

The Great Tribulation and The Church

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I. Introductory Remarks.

In the study on the [Second Coming of Jesus Christ](#) it was established that His coming would not take place until the end of the "Great Tribulation" period of 3 1/2 years. It was also established that there are no scriptures that indicate a rapture or secret appearing of Jesus prior to the Second Coming, but there are those scriptures that do indicate that the Church will be protected or kept during this terrible time that is to come on the earth.

In this study the objective will be to examine what happens to the church during this time and what God's plans are for the ministry of this glorious church just prior to the great tribulation.

II. The Great Tribulation.

The "Great Tribulation" is that period of time which immediately precedes the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the second time. It is the last three and a half years in the end of the present age. It is the last half of Daniel's seventy week prophecy. (See addendum #3 for further explanation)

The tribulation period will be the darkest page in the history of the world. All that has gone before, is as nothing to the horrors that will be enacted under the reign of the blasphemies of the antichrist. (*W.H. Offiler*)

The tribulation period is the period of time during the blowing of the seventh trumpet judgment when the seven bowls of God's final judgment and wrath are being poured out upon the earth. (See Revelation 16:2-17) Daniel speaks of this time as a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and ***there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation***, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.

- **Jesus also said, "There will be "Great Tribulation", such as has not been since the beginning of the world."**

Matthew 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been

since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

At the beginning of this period a great separation take place in the church and those who made themselves ready were found worthy to escape to the place of refuge and the others were left behind to die by the sword of the antichrist or commit apostasy. This is the time known as the "great falling away."

2 Thessalonians 2:3 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the **falling away** comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

Revelation 13:7 *And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

Revelation 13:16-17 *And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

III. God's Plan For The Church During The Great Tribulation.

Some of God's people shall be accounted worthy to escape the "Great Tribulation". It's important to understand, for the sake of this study, when reference is made to the "Great Tribulation", I am only talking about the final 3 1/2 years of God's ultimate wrath.

There is much tribulation that goes on in varying degrees immediately prior to the "Great Tribulation", which includes the seven seal judgments and the first six trumpet judgments. It is my conviction that the Church will be ministering in the full power and authority of Christ during the time immediately prior to the "Great Tribulation". We shall look at this a little later in the study.

Luke 21:34-36 *"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. "Watch therefore, **and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things** that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

- In the following passage God's people are told to shut the doors and hide for a little moment, until the indignation or the tribulation is past. The word

“indignation” speaks of the fury of God's wrath and His displeasure with sin.

Isaiah 26:20-21 *Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the **indignation** is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.*

- Zephaniah speaks of a gathering together before this terrible decree is given. He says, **"it may be that we will be hidden** during the outpouring of God's wrath."

Zephaniah 2:1-3 *Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, before the decree is issued, before the day passes like chaff, before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, **before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you!** Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. **It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.***

- In the Book of Revelation we have a picture of a woman clothed with the sun the moon and the stars, who has been accounted worthy to escape the "Great Tribulation".

Revelation 12:1 *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.*

Revelation 12:6 *Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

This passage of scripture will be discussed in greater detail later in this study. In most of these instances concerning the Church's safety during the time of the "Great Tribulation", it hints of a possible separation in the Church at this time. Luke 21 shows us that we must be worthy to escape. Zephaniah shows us that it may be that we shall be hidden and now here in Revelation 12 we see that there is a remnant that is left behind to face the beast during the "Great Tribulation". Revelation 11 also show a separation when the temple is measured.

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

It will be important in this study to determine what constitutes one being preserved or protected and also why it is that some will not be. This truth is understood when we see how the truth concerning the Bride of Christ relates to the end time scenario.

IV. The Bride of Christ in Relationship to Great Tribulation.

One of the most important truths surrounding the end time environment is the truth or mystery concerning the Bride of Christ. You see, I believe, it is His bride that He is ultimately watching out for to protect during this time. The concept or truth concerning the Bride of Christ is the centerpiece to this whole mystery.

1. The Bride Of Christ Is Mentioned In Scripture.

Ephesians 5:32 *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

We, the Church, have been espoused or engaged to Jesus the bridegroom, who is to be the husband.

2 Corinthians 11:2 *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

Isaiah 62:3-5 *You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God... But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; **and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.***

Romans 7:4 *....that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead.*

The apostle Paul compares the relationship of a husband and wife to the relationship of Christ and His Church.

Ephesians 5:25-27 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

2. The Bride Must Be Thoroughly Cleansed Before Jesus Returns.

In this same passage that Jesus likens the relationship of a husband and wife to the relationship He has with the Church, it says, "Jesus is going to present to Himself a glorious Church or Bride without spot or wrinkle or any such thing". Before Jesus can return His Bride must be thoroughly purged of sin.

In the following passage Isaiah speaks of the cleansing and purifying that must take place in the Church, before she enters into the tribulation period.

Isaiah 4:1-2 *And in that day **seven women** shall take hold of **one man**, saying, "We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; **only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach.**" In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped. (See verses 3-6 also)*

Notice that it says in verse 1, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, 'We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach.'"

This passage is clearly speaking of the Bride of Christ and her relationship to the Bridegroom. Only Jesus can take away our reproach and seven women speak of the perfection that the Bride shall experience.

(Note concerning perfection – Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Perfection comes when we experience the fulfillment of the [Day of Atonement](#), a day in which we cease from all of our labors. It is something that only Christ can do. Just as the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost were fulfilled in New Testament Christianity, so also must the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles be fulfilled. Perfection cannot be understood without an understanding and revelation of how the Feasts of Israel fit into this picture. This is another study of its own)

This passage of scripture has a lot to say about what's going to happen to the Church prior to the "Great Tribulation". Without getting too deep into the truths concerning the "Feasts of Israel" and their relationship to the end time scenario, this Scripture speaks of the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. Under the Old Covenant the Day of Atonement was the one day in the year in which all the sins of the people in the nation of Israel were completely cleansed. It prepared them for the coming feast of tabernacles.

Under the New Covenant the Day of Atonement is a day near the end of the age in which all of those Christians, who have prepared themselves shall be

completely cleansed and purified before the marriage of Christ and His church during the feast of tabernacles in the wilderness spoken of in Revelation chapter 12. This passage shall be dealt with more in detail later in the study.

- Revelation 19 shows us there is a preparation that must take place before the Bride can be presented to Jesus. It says, "His wife has made herself ready."

Revelation 19:7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

As we have seen from the testimony of these scriptures, God is going to have a great and glorious Church in these last days. It will be out of this Church that He shall choose a bride for His Son. It will be those in the Church who have made themselves ready and measured up to the stature of the fullness of Christ who will be chosen. These are those who are worthy to escape the "Great Tribulation".

3. The Parable Of The Ten Virgins Illustrates The Truth Concerning The Bride Of Christ - Matthew 25:1-13.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins found in Matthew 25 illustrates to us how we can be ready to be a part of the Bride of Christ and escape the wrath of the "Great Tribulation". This parable is the key passage of scripture to this great mystery concerning the Bride of Christ. Keep in mind that this chapter is a continuation of chapter 24, which is one of the clearest chapters in the whole Bible concerning End Time Events.

There are some Key Words and Thoughts in this parable that need to be looked at in order to get a clear picture as to what we can do to prepare for this great event.

Key Words in This Parable.

- **Key Words: Virgin**

The word "virgin" means clean, pure and holy and applies to all Christians who have come to personally know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God doesn't use words as purity, holiness or righteousness to describe an unbeliever. All ten virgins were described in this manner, which shows that there will be a separation of Christians in this last hour of the Church.

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to

Christ.

The "New Thayer's Greek English Lexicon" defines chaste in this passage as being pure from carnality, chaste, modest, pure from every fault, immaculate.

- **Key Words: Lamps**

Lamps represent the unfolding of God's Word in our lives to direct our steps unto Him in a more perfect way. All ten virgins had lamps, which once again shows us that all ten virgins were Christians.

Psalm 119:105 *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*

- **Key Words: Oil**

Oil is the symbol used in scriptures to signify the Holy Spirit. All ten virgins had some oil, but the five wise virgins had an extra supply. We receive our extra supply when we are fully immersed into the Spirit through Spirit Baptism.

1 Samuel 16:13 *Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.*

All that have been born again have been given a supply of oil. The word anointing in the following passages means to smear or rub with oil.

1 John 2:20 *But you have an anointing from the Holy One...*

1 John 2:27 *But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you...*

The deciding factor in this parable that makes the difference between the wise and the foolish virgins was the extra preparation to obtain a larger proportion of oil, which only comes by being baptized in the Holy Spirit; and then continuing to stir the gift of the Spirit up in your life.

Those that were ready went into the Marriage and those that were not ready did not go in.

Key Words: The door was shut.

This shows there will be a separation of Christians in the last days. The key thought to show the difference separating the wise from the foolish virgins is

preparation.

Revelation 19:7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

There is definitely a preparation that must go on if we are to be a part of the Bride of Christ, who shall be counted worthy to escape the "Great Tribulation".

2 Timothy 2:20-21 **But** in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

It says, "if we will purge ourselves from the works of carnality, then we will be a vessel of honor." We have choice of changing from a seldom used vessel to one that is greatly valued and often used as a vessel of honor. Again, there is only so much purging we can do when laboring with the Holy Spirit. It will take the Day of Atonement, a Day when we cease from our labors and Christ Himself becomes the finisher of our faith.

Who has the prerogative? Is it God's sovereignty concerning who is a part of the Bride of Christ? No, because it says, "if a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor".

- **Key Words: Midnight Hour**

The midnight hour speaks of the dark hour at the end of the age. Let us not wait until "the midnight hour" is upon us before we start to do our preparing. Now is the time to get that extra supply of oil in our vessels.

It was at midnight when the Lord went through the midst of Egypt and smote them with the last plague that caused all of their firstborn to die. It was also at this midnight hour that the children of Israel were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh.

Exodus 11:4-5 Then Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: `About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the first born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the first born of the maidservant who is behind the handmill, and the firstborn of the beasts.

They went out at midnight on the wings of an eagle, the wonderful delivering power of the Holy Spirit.

Exodus 19:4 *'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.*

In similar manner, and in almost the exact wording, He has promised to take out His church in the end of this present age.

Revelation 12:14 *But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

Another Exodus is coming. It will come at the midnight hour of this age, and will again be heard that exceeding great bitter cry of those who have sold their Birthright for the mess of pottage of worldly pleasure. Once again the judgments of God will fall. Kings upon their thrones and maidservants behind the mill, will soon realize that "One has been taken, and the other left," The glory of the Lord will vanish from the earth for the period of the "Great Tribulation". (W.H. Offiler)

4. The Church Will Be Measured To Reveal The Bride Of Christ.

God is going to measure the temple of God, which is His Church and there will be those who will not meet up to the measuring process.

Revelation 11:1-2 *Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. "But **leave out the court which is outside the temple**, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months.*

The New Testament Church is the temple of God. We are the temple that God is going to measure. God no longer dwells in temples made with hands, but dwells in believers, the Church of the living God.

2 Corinthians 6:16 *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

Ephesians 2:19-22 *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.*

This spiritual house is growing unto a Holy temple in the Lord. This is the temple that God is going to measure.

5. The Standard by Which God Will Measure The Church.

- **She shall be chaste and pure from every fault.**

2 Corinthians 11:2 *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

The word chaste means: Innocent, modest, perfect, clean and pure. (Vines) says chaste signifies pure from every fault, immaculate, pure from carnality.

- **She shall be holy, without spot or blemish.**

God is looking for a bride, who will be a help meet for His Son, someone who is commensurate to Jesus. He's looking for a bride in all her glory, having no spot, wrinkle or any such thing. It is not that our sinful body will be done away with. It's that we will have brought our sinful body into subjection to the new man in Christ.

Ephesians 5:27...*that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

- **She shall measure up to the stature and fullness of Christ.**

The Bride of Christ will measure up to the stature of the fullness of Christ in authority, power and character. She will be commensurate to Jesus in every aspect.

Ephesians 4:13 *...till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...*

Since coming into the stature of the fullness of Christ is the measure that we shall be measured by it will be important for us to look at some of the scriptures that pertain to coming into this type of maturity and readiness.

6. Requirements and Helps for Measuring Up to Bride Maturity.

- **You must have a genuine Born Again experience - John 3:3.**

- **Must be established in the elementary principles of Christ** - Hebrews 6:1-3.

All of the elementary principles of Christ must be **established in our lives** including water baptism and Spirit baptism in order for God to permit us to go onto perfection.

Water baptism is our only experience in the Christian walk where we have that opportunity take on the Name of the Bridegroom. (See *Ephesians 3:14-15*)

- **We must seek to walk in the fullness of the Spirit** - Galatians 5:16.

Walking in the fullness of the Spirit means that our lives are being directed and controlled at all times by the Holy Spirit.

- **We must learn to accept trials and tribulations with joy** - James 1:2

Trials and tribulations are given to us to perfect our faith.

- **We must read and study the Word of God** - 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

The word of God is given to us for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect and thoroughly furnished.

- **Love is the most essential ingredient that goes into the work of perfection** - Colossians 3:14.

It is the bond of perfection that ties everything together.

- **We must have a strong, healthy dose of the fear of God** - 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Personal holiness is perfected in the fear of God. It is important to keep in mind that when we speak of perfection, there is only so much we can do. There will come a time at the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement when we cease from our works and the Holy Spirit completes that which was begun in us. It is Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith and it is He who completes that which He began.

Hebrews 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Philippians 1:6 *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good*

work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...

7. The Bride's Ministry Prior to the Great Tribulation.

It is my conviction that the Bride of Christ will actually minister to the world in the stature of the fullness of Christ. Everything that happened during Christ's ministry on the earth during His 3 1/2 years of ministry shall be duplicated once again.

John 14:12 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.*

Only this time it will be accomplished by a many membered body, which is able to do much more than Jesus did, because of His limits of space and time.

- **There are many scriptures that make reference to this glorious ministry**

Ephesians 1:22-23 *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Matthew 24:14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

We must keep in mind that God is a fair and just God. I believe He is going to give the world one last chance to experience the majesty of His power and glory through His purified Bride, who has now been made holy without spot or wrinkle. A mighty revival shall occur throughout the nations through the many membered body ministering in the fullness of the Christ, which now fills all in all. This is all occurring during the trumpet judgments that are to come before the antichrist is revealed and the Bride is taken to her place of refuge during the great tribulation.

Isaiah 60:1-5 *Arise, shine; For your light has come! and the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. 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. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. "Lift up your eyes all around, and see: they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.*

The length of time that the glorious church will minister on the earth before being

taken out to the wilderness is scripturally undetermined. Some speculations are:

- Five years. From the Day of Atonement to the beginning of the feast of tabernacles (7/10 to 7/15) equals five days, a year for a day.
- Three and one-half years. It would be commensurate to Jesus' 3 1/2 year ministry.
- One year. This is the 'year' of the Lord's favor as in Isaiah 62:2.
- Nine months. This is the natural gestation period (Revelation 12:2-5; Isaiah 66:7-8).

8. The Bride's Place of Refuge During The "Great Tribulation".

We have already seen that those who measure up to the stature of the fullness of Christ shall be preserved during the "Great Tribulation", but now we will want to take a look at how God is going to do this.

Revelation 12:1 *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.*

- **The woman spoken of here is the Bride of Christ.**

She is the portion of the Church that has attained to the stature of the fullness of Christ spoken of in Ephesians 4:13 & 5:27. She also represents the five wise virgin class of Matthew 25 and the inner Temple that is measured in Revelation 11.

There are several key words in the passage that show us the woman spoken of here does represent the Bride of Christ.

- **Key Word: The Sun** – The sun is a type of the Father as it represents His glory.

Psalms 84:11 *For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory...*

- **Key Word: The Moon** – The moon reflects the glory of the sun, as Jesus reflected the glory of the Father.

Notice that it says, "*the moon under the woman's feet*". The Bride of Christ stands upon her Chief Cornerstone, who is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:20-22 ...having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord...

Key Word: The Stars – The stars represent the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers.

Genesis 15:5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." (See also Genesis 22:17)

The eternal power and Godhead are revealed through the creation of the world. This once again shows us that the sun, moon and the stars represent the eternal Godhead.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...

The picture we see in this passage of scripture is a picture of the Bride of Christ being clothed with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are created symbols of the Triune God. Here then is the Bride of Christ clothed with the Divine glory of the Father, standing securely on the atonement of the Son of God, and crowned with the full power and glory of the Holy Spirit.

- **Satan tries to destroy the man child and the woman.**

Verses 2-5 talk about the man child that actually gets taken up into heaven at this time. In this study we are not concerned about the man child or who he represents, except to know that he comes forth from the Bride. It is he who Satan tries to kill, but because the man child is caught up to God and His throne he is now angry with the woman or the bride and begins to make war with her.

Revelation 12:5-6 And she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

- **The Woman flees into the wilderness on the wings of an eagle.**

In verses 7-13 war breaks out in heaven and Satan is cast down to the earth once and for all. He knows his time is short, so he persecutes the church, but God in His sovereignty rescues her out of Satan's grip.

Revelation 12:13-14 *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

The woman or the Bride of Christ flees into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God. She stays there for 1,260 days which is 3 1/2 years of the great tribulation. This is a place where she is nurtured and provided for by God during this terrible time that is yet to come upon the face of the earth.

- **We shall be kept from this terrible hour.**

Revelation 3:10 *"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

As we have seen, the word keep means to guard, to cause one to escape in safety out of the power and assaults of the enemy.

- **Escape via the wings of a great eagle.**

We now see that God has given to the Bride of Christ wings of a great eagle to flee from the presence of the serpent. We must ask ourselves now, what does God mean when He speaks of eagle wings?

Eagle wings speak of the supernatural deliverance of the Holy Spirit. Israel went out on Eagles Wings--The wonderful power of the Holy Spirit of God. In similar manner, and in almost exact wording, God has promised to take out His Church at the end of this present age, which is almost upon us.

Exodus 19:4 *You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself.*

The supernatural deliverance of God brought forth a strong people as the children of Israel left Egypt.

Psalms 105:37-42 *He also brought them out with silver and gold, And there was none feeble among His tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed, For the fear of them had fallen upon them. He spread a cloud for a covering, And fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and He brought quail, And satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and water gushed out; It ran in the dry places like a river.*

Isaiah 40:31 They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 5:26-30 He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the end of the earth; surely they shall come with speed, swiftly. No one will be weary or stumble among them, No one will slumber or sleep; nor will the belt on their loins be loosed, nor the strap of their sandals be broken; Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses' hooves will seem like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind. Their roaring will be like a lion, they will roar like young lions; yes, they will roar and lay hold of the prey; they will carry it away safely, and no one will deliver. {30} In that day they will roar against them like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks to the land, behold, darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened by the clouds. (See Joel chapter 2 for parallel passage)

This is prophetic passage of scripture speaking of the Bride being called by God to the wilderness. Verse 30 speaks of the "Great Tribulation" where it says, "Behold, darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened by the clouds." It also says in verse 27, "no one is weary or stumbles," which is the terminology used for eagle wing deliverance.

- **The place of refuge.**

Now that we see that God does have a plan for saving His glorious Bride during the "Great Tribulation", let's look at this place of refuge in more detail.

Luke 17:34-37 "I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. "Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. "Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left." And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

Many scholars have used this scripture to describe the rapture, but let's remember that each piece of an interlocking puzzle must fit in with the whole. It is also important to keep in mind that an obscure passage of scripture must fit with the overall continuity of what the Bible is saying. You don't major on the obscure pieces, you allow them to fit with the whole, which is why I have waited until now to fit this piece with the overall picture. As you see it fits perfectly now that the foundation has been laid.

When it says "one will be taken and the other will be left" it says nothing about a

secret rapture, but rather says they will be taken to where the body is gathered together. It is the place spoken of in Revelation 12, the place in the wilderness where we are taken on the wings of an eagle. The "body" is the body of Christ and the "eagles" are the blood washed saints gathered around the atonement at the end of the age.

Another scripture where we see very clearly that God does have a place of refuge for His people during the coming judgment is found in Isaiah.

Isaiah 26:17 *As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, when she draws near the time of her delivery, so have we been in Your sight, O LORD.*

Isaiah 26:20-21 *Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.*

Notice verses 20 & 21 in particular, also note how this passage parallels with Revelation 12 concerning the woman with child.

Just as the nation of Israel was protected during the plagues that were poured out upon the Egyptians, when Moses went before Pharaoh, the Bride of Christ shall be protected, when God pours out all the plagues of His wrath upon the ungodly during this time. (Exodus 9:22-35 & 10:21-23).

Another scripture of which we have already discussed somewhat shows us once again the picture of the bride of Christ being perfected and then delivered and protected during this terrible time.

Isaiah 4:5-6 *Then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering. And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. (See whole passage for context)*

Verse 4 speaks of the perfection that takes place in the Bride. The spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning or the baptism of fire through the baptism of the Holy Spirit brought about the perfection. Once again this shows us how important the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is to us if we are to be preserved during this time. Verses 5 & 6 speak of her protection and place of refuge from God's wrath upon the wicked.

V. The Remnant That Is Left Behind.

Though God's mighty hand shall deliver the Bride of Christ to this place of refuge, a remnant shall be left behind because they were not ready. Because the Bride of Christ escapes to the wilderness, the dragon, who is Satan goes to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed, who still have the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

- **The remnant left behind are the five foolish virgins.**

The remnant are the five foolish virgins of Matthew 25 who did not go into the marriage. Only those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage.

Matthew 25:10-12 *"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'*

They did not have on the wedding garments and thus were thrown into the place called the outer darkness or the great tribulation.

Matthew 22:11,13 *"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment... "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

- **The Remnant is the little sister of the Song of Solomon – Song 8:8**

Song of Songs 8:8 *We have a little sister, And she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for?*

- **The Remnant is also the outer court that does not get measured.**

The outer court of Temple of God shall be trodden underfoot for forty-two months, which is the 3 1/2 years of the great tribulation.

Revelation 11:2 *"But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city under foot for forty-two months.*

The measuring of the Bride of Christ precedes the treading down and she is perfected and delivered from the great tribulation. The court which is without is left out and not measured. This is a symbol of the unwise virgin class of Matthew 25:10, and the remnant of the woman's seed of Revelation 12:17. They face persecution and martyrdom under the reign of the beast or antichrist during the "Great Tribulation".

We must be accounted worthy to escape all these things. Some will not be accounted worthy because they did not measure up to God's standard of perfection.

Luke 21:34-36 *"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

Zephaniah 2:1-3 *Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, before the decree is issued, before the day passes like chaff, before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you! Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.*

VI. What Happens To The Remnant?

- **They Face Persecution and Martyrdom Under The Antichrist.**

The remnant that is left behind will face persecution and martyrdom under the reign of the antichrist during the period of the "Great Tribulation". The Christians who are a part of the unwise virgin class will no longer have power over Satan. They must either die for Christ or receive the mark of the beast.

Revelation 13:5-7 *And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

- **Many Will Apostatize And Fall Away.**

Revelation 14:9-10 *Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.*

This is the time of the great falling away that Paul warned the Thessalonians about and also Timothy. At the beginning of the "Great Tribulation" is the time of the falling away when many shall apostatize or deny the faith.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition...*

Those who die with Christ during this time will be among the dead in Christ who will arise to meet Jesus in the air at the last trumpet.

Revelation 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

VII. Summary.

- The word rapture is not in the Bible, but is derived from the words "caught up" found in I Thessalonians 4:12-17.
- The word rapture in all actuality refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- When Jesus returns He shall return on the clouds of Heaven. It is at the end of "Great Tribulation" that Jesus returns on the clouds of heaven.
- When the Disciples asked Jesus when His Second coming would be, He stated specifically it would be at the end of the "Great Tribulation". He did not speak of any other appearing.
- The Apostle Paul said that the "falling away" and the revealing of the Antichrist must come before the Second Coming, when warning the Thessalonians about being deceived about His return.
- The Second Coming will be at the Last Trumpet, which sounds at the end of "Great Tribulation"

- At the sounding of the Last Trumpet the mystery of God will be finished.
- Some Christians will be preserved during the "Great Tribulation", which takes place during the final 3 1/2 years before the second return of Christ.
- God has a plan for His people.
- The Bride will minister in all of the authority and power of Christ prior to the "Great Tribulation."
- Those who are a part of the Bride of Christ by coming into the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" will be taken to a place of refuge on the wings of a great eagle, which speaks of the supernatural deliverance of the Holy Spirit.
- Those Christians who did not measure up to the fullness are the five foolish virgins of Matthew 25 and the remnant that gets left behind in Revelation 12.
- Those who get left behind face martyrdom under the antichrist and must either take the mark of the beast or be killed.
- Those who die as martyrs under the reign of the Antichrist are a part of the dead in Christ who arise first to meet Jesus in the air. They also enter into the millennium with the Bride of Christ.