

## The Rapture is Dispensational

**T**o anybody who interprets the Bible's history and prophecy literally, it is obvious that God has administered mankind differently at various stages of history. In the Garden of Eden there was no sin; from Eden to the Flood men lived by their conscience; after the Flood human government was introduced and the patriarchs sojourned in the land of promise from Abram to the Exodus.

The age of Law saw God administering His will among men through a nation with laws, a priesthood and kings. Prophets were raised up to reveal God's plan for the nation to prepare them for the coming of the Lamb of God who would provide eternal salvation for sinful man. When Israel rejected the Saviour and so was put aside, God turned to a Gentile Church.

On the birthday of the Church at Pentecost, the Word of God was preached in **Gentile languages** as a clear sign to the Jews that God was pouring out His Spirit, not on Jews only, but on "*all flesh*" and that "*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Acts 2:17,21). A new dispensation had come - the Church age.

### *The Gap Between Israel's 69th "week" and 70th "week"*

The Church age however, must come to an end for God has not finished with Israel. It fills a gap in Israel's history between the 69th "week" and 70th "week" of Daniel's prophecy (Dan.9:24-27).

Daniel was shown God's plan for the Jews and Jerusalem and 490 years (70 sevens) were determined upon them beginning from Passover in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, King of Persia. At the end of 483 years (69 sevens) Messiah would be cut off, Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans, and desolations were determined until a future Roman prince made a seven-year covenant with the nation.

The gap between the 69th seven of years, and the last seven years of Israel's history - before they experience everlasting righteousness and blessing in the kingdom of Christ - was the Church age.

Paul indicated that during this long gap in Israel's prophetic history the Jews would be scattered among the nations and blinded spiritually. He described the gap in Israel's history as "*the times of the Gentiles*" and called it a "*mystery*" (Rom.11:25). He said:

*"Blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved..."* (Rom 11:25-26).

## The Rapture of the Church

So the Church age has a terminus point after which Israel will again seek the Lord and be blessed with a new covenant, from which they will never again stray.

The Church age is the age of Israel's blindness, but when the Church is complete Israel will again turn to the Lord.

James indicated that this would be the case when Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to report on the conversion of Gentiles. James said:

*"Simeon (Peter) hath declared how **God at the first did visit the Gentiles**, to take out of them a people for his name (the Church). And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,*

*AFTER THIS I WILL RETURN, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:14-18). See also Amos 9:11.*

Peter had reported to the Apostles on his visit to the Gentile, Cornelius, and God had shown him that Gentiles whom he considered unclean would be cleansed and become a people for Christ's name.

After the Gentile Church is complete, God will again raise up the throne of David and then all the Gentiles would be blessed in the millennial kingdom. God had it all planned out from the beginning of the world!

It is perfectly clear from this prophecy that the Church will exist only for the period of the gap between the 69th "seven" and the 70th "seven" of years during which Jerusalem and the Temple would experience desolations.

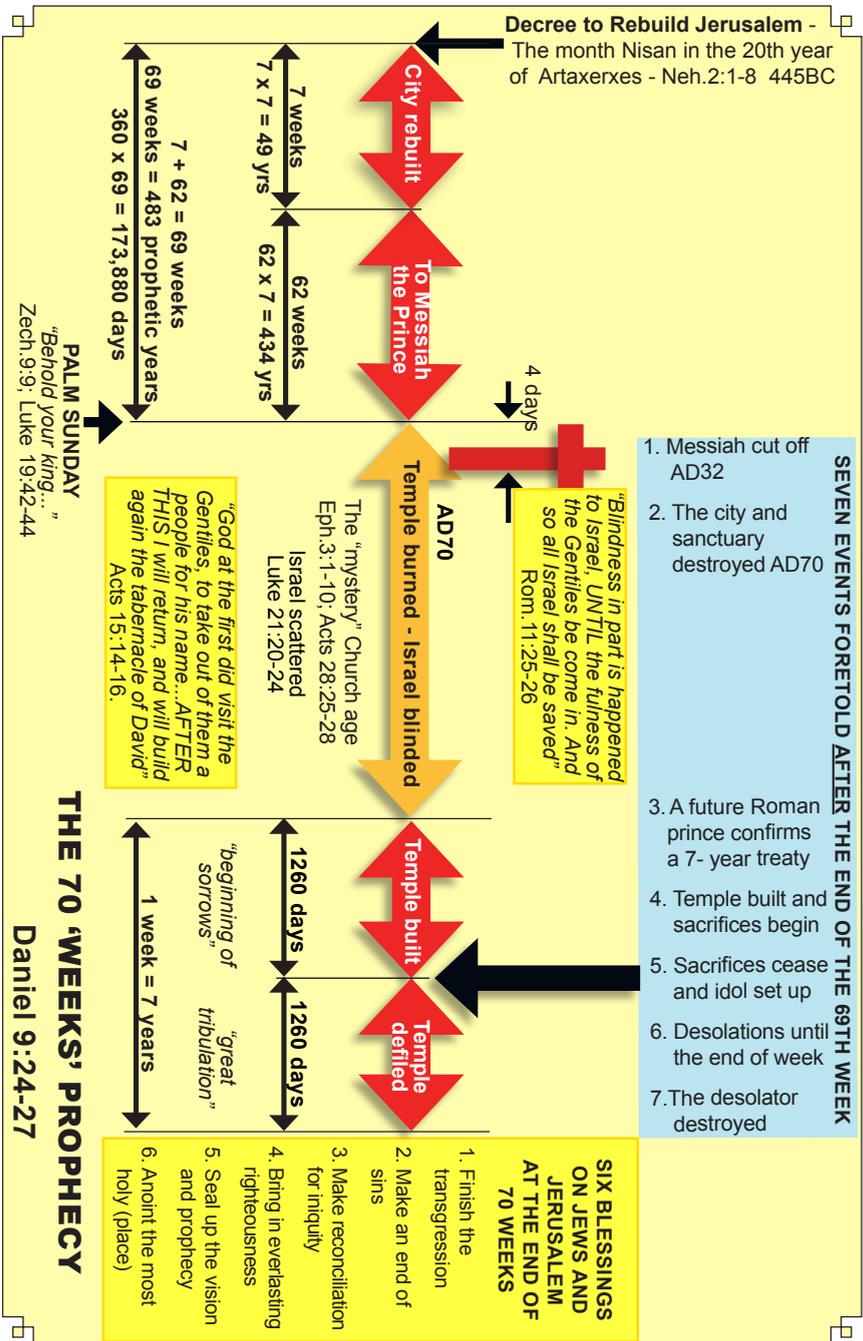
There is no time given for the length of the Church age and Jesus said that no man knows the day or hour of His return. Israel's testimony was indicated as 490 years but the length of Israel's blindness is not indicated. Even Jesus does not know how long this will be. Mark wrote:

*"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).*

It is the Father who determines the "times or the seasons" (Acts 1:7). When the "fulness of the Gentiles" has come into the Church the Father will send the Lord Jesus for His bride and the Church will be "caught up" (raptured).

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*"70 weeks (sevens) are determined upon THY PEOPLE (ISRAEL) and upon THY HOLY CITY (Jerusalem)" Dan.9:24.*



## The Rapture of the Church

Life on earth must continue after the *“fulness of the Gentiles”* has come in because it is after that that *“all Israel shall be saved”* and God will make a *“new covenant”* with the nation.

The conversion of Israel occurs when Russia and her Islamic alliance invades Israel (Ezek.39:22-29; Joel 2:1-21). So life on earth must go on after the *“fulness of the Gentiles”* comes in and Church age is complete.

Thus, if life goes on upon the earth after the Church is complete, and Israel becomes God’s witness on earth again, isn’t it logical that the Church would have to be removed **before the last seven years** of Israel’s prophetic history?

Many scriptures indicate that the last seven years before Christ returns to reign on the earth will be a period of great trouble; Jeremiah calls it *“the time of Jacob’s (Israel’s) trouble”* (Jer.30:7). Jesus called it *“great tribulation”* (Matt.24:21) and Paul called it *“the day of the Lord”* (1Thess.5:2). Israel will be *“saved out of it”* (Jer.30:7) and the Gentile nations who follow Antichrist will be judged. The Book of Revelation shows that only Israel is God’s witness on earth during the Tribulation.

### *The Church Age to Finish Before the Tribulation*

The Book of Revelation was a message to the seven churches of Asia. It was to indicate to them future events - *“things which must shortly (quickly) come to pass”* (Rev.1:1). God gave us a chronological outline of the future from John’s day to the end of time.

First, John wrote to each church describing their condition, commending their faithfulness and condemning failure. Promises of blessing were made to some in each church who were described as *“overcomers.”* From these promises we understand that the name *“overcomer”* means those in each church who were saved. The same terminology is found in John’s first epistle (1John 5:4-5).

As we become familiar with the text, it is clear that these letters have a prophetic character and describe the professing church, Christendom, from Pentecost to the Rapture; seven stages culminating with Laodicea which is an apostate church that sickens Christ. This is consistent with other prophecies about the end of the Church age (1Tim.4:1-3; 2Tim.3:1-8; 2Peter 3:3-4).

Since Revelation chronologically describes future events from the time of John, we would expect to discover a clear prophecy of the rapture of the Church. And that is precisely what we find.

## The Rapture is Dispensational

After Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 where the seven churches are described as seven stages of church history from Pentecost to the end of the Church age, we find John in Chapter 4 saying:

*“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: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne” (Rev.4:1-2).*

When God spoke to prophets He enabled them to see future events occurring before the time, and since John was a part of the Church, the Body of Christ, he foresaw his own rapture through the open door into heaven at the end of the Church age.

Then in Chapters 6 to 18 a detailed description is given of the seven years of Great Tribulation divided into two periods of 1,260 days concluding with the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ as He comes to reign on the earth for 1,000 years (Revelation Chapters 19 and 20).

John heard *“the trump of God”* and was *“immediately”* caught up which agrees with the description of the Rapture:

*“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” (1Cor.15:51-52).*

The Rapture is Dispensational!

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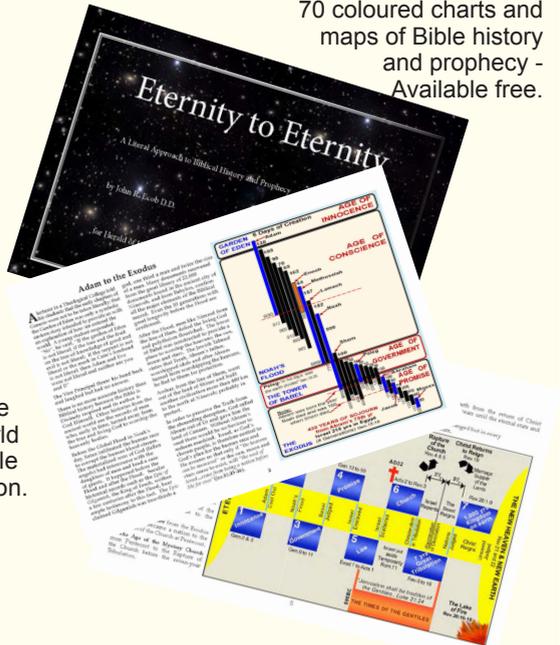
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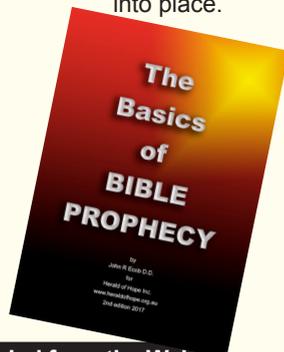
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