. Christ arose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits, becoming the Firstfruits from among the dead (1st Corinthians 15:20). Pentecost commemorates the date of the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, and falls fifty days after Firstfruits. This Feast was fulfilled when the Lord sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to indwell His Church (John 16:7, Acts 2:1). God literally wrote His law on our hearts on this date (Jeremiah 31:33).

The Autumn feasts are due to be fulfilled at Christ's return. They are the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. There are three trumpet blasts that are spoken of in Judaism, the "first trump", the "last trump" and the "great trump". The first trump is sounded during Pentecost, commemorating the giving of the law - during which a trumpet blast was heard which grew louder and louder (Exodus 19:16, 19). The last trump is sounded on Rosh HaShanah (Leviticus 23:24). The great trump is blown on Yom Kippur, signalling the return of the Messiah to Earth.

Rosh HaShanah in Hebrew means "the Head of the Year", as it marks the first day of the civil year. It is also known as "Yom Teruah", or the Day of the Awakening Blast. "Teruah" can also be translated as "shout". Paul states that the rapture will occur at the "last trump", during which the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a "shout" (1st Thessalonians 4:16). Those "asleep" in Christ will awaken (1st Thessalonians 4:14), and be caught up with those who are alive and remain to meet the Lord in the air. According to Jewish teaching, the gates of heaven are opened at Mussaf - the first service of Rosh HaShanah. The gates are closed again at Neilah - the last service of Yom Kippur. Revelation 4:1 gives us a miniature picture of the Rapture of the Church...

[Revelation 4:1-2](#)

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After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit:

John sees a door open in heaven (gates) and hears a trumpet (last trump) talking with him. Immediately he is translated into heaven (Rapture), where He sees the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul states that the Rapture will happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", 1st Corinthians 15:52. This opening and closing of the gates fits in with the Rapture, for the Church will enter into heaven at the beginning of the seven year period and will return out of heaven at the end of it.

Isaiah 26:2

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Rosh HaShanah is also sometimes referred to as "Yom HaDin" - the Day of Judgement (or the day of the resurrection of the dead), "Yom HaZikaron" - the day of Remembrance, "Yom HaKesah" - the Day of Concealment (of Christ's Bride in heaven) and "Ha Malech" - the King (or the day of the Coronation of the King). Rosh HaShanah is also known as the "Unknown Day", for it is the only feast which nobody knows the exact day it will occur, due to the fact that it begins on a new moon. The new moon is very difficult to see, and is usually best seen at sunset. Rosh HaShanah begins when two witnesses attest to the appearance of the new moon before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. As Jewish days begin at sunset, it is never known on which day Rosh HaShanah will officially begin, so the feast is celebrated over the two days. The Lord also said of His coming, that no man knows the day nor hour, only His Father in heaven (Mark 13:32). Rosh HaShanah begins a ten day countdown to Yom Kippur, also known as the Days of Awe, in which Jews repent of any sins they have committed over the past year. Between the Feast of Trumpets and Yom Kippur are seven days of Awe, which are symbolic of the seven year tribulation period. The final day is Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. In the Scriptures, this was the day the High Priest entered the Holy Place and sprinkled the blood of the sin offering upon the altar, making atonement for the sins of the people. It was the only day in which the Jews were permitted to afflict themselves as a sign of repentance for their sins (Leviticus 16:29). Yom Kippur will be fulfilled at the return of Christ to the earth, when the nation looks upon Him whom they pierced.

Zechariah 12:10-11

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one

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that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

The last feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, occurs five days after Yom Kippur and will be fulfilled during the Millennial Reign of Christ, and at the creation of the new heavens and new earth. Revelation 21:3 states, "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God". By examining the Jewish background to the feasts, many Christians believe that the Rapture of the Church will occur before the tribulation period begins, and could possibly become the fulfilment of the Jewish

[Feast of Trumpets](#)

Antichrist only to be revealed after the Rapture

The church of Thessalonica was very concerned about the timing of the Rapture. If Paul's words are to be taken literally, this church had apparently received a letter claiming to be from the apostles stating that the Second Coming of Christ to the earth had already happened. The Thessalonians were troubled about those believers who had died, and wondered what would happen to them seeing the resurrection had already taken place. Paul writes to reassure them that the Second Coming of Christ hadn't actually come yet, and he gave them some assurances that this was the case.

2nd Thessalonians 2:3

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (Christ's Second Coming to earth) shall not come, except there come a falling away first (apostasy), and that man of sin be revealed (Antichrist), the son of perdition;

2nd Thessalonians 2:6-8

And now ye know what withholdeth that he (Antichrist) might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work (Spirit of Antichrist): only he who now letteth (old English word for "hinders") will let (hinder), until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (Antichrist) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

So Paul gives a double assurance. Christ's Second Coming to Earth can't have already occurred because the Antichrist must be revealed before this happens. And the Antichrist can't

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be revealed until whatever is hindering his appearing is first removed. The Antichrist will be revealed to the world the day he confirms the peace agreement in the Middle East. This will trigger the start of Daniel's 70th week. But something is hindering the Antichrist being revealed (to the world) now. Further study reveals only one logical conclusion on the identity of what that is.

It's not Christ Himself. Jesus said in John 9:5, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world"; Jesus Christ is no longer physically in the world, He is in heaven. We know that God is omnipresent (He exists everywhere at all times). So the Spirit of God cannot be the One hindering the revelation of Antichrist, for God cannot be taken from the earth. If He was taken from the earth, nobody during the Tribulation period could be saved. But Jesus did say the Church was the light and salt of the earth, through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:13-14

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

I believe that the only thing hindering the Antichrist being revealed today is the Holy Spirit's influence in the world through the believers, holding the tide of sin back. The proof we have from Scripture that this Restrainer is indeed the Holy Spirit, can be found in the language used by Paul in 2nd Thessalonians itself.

2nd Thessalonians 2:6-7

And now ye know **what** withholdeth that he (Antichrist) might be revealed in his time: For the mystery of iniquity doth already work (Spirit of Antichrist): only **he** who now letteth (old English word for "hinders") will let (hinder), until he be taken out of the way.

Look at the words highlighted in bold in the above verses. No, Paul hasn't made a mistake in his Greek. This doesn't make sense in English, it should really read "now ye know **who** withholdeth". But Paul doesn't say that, and the reason why is because the only Person that can ever be described as being both neuter gender and masculine at the same time is God Himself in the form of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit's influence in this world is directed through Christ's body, the Church. Once the Church is taken out of the way (to heaven), that

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medium for influence will be temporarily lost, allowing the Antichrist to be revealed.

My friend Dean Haidas has confirmed to me that this is what the actual Greek rendering of these verses mean. The following explanation is in his own words...

In Greek, we need to focus on the word which means "to hold down", "to restrain". This word is **κατέχων**. When this word first appears in verse 6, it reads **To κατέχων**

..
To
in Greek means
The
in English. But in verse 7 it reads
Ο κατέχων

..
Ο
in Greek is masculine. Also note that the Omicron has changed to Omega in this word (
ο
has changed to
ω
). This change is very important when we read and write Greek. This change now means that this is a living being! So now we have someone who is masculine and alive, holding down the evil to come.

This would have to be the Holy Spirit, who is also inside all true believers in Christ. Verse 7 reads "until he is taken out of the way, then the lawless one will come".

This proves that in order for the Antichrist to be revealed, the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way. When this happens, all believers who have the Holy Spirit in them will also be taken out of the way (Rapture). Then the tribulation will begin.

Verse 6 - **To κατέχων** - **The one** who is holding down...

Verse 7 - **Ο κατέχων** - **He** who is holding down...

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Well I hope this has helped your understanding of timing of the Rapture of the Church. If you have any questions, just email, and I will try my best to help.

Source [Rapture Alert](#) , [Favor Minded](#) , [Rapture on Rosh HaShanah](#)