

Biblical Forensics©

“Deliverance before Judgment”

Part 8

In this segment we continue to explore and discuss Dr. John Walvoord's 50 facts furnishing ample evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Dr. Walvoord was a distinguished theologian of renowned scholarship at Dallas Theological Seminary. He was greatly respected among members in the theological community for his insights into Scriptural understanding. We pick up next with his list of important evidence:

The Work of the Holy Spirit

20. The Holy Spirit is the Restrainer of evil in the world. He cannot be taken out as prophesied unless the Church, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is taken out. -(2nd Thessalonians 2:1-12, supported by Genesis 6:3).

This identification of the restrainer with deep roots in church history is most appealing. The special presence of the Spirit as the indweller of saints will terminate abruptly at the “**Parousia**” (a noun that means "a coming" or "a presence.") as it began abruptly at Pentecost. If a search of the Greek New Testament were conducted, one would find that primarily this word (Parousia) refers to the Coming of the Lord Jesus. It can refer to either His second coming at the END of the 7-year Tribulation period -(Matthew 24:27, 37, 39; Revelation 19:11), or to His coming to Rapture His Church PRIOR to the 7-year period known as the Tribulation -(1st Corinthians 15:23; 1st Thessalonians 2:19; 5:23; James 5:8; 1st John 2:28). Once the body of Christ has been caught away to heaven, the Spirit's ministry will revert back to what he did for believers during the OT period. His function of restraining evil through the body of Christ -(John 16:7-11; 1 John 4:4) will cease similarly to the way He terminated His striving in the days of Noah - (Gen. 6:3). At that point the reins will be removed from lawlessness and the Satanically inspired rebellion will begin. It appears that to **“katechon”** ("what is holding back") was well known at Thessalonica as a title for the Holy Spirit on whom the readers had come to depend in their personal attempts to combat lawlessness -(1 Thessalonians. 1:6; 4:8; 5:19; 2nd Thessalonians. 2:13).

Dr. Gerald Stanton cites six reasons why this passage should be understood to refer to the Holy Spirit's restraining ministry through the church:

(1) By mere elimination, the Holy Spirit must be the restrainer. All other possibilities fall short of meeting the requirements of one who is to hold in check the forces of evil until the manifestation of Antichrist.

(2) The Wicked One is a personality and his operations include the realm of the spiritual. The restrainer must likewise be a personality and of a

spiritual order, to resist the wiles of the Devil and to hold Antichrist in check until the time of his revealing.

(3) To achieve all that is to be accomplished, the restrainer must be a member of the Godhead. He must be stronger than the Man of Sin, and stronger than Satan.

(4) This present age is in a particular sense the "dispensation of the Spirit," for He works in a way uncommon to other ages as an abiding Presence within the children of God.

(5) The work of the Spirit since His advent has included the restraint of evil. The Spirit is God's righteous Agent for the age, and there are many reasons to be grateful for His restraining hand upon this world's iniquity. None but the Lawful One could restrain this world's iniquity.

(6) It is not difficult to establish that although the Spirit was not resident on earth during Old Testament days, whatever restraint was exerted was by the Spirit. -(Isaiah. 59:19). The wickedness of Noah's day and the fact that life went on as usual in blindness to impending destruction is used of the Spirit in vivid portrayal of careless and wicked men upon whom Tribulation judgment shall fall.

21. The Holy Spirit will be removed before the **"lawless one"** is revealed. - (2nd Thessalonians 2:6-8). That lawless one will certainly be revealed in the Tribulation. In fact, the Tribulation begins with the signing of the covenant between the lawless one and Israel. That act will reveal the Antichrist's identity -(Daniel 9:27a).

The man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 is the Antichrist who will come on the world scene at the beginning of the Day of the Lord. This Day, sometimes called the "end times," **starts after the Rapture of the Church in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** -(cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). The Antichrist is given the title "man of lawlessness" (one of 33 names in the Old Testament and 13 in the New Testament) because he will oppose in every way the Biblical God and His law. He will be completely lawless. Daniel 7 speaks of this man as a "boastful" king who will "try to change the set times and the laws" -(verses 11 and 25). He will come offering a false peace to the world and will with his charismatic personality, incredible promises, and breathtaking miracles unite all nations politically, economically, and religiously under his leadership. At the same time, he will make a covenant with Israel for three and one-half years (cf. Daniel 9:27, where "seven" indicates seven years). In the middle of the seven years, the man of lawlessness will break his covenant with Israel, stop their sacrifices -(Daniel 9:27), and enter the temple to set himself up as "god" and demand worship -(2nd Thessalonians 2:4). This is the "abomination that causes desolation" that Jesus spoke of in Mark 13:14.

22. The **“falling away”** in 2nd Thessalonians 2:3 is better understood in its context as **“the departure”**. To augment Dr. Walvoord’s point, the expression **“the departure”** was used by the first six English Bibles prior to the King James Bible. The KJV Bible translators opted for the term **“falling away”** during a period of time when there was an effort to seek reconciliation with the Roman Catholic elements who were advancing and attempting to undermine the translation of the KJV Bible. Instead they were promoting their own Jesuit Bible.

(See: <http://www.fivedoves.com/letters/apr2015/pastorbob45-2.htm> for a complete study on the Greek word **“he apostasia”** titled “Pre-Tribulation Truth Part 3”).

23. The work of the Holy Spirit making the Church like Christ in that they submit to death and persecution, whereas the Tribulation saints cry out for vengeance -(Revelation 6:10).

The Hermeneutical Argument

24. Only the Pre-Tribulation view allows for a **truly literal interpretation** in all of the Old Testament and New Testament passages regarding the Great Tribulation.
25. Only the Pre-Tribulation position clearly distinguishes the Church from Israel and identifies God’s dealing with each as well as defining the necessity of an interval of time between the Rapture and the Second Coming.

The Church began on the Day of Pentecost with a visitation of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2. The Church ends at the Rapture with the translation of living saints and the resurrection of those who have died in Christ -(1st Thessalonians 4:13-18). Until the Rapture, God is gathering out from the Gentiles a people for His name -(Acts 15:14) and combining them with the elect remnant of Israel -(Romans 11:5) into one new body called the Church -(Ephesians 2:11-3:13). This great task is accomplished by a unique ministry of the Holy Spirit only during the Church Age called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul taught in 1st Corinthians 12:13, “**For by one Spirit were we all [Jewish and Gentile Believers] baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.**” This work of the Holy Spirit is only for the Church. Therefore, it is not surprising that since the Tribulation cannot start until after the Church is completed and taken to heaven in the Rapture that the man of lawlessness is restrained through the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth indwelling Church Age Believers. This current work of the Holy Spirit is unique to the Church, Dr. John Walvoord explains. We search the prophetic Scriptures in vain for any reference to baptism of the Spirit except in regard to the Church, the body of Christ -(1st Corinthians. 12:13).

The Church is not found in the Bible until Jesus said he was going to build His church and that is found in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17. These are the only two places in the Gospels where the name or word "church" is found. However, from Acts to Revelation, the word "church" is mentioned **75X** times, **and always separate from Israel**. Doctrine is based on building blocks, drawn upon through a comprehensive study of the major doctrines found in the Bible. It is not until Acts 2 and following that the **clear picture of a separate body we know as the "Church" begins to be defined, fleshed out, and where its mission and particular blessings are defined, its message, purpose, and promises are made to the followers of Jesus Christ**.

The specifics of a seven-year gap is based totally on the fact that God's plan for 70 weeks to bring about the end of sin is found in Daniel 9:23-27. History has shown that 69 of those seventy weeks specifically related to the Jews are completed. Since Christ's resurrection, we have been in a "Gap" where the clock for Israel has stopped and the clock for the Church Age is active. At the Rapture, the Church Age clock ends, and the clock for Israel begins to start ticking off the last seven years. This is what is known in prophecy as Daniel's 70th week.

- 26.** All believers must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ -(2nd Corinthians 5:10). This event is never mentioned in the account of events surrounding the Second Coming.

This is a confirmation that we are held accountable for our time here on earth, what we did with what God gave us, how we spent our time, how we treated others, used our talents, and treasure. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SALVATION. Paul's words merely point out the fact that God is equitable, and just, but our rewards in Heaven are determined by how we lived here and now. This is not about works-righteousness but about accountability.

- 27.** The **"four and twenty elders"** in Revelation 4:1-5, 4:10, 5:8, 5:14, 11:16, and 19:4 are representative of the Church. Thus it is necessary that the Church be undivided and brought to glory before events of the Tribulation begin.

The Greek word translated here as "elders" is never used to refer to angels, only to men, particularly to men of a certain age who are mature and able to rule the Church. The word elder would be inappropriate to refer to as angels, **who do not age**. Their mode of dress would also indicate these are men. While angels do appear in white, white garments are more commonly found on believers, symbolizing Christ's righteousness imputed to us at salvation -(Revelation 3:5,18; 19:8).

The golden crowns worn by the elders also indicate these are men, not angels. Crowns are never promised to angels, nor are angels ever seen wearing them. The word translated “crown” here refers to **the victor’s crown, worn by those who have successfully competed and won the victory, as Christ promised** -(Revelation 2:10; 2nd Timothy 4:8; and James 1:12).

28. There is clearly a coming of Christ for His Bride before the Second Coming to Earth. -(Revelation 19:7-10).

29. Tribulation saints are not translated (Raptured) at the Second Coming of Christ but carry on ordinary activities. These specifically include farming, construction, and giving birth. -(Isaiah 65:20-25).

The tribulation saints are, quite simply, saints living during the tribulation. The Bible indicates that a great number of people during the tribulation will place their faith in Jesus Christ. In his vision of heaven, John sees a vast number of these tribulation saints who have been martyred by the Antichrist: ***“There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands”*** -(Revelation 7:9). When John asks who they are, he is told, ***“These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”*** -(Revelation 7:14).

30. The Judgment of the Gentile nations following the Second Coming - (Matthew 25:31-46) indicates that both the saved and the lost are in a natural body, which would be impossible if the Tribulation had taken place at the Second Coming.

The Judgment of the Nations, or Gentiles (the Greek word can mean either), takes place on earth after Christ comes to reign, as verse 31 clearly states: ***“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him.”*** If we are right in identifying it with Joel 3, the location is the Valley of Jehoshaphat, outside Jerusalem -(Joel: 3:2). The nations will be judged according to their treatment of Christ's Jewish brethren during the Tribulation -(Joel 3:1-2, Joel 3:12-14; Matthew 25:31-46).

It is important to notice that three classes are mentioned—sheep, goats, and Christ's brethren. The first two classes, over whom Christ sits in judgment, are Gentiles living during the Tribulation. The third class is Christ's faithful Jewish brethren who refuse to deny His Name during the Tribulation in spite of towering persecution.

31. The separation of the saved and the lost would be unnecessary if the Translation (Rapture) took place at the same time as the Second Coming

and requires a regathered Israel, or if all the saved had previously been separated by a translation (Rapture) at the Second Coming,

Differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming

- 32.** At the Rapture, the Church meets Jesus Christ in the air. -(1st Thessalonians 4:16-17). At the Second Coming, Christ returns to the Mount of Olives with the Church. -(Revelation 19:6-14).

Revelation 9:14: Accompanying Christ are the ***“armies of heaven”*** referring to **all believers who have been taken to heaven** (in the Rapture, which will have occurred at some point prior to this). Here the believers will be returning to earth with Christ as part of his vast army. They will be dressed in pure white linen, as noted also in Revelation 19:8. Some suggest that this army will be angels because Christ had spoken of returning with his angels -(Matthew 24:30-31). Most likely, however, this army will be believers because Revelation 17:14 says that the victory will come through the Lamb **“and his people.”** The believers will come with Christ on white horses. They will not come to fight, however, for there will not need to be a battle. Christ will conquer with his potent word (Revelation 19:15).

- 33.** At the time of the Rapture, the Mount of Olives is unchanged. At the Second Coming, it is divided (split in two) forming a valley east of Jerusalem. -(Zechariah 14:4).
- 34.** At the time of the Rapture, saints are translated (Raptured). -(1st Thessalonians 4:16-17). No saints are translated at the time of the Second Coming. -(Revelation 19:6-14).
- 35.** At the time of the Rapture, the world is not judged for sin, but descends deeper into sin. At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the world is judged by the King of kings. -(2nd Thessalonians 1:7-9)

The following people will be judged when Christ returns.

- **Those Living From The Nation Israel**

When Christ returns, He will judge those from the nation Israel, who have survived the Great Tribulation. This judgment is described in Ezekiel 20:34-38. Jesus also illustrates this judgment in Matthew 25:1-30 in the parables of the ten maidens and the ten talents. These survivors of the Great Tribulation will be regathered from all over the world to the land of Israel. This will follow the victory of Christ over His enemies at Armageddon. The unrighteous will be purged from the righteous and sent away. Jesus illustrated this truth in the parable of the talents. ***“As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*** -(Matthew 25:30).

- **The Gentile Nations**

Jesus spoke of judging the living Gentile (non-Jewish) nations at His Second Coming. These Gentiles are people who are still upon the earth during the Great Tribulation. They are the living, not the dead. The dead will be raised to judgment in the future. The prophet Isaiah wrote of these. ***“Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, He takes up the isles like fine dust. All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.”*** -(Isaiah 40:15, 17). They will be brought to the city of Jerusalem and judged in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The righteous will enter into God's Millennial kingdom while the unrighteous will be taken to judgment. Like the unbelievers from the nation Israel, they will probably be killed at this time. Their final judgment is still future.

- **The Old Testament Saints**

There will also be a judgment of the Old Testament saints. They will be raised from the dead and judged. Daniel wrote. ***“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”*** (Daniel 12:2). ***“For the Son of Man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay everyone for what has been done.”*** -(Matthew 16:27).

- **The Tribulation Saints**

When Christ returns, those who were killed during the Great Tribulation will also be judged. They will be **raised from the dead in a glorified body, receive rewards, and will enter into the kingdom of God.** In the Book of Revelation we read. ***“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”*** -(Revelation 20:4-6).

The church, the body of Christ, will have already been judged and rewarded before Christ returns.

- 36.** The Translation (Rapture) of the Church is pictured as a **“deliverance from the Day of Wrath**, whereas the coming of Jesus Christ is a “deliverance” for those who have suffered under severe Tribulation. The theme of “deliverance” before “judgment” is an integral aspect of God’s plan for the righteous followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are no fewer than **637 specific passages dealing with the “theme” of “deliverance before “judgment”**. Of all the different competing views on the Rapture, only the Pre-Tribulation Pre-Millennial view meets the requirements of God’s “theme” of “Deliverance before Judgment”.
- 37.** The Rapture is only for the saved -(Titus 2:13-14), while the Tribulation and Second Coming deal with the entire world. The **judgment pattern is** an inherent feature of God’s rule as explained in the Mosaic covenant - (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28). It is **the Biblical answer to the problem of evil**.
- 38.** No unfulfilled prophecy stands between the Church and the Rapture. Many signs must be fulfilled before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
- 39.** No passage in either the Old Testament or New Testament deals with the resurrection of the saints at the Second Coming nor mentions the Translation of living saints at that same time.

The word "saint" is derived from a Greek verb **“hagiazō”** whose basic meaning is "to set apart," "sanctify," or "make holy." In the history of the Old Testament religion, the idea of holiness or separateness was inherent in the concept of God.

This idea of the separateness of God and His people is carried forward in the New Testament, which was written by Jews (except possibly Luke-Acts) who interpreted God's covenant with Israel through the teachings of Christ. Those who were dedicated to the teachings of Christ were frequently called saints by these writers (e.g., Matthew 27:52; Acts 9:13; 26:10; Revelation 14:12). Six of Paul's letters to churches are addressed to saints -(Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians).

Saints, in the New Testament, are never deceased individuals who have been canonized by the church and given sainthood. They are **living individuals who have dedicated themselves to the worship and service of the one true God as revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ**. Even the children of such parents are called "sanctified" -(1st Corinthians 7:14-15). That is, they are considered undefiled by paganism if at least one of their parents is a Christian. **All saved are sanctified, but not all sanctified are saved.**

The Nature of the Tribulation

- 40.** Only the Pre-Tribulation view maintains the distinction between the “Great Tribulation” and the Tribulation in general, which will befall all humanity as the result of sin and evil in this life.
- 41.** The Great Tribulation is properly understood in the Pre-Tribulation view as a preparation for the restoration of Israel. -(Deuteronomy 4:29-30; Jeremiah 30:4-11; Daniel 9:24-27; Daniel 12:1-2).
- 42.** Not one single passage in the Old Testament which discusses the Tribulation mentions the Church. That is an important point in the Dispensational construct differentiating a unique difference between the Church and Israel.
- 43.** In contrast to Mid-Tribulation, or Pre-Wrath views, the Pre-Tribulation view offers an adequate explanation for the beginning of the Great Tribulation in Revelation 6. These others are clearly refuted by the plain teaching of Scripture that the Great Tribulation begins long before the 6th trumpet of Revelation 11.
- 44.** There is no proper groundwork provided that the 7th trumpet of Revelation is the last trumpet of 1st Corinthians 15. It is accepted only on the basis of assumption. The Pre-Tribulation view maintains the proper distinction between the prophetic trumpets of the Church and the trumpets of the Tribulation.
- 45.** The Unity of Daniel’s 70th Week is maintained by the Pre-Tribulation view. By contrast, the Mid-Tribulation view destroys the unity and confuses the program for Israel and the Church. The Post-Tribulation view usually denies the clear teaching of the 70th Week by subverting it into some form of allegory.
- 46.** The gathering of saints after the Tribulation is done by angels, whereas the gathering of the Church is done by “The Lord Himself” -(John 14:3; 1st Thessalonians 4:17).
- 47.** Revelation 22:17-20 states, ***“And the Spirit and the Bride say come, And he that heareth, let him say come ... He who testifieth of these things saith, “Yea, I come quickly, AMEN COME LORD JESUS””***.
- 48.** At the Rapture Satan is not bound, while at the Second Coming Satan is bound and thrown into the abyss.
- 49.** No passage dealing with the Resurrection of saints at the Second Coming, in either Testament ever mentions a Rapture of living saints at the same time.

Dr. Walvoord was a scholar of renown. We lost him a few years ago when he went home at the age of 95 to be with the Lord. His methodical analysis of Scripture will be greatly missed. His skill and scholarship was

amply evident in his ability to reconcile confusing or what might be seen as confusing passages.

Pastor Bob