



Message Transcript **After the Great Tribulation**

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- Lord Jesus we give you all the glory, honor and praise. Lord our prayer today is that you would speak directly to us. Lord, we wanna hear your word clearly. We wanna hear you. We wanna hear what you say to us, and we wanna believe what you say. Lord be helpful to me as I teach this text, Lord, I feel like I have five sermons in this one. So Lord help me to be able to communicate what needs to be communicated at this time. And Lord for all you're gonna do we give you praise and glory. And now all God's people who are ready to hear directly from Him today to believe what He says about you and by faith to put into practice what He shows you will you very loudly agree with me by saying the word

- [congregation] Amen.

- Amen, have you ever noticed that the very biggest blessings that God gives us are oftentimes the things that Satan tries to thwart. I mean, think about how God created the heavens and the earth. He created everything and He gave us a beautiful place. And we see not just a couple of chapters later where Satan is trying to come and tempt man to sin and ruin everything that He established. We see that God established marriage between a man and a woman and it's a beautiful gift between a husband and wife and yet so many marriages struggle as Satan tries to attack them. God establish the family and yet, oftentimes as family, we struggle because of lies of the enemy and what he tells us that's different from how God established the family. It sure seems to me that some of the greatest blessings that Satan or that Jesus has given to us, that Satan himself oftentimes tries to thwart. Think about the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, is there any greater event scheduled on your calendar

than meeting Jesus Christ face to face? And yet in the church so often we argue and debate over the timing of when it's going to happen rather than the fact that it is going to happen. And the reality is Jesus Christ is gonna break through the sky fully bodily and physically every eye will see Him. You will know Him, you will see Him. And we are gonna those of us who know Him we're gonna give Him glory honor and praise forever and ever amen. And yet, oftentimes in church, we get all hung up on the planning committee and worried about when He's gonna come and how it's all gonna play itself out. And so before we begin today I just wanted to make a couple statements. One is there is a huge difference between closed-handed and open-handed issues when it comes to God's word. There're some closed-handed issues we have to hold onto no matter what that we can never waiver upon. For instance, the Trinity or the full deity and humanity of Christ or the spiritual loss in this of the human race or the substitutionary atonement bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ or salvation by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone, or the physical return of Christ or the authority and enhancing of scripture. I mean, those are elements from God's word. We can't punt that, we can't agree to disagree. Those are closed-handed. That's true for every believer all the time, but then there's open-handed issues and open-handed issues would be what's the mode of baptism, should we sprinkle or immerse? What should it look like for women serving in the church? What is the expression of spiritual gifts? Do they experience fully today or have they ceased? And all of these different areas are open-handed issues which means we don't break fellowship over them. But what it means is we can have conviction about them but see things differently. Just so

you know, everything I just mentioned to you, have very strong biblical convictions about all of them and some of my friends don't share my convictions and they're wrong and we're still friends. I'm glad you're laughing. When it comes to the return of Jesus we can see things in scripture differently than one another and not break fellowship over it. But we have to have conviction on what the scriptures teach. As I teach today you're gonna hear my conviction of how I believe the biblical texts portrays the second coming of Jesus Christ and the gathering of his saints to Him. You may not agree with me. You don't need to agree with me. You need to align with the word of God but I think it's important that we look at the texts in Revelation seven today. And before we get there I wanna let you know when it comes to talking about this, and one of the reasons I hardly slept at all last night have been thinking about Revelation seven more than any other message is that no matter where you land last week we talked about the fact that I'm a futurist. I believe there's a final seven year period. That's the way that I read the text of the Bible. And because of that, there are understandings of this pre-millennial understanding that prior to Jesus establishing a thousand year reign there's different views of what God is going to do with the church. We talked about them last week. There's a pre-tribulational view that right at the very beginning of that seven years prior to Daniel 70th week the church is gonna be raptured out. We're gonna be in heaven for seven years and then Jesus will bring the church back down at the end of the seven years that's called pre-tribulationism. Majority of people and christen them for the last 150 years that's exactly what they've been taught. Then there's a mid-tribulation position which means Jesus comes at the mid point of the

tribulation period. Then there's a post-tribulational period where Jesus is at the end where we get raptured and come right back down as He sets up His millennial reign. And then we talked about a pre-wrath position where there's a period of time and at the midpoint, the great tribulation starts. That goes for a period of time, but it's cut short by Jesus. The church is raptured. God begins to pour out His judgment and then He returns and establishes His millennial reign after that. At the end of the day we're not gonna break fellowship over this, but what we want to do this morning is to see what does God say? And I know I'm talking to all sorts of different people. Some of you are dyed in the wool. Don't even try to change my position. You'll never change it in a million years. Okay, I realize that I'm not trying to change your position. I'm just trying to be biblical. And I'm asking you to be open to what the word of God would say. Some of you are somewhat in the middle who say I've never really studied this stuff before I'm open to it. And others have said, I've studied this for years, and I don't really care. I mean, as long as Jesus comes back what's the big whoop anyway? And so while you have pre-millennialist and post-millennialist you guys are pan-millennialist, you're like it's all gonna pan out in the end anyway, right? So for me, I think if the scripture speaks to it, we need to own it. And for me, I was taught at my seminary Dallas Theological Seminary from some of my favorite people in the world. And some of my, some of the best Bible teachers in the world, the pre-tribulational rapture position the problem was when I was taught it and I've studied it for a number of years. I never understood it. It never made sense to me. So I would say to myself, maybe I just don't know the Bible well enough. Maybe I'm not smart enough. Maybe I just don't

get it enough. Then I got to a place where maybe I just don't have faith to believe to that's the way it's going to work itself out. And then I finally got to a place. Maybe I don't believe it because I think I've studied the scriptures. I think I've looked at this for 32 years and if I can't make sense of this then maybe it's just not in the scriptures. And so what I wanna do today is present a case for how I believe that the end times are going to unfold as we're in Revelation chapter seven. Now, before we do that, I wanna set up where we've been just so we can go through this super quick and set up some scriptural foundation for us. If you read the last message where we talked about Revelation six we talked about six different seals that were opened by the Lord, Jesus Christ in John's apocalyptic vision and what those six seals represented as a time of terrible persecution began to unfold on planet earth. And then we combine that or cross reference that I should say with Matthew chapter 24 and recognize that Jesus said that the exact same things were gonna happen. When Jesus' disciples ask Him how are these things going to take place? What are they going to look like? Jesus goes into two different chapters in our Bible Matthew 24 and 25 to spell out for His disciples. This is what it's gonna be like. This is what you can look for. This is what you need to see. The apostle John has the same six things that we see Jesus say. So I just wanna put these slides back up again. We're gonna go through them really quick just so you can go back and forth. But we talked about in the first three seals we called those the beginning of birth pangs. The first seal we saw was the white horse with the Antichrist on it. And the Antichrist was coming to conquer. He had a bow, he had no arrow. He was coming to conquer as a geopolitical leader. Jesus said in Matthew 24,

verses four and five "See to it that no one loves misleads you. "For many will come in my name "claiming I'm in the Christ and will deceive many." So what we see in him is that Jesus said, "Yeah there's gonna be many Christs "that try to rise up but there'll be one final day "where there's an Antichrist, "that will be a geopolitical leader for the entire world." The second seal we see is a red horse and a rider. He's given a sword and power to conquer through war. Jesus said in Matthew 24, six and seven "You'll be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. "See to it that you're not frightened "for these things must take place, "but that is not yet the end "nation will rise against nation "and kingdom against kingdom." So we see Antichrist, we see wars, same exact things. Then we see the third seal that Jesus opens as John looks at that. The third seal is the black horse and rider. He has given a scale to measure the food supply and He will bring famine. And so we see Jesus saying the same thing in Matthew 24 "In various places, there'll be famines "and earthquakes "but these are merely the beginning of birth pangs." As we see these three first seals opened up. We see when we get to this place this is gonna be unprecedented time where the Antichrist the geopolitical leader is gonna rule. There'll be war. There'll be famine as a result of the war. And then we get to the fourth horsemen. As the fourth seal is open, we see an ashen or a pale horse, and he represents death and was given authority to kill over a fourth of the earth. And if you remember, we talked about the fact that this may not be geographic. It may be demographic and there may be targeting a specific group of people that don't worship the Antichrist, whatever it is, it's gonna be a time of unprecedented death on our planet, which leads to the fifth seal being open. But Jesus said, let me just read

what Jesus said first, Matthew 24, verses nine and 10, it says, "Then they will deliver you to tribulation "and will kill you and you will be hated by all nations "because of my name "at that time, many will fall away "and will betray one another and will hate one another." So Jesus said, tribulation is coming and you're gonna be hated by everybody. And not only is that gonna happen but there's gonna be a apostates. Those who are false professors of Jesus who when the Antichrist arises to power will give their allegiance to him rather than the Lord Jesus Christ, no true believer will ever do that by the way. But some in the church are not true believers and they will give their allegiance to him. Then we saw in the fifth seal it revealed a remnant who are martyred because of the word of God. And because of the testimony which they had maintained Jesus says in Matthew 24, "That would be a great tribulation "such as not occurred "since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. "Unless those days had been cut short "no life would have ever been saved. "But for the sake of the elect "those days had been cut short." So there's martyrdom taking place at that time as well. Then we get to the sixth seal which really climaxes everything that's going on. The sixth seal reveals these cosmic disturbances. We see the sun go dark. We see the moon turn to blood. We see stars falling from the sky. Jesus says, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days, "the sun will be darkened "and the moon will not give its light. "And the stars will fall from the sky. "And the powers of heaven will be shaken." Now think about this, everything that Jesus and John are prophesied is going to come true exactly the way that they say it's going to come true. And here's what we see in Revelation six we know that this can't be the wrath of God that He's pouring out on the

planet because when the fifth seal is open and we see martyrs the martyrs are asking Jesus "How long until You avenge our blood?" In other words, "Jesus, how long until You pour out wrath "on planet earth for people killing us "because of our love for You?" In other words, "Jesus, when is Your wrath going to start?" Secondly, if this is God's wrath which it can't be first Thessalonians five nine says, "That God will spare us from His wrath." God does not pour out His wrath on His kids. Tribulation, we can endure God's wrath no, He doesn't pour it out. This is one of the reasons why we know as the six seals are being open, the church is still here. Another reason we know that church is still here is there's not been one text in the entire book of Revelation that has told us that the church has gone to heaven. Not one, like not one. Some scholars say, well, no Revelation, four one see John went up to heaven and that's representative of the entire church. If you take the scripture, literally John going to heaven does not mean all the church. Trying to force the 24 elders to be the church, doesn't make it the church, right? There's no scripture yet that we've read. As we get to scriptural foundations that talk about the fact that the church has been raptured prior to Revelation chapter six. And even if you read other scriptures there's so much evidence to show that there are things that are going to happen before the church is raptured. Think about this, in Joel chapter two and verse 31 he has just gotten done prophesying about God pouring out His spirit, which we know happened in Acts chapter two. But when he prophesies about the day of the Lord in Joel two verses 30 and 31, he says, "I will display wonders in the sky "and on the earth blood fire, and columns of smoke." What Joel says, the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood when? Before the

great and awesome day of the Lord comes. So before God's wrath is poured out, Joel says there's gonna be cosmic disturbances before God's wrath is poured out, Jesus says, there's gonna be cosmic disturbances before God's wrath is poured out, John says, there's gonna be cosmic disturbances in Malachi chapter four and verse five it says, "Remember the law of Moses, my servant "even the statutes and ordinance, "which I have commanded him in horah before all Israel, "behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet "before the coming of the great "and terrible day of the Lord." What's gonna happen before the great and terrible day of the Lord? Elijah is gonna come. Anybody seen Elijah yet? I haven't. I believe that he's one of the two witnesses that will appear at the midpoint and prophecy. I believe he and Moses will do that for the last three and a half years as they proclaim the gospel to the entire world that hasn't happened yet. This idea or notion in scripture that we are going to be out of here prior to going through any form of suffering or trial is unfounded anywhere in the scriptures. There is not one verse anywhere in the scriptures that would share that. Listen to this quote John Walvoord, who was the president of Dallas Theological Seminary, and was still there teaching into his nineties when I was at school, who by the way is a absolute, was an absolute Prince of a man. Super humble. Love the Lord with his whole heart was a pre-tribulationist, espoused that theory and understanding, he agreed that there was not one scriptural reference to support either pre-tribulationism or post-tribulationism. He says, "It is therefore not too much to say "that the rapture question "is determined more by ecclesiology "or the study of the church "or the understanding of the church "than eschatology the study of the end things. "Any

answer to the rapture question "must therefore be based upon a careful study of the church "as it's revealed in the new Testament." Here's what he's saying. You can't really know we're putting the church there because we don't believe the church can experience any of that. But there's not one verse in the Bible that would teach that. Is that troubling to anybody in here? I mean, is that troubling to anybody in here that takes the word of God seriously, that there's not one verse that espouses a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints. There's not one. I can't find one of my Bible which is why I don't hold to that position. And when you read on in the Bible, you'll see, it's not just Jesus. And it's not just John. What about the apostle Paul? The apostle Paul wrote back to the Thessalonians because they were concerned that the day of the Lord had come, they were concerned that they had missed the coming of Christ. They were concerned that they had missed the parousia or the gathering together of all the saints. In other words, they were concerned they missed the rapture. Ever been concerned you missed the rapture? You call your friend on the phone they're not there you call somebody else they're not there third times did I miss it? The Thessalonians were concerned. They were like, "Hey, we're we may be missing out here. "What's going on?" So Paul writes them back in second Thessalonians, chapter two. And here's what he says. Second Thessalonians chapter two, verse one. He says, "Now we request you brethren "with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus "and our gathering together with Him." In other words, here's what Paul puts together the coming of Jesus and our gathering together happening at the same time. Concerning that here's what we wanna make sure you understand "that you not be quickly shaken from your composure "or

disturbed by either a spirit or a message or a letter "as if from us to the effect "that the day of the Lord has come." In other words, don't be shaken. If it's a spirit, if somebody told us that somebody told you that we said the day of the Lord happened or you think you got a letter from us we want you to be sure you don't need to be troubled by any of this. Now, this would be a great time for Paul to say because the rapture didn't happen and if it did, we'd be in heaven. So don't worry about it that's not what he says. Here's what Paul says in second Thessalonians, chapter two verse three "Let no one in any way, deceive you "for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, "and the man of lawlessness is revealed "the son of destruction." Paul says, "Here's how you know you haven't missed the rapture "because the Antichrist hasn't been revealed. "And there hasn't been a falling away "and a great apostasy in the church." If you don't see those two things you haven't missed anything. Now here's, what's interesting scripturally, Jesus says that all these things will happen and then after the tribulation of those day we'll see Him. Joel prophesy's, that things will happen before the great and terrible day of the Lord. So there's things that have to happen that then afterwards Jesus comes, but he's got to come before some of those other things take place before the wrath is poured out. So we're looking for a place in the book of Revelation that would be after the tribulation of those days and before the great and terrible day of the Lord, is there any place in the book of Revelation looks like that? We're gonna see it today in Revelation chapter seven. It's very interesting that when you think about this if scripture taught a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints you have to ask yourself the question. Why would the book of Revelation even be in our Bible? Like who would it

be for? Like why we've got to give a book to the church that nobody needs to read. I mean people are fascinated to read this book saying, well after the first three chapters it doesn't mean anything to me. It's just for those left behind to read. Maybe they'll get saved. I don't believe that's why the book of Revelation was written. I believe the book of Revelation was written for our edification as a church to know what's coming. So we're ready for Christ's return and we're ready for His coming and in every generation, we will be ready for Him. If you read through Matthew chapter 24 in the Olivet discourse where Jesus is espousing these truths to His disciples, He says in Matthew 24, verse 29 "After the tribulation of those days." He says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days "the sun will be darkened "and the moon will not give its light "and the stars will fall from the sky. "And the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Matthew 24:30, "And then the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky. "And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. "And they will see the son of man coming on the clouds "of the sky with great power and glory. "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet, "And they will gather together His elect "from the four winds "and from one end of the sky to another." So he says to learn this parable from the fig tree when you see its figs falling you know that the time is near. And He says, when you see these signs you know that the time is near. Now look at because He says that "Heaven and earth will pass away "But my words will never pass away." Verse 36, "But of that day and hour, "no one knows not even the angels in heaven nor the son, "but the father alone "for the coming of the son of man "will be just like the days of Noah. "For as in the days of Noah, before the flood "they were eating and drinking and marrying "and

giving in marriage until the day Noah entered the Ark. "And they did not understand until the flood came "and took them all away. "So we'll be at the coming of the son of man." And He says, what it's gonna be like, "Then there'll be two men in the field. "One will be taken and one will be left. "Two women will be grinding at the mill. "One will be taken and one will be left." Taken means to gather to oneself, taken means to come. Now I've heard pre-tribes my whole life say, "Nobody knows the day and the hour. "It could come at any single time. "Nobody knows the day or the hour. "It can happen today. "Jeff, it could happen while you're talking "and we're gone, it could happen." That's not what He's saying. He says after the tribulation of those days when you've seen all these signs that have happened that you see in Revelation six when you see an apostasy and a falling away. When you see the Antichrist, when you see martyrdom, when you see cosmic disturbances, when you see the stars falling from the sky you may not know the day or the hour, but it's close. It's like pregnancy. When you meet a gal, who's three months pregnant, you don't think, "Oh good, is it today?" "Hope not right." You meet a girl who's about nine months along. She's got contractions going on. It's about that time. She's got pain. She's got labor. The water breaks. You may not know the day or the hour, but it's coming soon. Everyone in the new Testament talks about the signs that you're gonna see before the coming. So to believe in the eminent return of Jesus that He can come at any time is not backed anywhere in the scripture. It's not, there's no scriptural foundation for it. Then how about taking a look at theological foundations. The theological foundation for the pre-tribulation rapture of the saints is simply this, we'll never suffer. I mean, if we got to

vote on how we wanted it to be, I mean, who wouldn't vote for the pre-tribulation rapture of the saints that's my vote. I mean, that's what I want. I mean, that's what I want my scriptures to tell me. But where in the world do you see where the church is exempt from suffering? I mean, where? I mean, just take a look at some of these disciples that were close to Jesus. Stephen was stoned to death. James, the son of Zebedee was beheaded. Phillip was scourged imprisoned and crucified. Matthew was killed with an ax. James, the brother of Jesus was beat to death at the age of 94. Mathias was stoned and then beheaded. Andrew was crucified in Turkey. Mark was dragged to his death in Alexandria. Peter was crucified in and Rome he asked to be crucified upside down because he didn't feel worthy enough to die like Jesus did. Paul was beheaded Jude, the half brother of Jesus was crucified. Bartholomew was beaten and then crucified. Thomas was speared to death in India. Luke apparently was hanged on an olive tree in Greece, Simon, the zealot, the disciple was crucified and John is the only disciple we know not to be martyred. So can you imagine, if we brought those 16 men into a room and we sat down with them and said, "Yeah I know you guys went through a lot "but we got this new theology now. "And here's what it is. "We believe that before it gets really, really bad "and we suffer, God's just gonna take us to heaven." What do you think they'd say? "Like, what Jesus are you serving?" Like the only place that you could possibly believe in a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints is in a place where you've never suffered before. Perhaps America, right? I mean, think about this. People talk about the fact that, it's a great doctrine and all this, but from the time of Christ until 2015AD Christianity today wrote an article and said that 70 million

people have been martyred for the sake of Jesus. That was in 2015. That was their number, 70 million. 70 million martyrs under the throne of God. How big is His throne? That's huge, right? 70 million martyrs. Now think about the application of the pre-tribulational rapture. The application is this, before it gets bad, God's gonna take you out. That's the application, which sounds really good I like that application unless I've suffered. Picture some women in Egypt about 2015 when their husbands or dad or uncle or brother or son were all beheaded by ISIS. Imagine all those women gathered to hear you preach. You're gonna have the gall to tell those women, "Hey before it gets really bad, don't worry, "God's gonna get you out of here." That's offensive. A better doctrine would be this in this world we're gonna have tribulation, but take heart Jesus Christ has overcome the world. And you know what? It may go from bad to worse, but here's the truth. Jesus Christ, if we endure till the end is our God and we can remain with Him forever and ever. Isn't that true? The only people that are comforted by a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints are those that aren't in the game. And then what about this understanding theologically of Israel and the church? Like how does that work itself out? I do believe there's a distinction between Israel and the church. There's no doubt in my mind because I read the Bible literally and God made promises specific to Israel that He's going to fulfill. I don't believe it's good hermeneutics to say that every promise to Israel is fulfilled in the church. I don't think that's right. I think God is still going to graft Israel in Romans chapters, nine, 10, and 11 tell me that that's true. My whole old Testament tells me that there's promises made specifically to the nation of Israel that God has to fulfill. I believe that, I think to be a Christian we need to understand, we

need to have a love for Israel. You know why? Because Jesus is Jewish. He was born Jewish. He died Jewish. He was raised Jewish. He ascended Jewish. He's coming back Jewish. Jesus is a Jew, right? So to be Christian you're pro-Jewish period end of story. That is not to say Israel has been a perfect nation. Our scriptures would tell us that they haven't. I'm not making a political statement here. I'm making the biblical statement that God is for the nation of Israel. Those are His people. But the understanding, that the distinction means that God can't work with Israel and the church at the same time I don't believe it's true because He's always been working with the church and Israel at the same time. Even after the church was established in 70AD when the Roman emperor Titus came in and sacked the temple and sacked Jerusalem and not one stone was left on another that was annihilation for the Jews at that time it was fulfilled prophecy that happened for them. The church was still going. The church was still going in 1948. When on May 14th of 1948 Israel was established as a nation. God was still working with Israel as He's still working with the church. And in the future, God is still working with Israel, as He's still working with the church. So to say the church can't be here while God is doing His work in Israel is not true. Theologicalist don't find a premise for it. And then what about historical foundations? What about historical foundations? Prior to the 18 hundreds and John Nelson Darby really no one believed in a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints. This teaching was promoted by the Scofield Reference Bible. Some of you may have one. I know I have one and they have all the notes in the margins that talk about this. And for the last 150 to 170 years have you been in an evangelical church pre-tribulationism has been taught to you in some

way, even the left behind series as we talked about as a pre-tribulational view of a rapture and an end times view, and it's fascinating and Christians read them and they're great fiction books. They're great fiction books but I don't care what a book says. I care what God's word says. And it's really interesting because what happened was in the early 19 hundreds when the church was splitting a little bit and you had this liberal social justice church and you had the churches that were conservative saying "We're not letting go of the virgin birth. "We're not letting go of the gospel. "We're not letting go of Jesus." They took with them the pre-millennial pre-tribulational rapture of the saints. So that was all packaged together and what we did so much so that for many evangelical Christians even to disagree with the pre-tribulation rapture of the Saints sounded heretical. Even today to some people's like, "I can't believe pastor Jeff's not pre-trib "I thought he was a Christian. "I thought he read his Bible, right?" The problem is the word doesn't support it. There is nowhere in the Bible that talks about an eminent return of Christ. There's nowhere in the Bible that says Jesus can come at any moment. Like nowhere, now scriptures will be shown for this. And I'll read them to you. Philippians chapter three, verse 20. I'll just give you a couple where Paul talks about that we are citizens of heaven and we eagerly await a savior there the Lord Jesus Christ. Just because we're eagerly awaiting a savior does not mean it's gonna happen today. Titus two in verse 13 is one of the favorites for pre-tribs where they go and they say things like this, "Looking for the blessed hope "and the appearing of the glory of our great God and savior "Christ Jesus." Just because I'm looking for the hope doesn't mean it's gonna happen today. We've already seen all the things that must take

place before He gets back. But that doesn't mean I'm looking for Him any less the worst things get, the more I'm looking for my hope. That's what the scriptures teach. Now one early church father, believed in a pre-tribulation, rapture of the saints. You can't find anybody writing this. I haven't read all of them. I've never found one. They all talk about the fact that you're gonna face the Antichrist and persecution before Christ comes back. What pre-tribes scholars do is they go back and they look at places where a church father would say, "We're looking for the blessed hope "or we're doing this like oh oh see see see." Because he's looking for that he must be pre-trib. There's no evidence of this anywhere. And if you want a scriptural understanding of, how about Peter and Paul, I mean just two examples of two men that did not believe in a pre-tribulation rapture of the saints. I mean, think about Peter for a second. In John chapter 20, after Jesus rose from the dead, He explains to Peter how He's gonna die. In John chapter 21, verse 18 He says, "Truly, truly I say to you, "when you were younger you used to gird yourself up "and walk wherever you wish. "But when you grew old, you will stretch. "When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands "and someone else will gird you "and bring you where you do not wish to go." Now He said this signifying the kind of death that would glorify God. So here's what He tells Peter. He prophesy's to Peter, has Jesus ever prophesied to Peter before? Has Jesus ever told Peter you're gonna deny, you're gonna betray me three times? When Jesus prophesy's is it true? If Jesus tells Peter you're gonna die a martyr's death is it gonna happen? Peter knew his whole life, he was gonna die a martyr's death. He was not looking for the rapture. If there would have been one Jesus prophecy over him wouldn't have been true. Or how

about when the apostle Paul gets saved Ananias gets sent to him, to do what? To show him how much he must suffer for His name. Even in the book of Philippians in chapter one Paul says, "For me to live as Christ and to die is gain." He doesn't say, "For me to live is Christ "but I hope the rapture comes." As a matter of fact, he says "As I think about it, it's a tough decision "but it's good for you that I remain in the body. "So convince of that, I know I'm gonna come see you." So he knew he was going to Philippi. He knew he was gonna go to Rome. So even when he was a shipwreck he knew he was gonna make it all the way there. Paul did not live with this understanding that Jesus could come back at any time. As a matter of fact, Paul's already told the Thessalonians He's not coming back until the Antichrist is revealed and there's a falling away in the church. That's how Paul lived. That's how Peter lived, there's nobody in the early church that live with this understanding this false, understanding that at any moment Jesus could come back. He's not coming back today. He can't, because it won't fulfill the scriptures He said, we're going to happen before He returned. Some people say this is like a hinge verse for sanctification. That if you believe Jesus is coming back today then you're gonna get right with Him. Like if Jesus can come back today, man, if you're gambling you better stop gambling. If you swear you better stop swearing. If you're immoral get right 'cause He'll come back today, I don't think that's a motivation out of love. Let me give you an example. I love my wife. If I found out that she took it she was taking a trip to Europe and found out while she was over there, she texted me and said, "Hey not gonna be back for a while. "They're shutting down flights. "It turns out I'm gonna have to get vaccinated. "There's all sorts of different

things. "I mean the earliest they think I'm going to be home "is two to three months." If I received that message I would never think for one second, "Two to three months, huh? "I bet I can fool around for two or three months "till she gets back. "She's not coming back today." Why would I never think that? 'Cause I love my wife. I don't care if she's back in two, three, four or five months, the longer it went the more I would yearn for her. That's why every single story post rapture in the Olivet discourse, whether it's about coming like a thief in the night or the 10 virgins and being ready, it is all about this. It's Jesus saying, "I can come back in any generation. "So no matter who you are, "be prepared that this could be the generation "that I could come back. "And if I don't prepare as if I am." That's what He's saying. That means that the book of Revelation and that the gospel is for every single generation it means this, could Jesus Christ come back in our generation? A hundred percent absolutely. As I look at the signs of the times I'll be surprised if He doesn't, if He doesn't will He come back in my kid's generation? Yeah, He could. What about my grandkids? Well, if He doesn't come with my kids, maybe my grandkids but I don't know when He's coming, but every generation should live as if this is the generation He's coming and should live in light of the gospel of Jesus. And that aligns with all of scripture. And that's why Jesus put the book of Revelation as He unveils Himself so that we will be ready no matter who we are in any generation for His coming. Amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- So that's my challenge with the pre-tribulational argument. I just personally can't find scriptures to support it. And I've read some of the best pre-tribulational scholars.

And you need to understand cause I'm not pushing against people. My favorite people, some of my favorite people in the world and some of the people I listen to and learn from are pre-tribulational on their understanding of the return of Christ. I'm just not convinced scripturally, theologically or historically that that's accurate. That's all I'm saying. I have challenges to the post-trib position too, my challenge, to the post-trib position is if you don't know the day or the hour but in post-trib you do, 'cause all you got to do is time at night, seven years from the time that the Antichrist signs a treaty with Israel. So I know the day and the hour of that I also have a problem because of the days that are gonna be cut short. How come you never tell me about when and how those days are gonna be cut short? It says in the Bible that up until the time of Jesus' coming you have the analogy of the fig tree or the thief or Noah and his Ark or Sodom and Gomorrah people are going about living their lives normally just like they would be during the six seals that are being opened. But I'm telling you when the wrath of God comes nobody's gonna be living like that. Everybody's gonna know that God is the one pouring out judgment. And more importantly to me. And finally, it's difficult for me to understand the second coming as a one day event. Jesus' first coming, how long did it take? It's 30 to 33 years. It wasn't just that He showed up and left the same day. The second coming is a complex whole series of events that begins with his parousia or His coming, His gathering of the saints, bringing them into heaven and then beginning to pour out His judgment and then bringing His church back down to earth and then establishing the millennial reign. It's over a thousand years as part of the second coming and it's all part of it together. And if not, then I got a question for every pre-trib

and every post-trib person in the world. In Revelation, chapter 19, when Jesus comes out of the sky with all of those coming with them which are those of us who love Him how come his robes dipped in blood? I mean, as a post-tribulational person, you believe from the time He went up into heaven, He's been there, so where did the blood come from? As a pre-trib person you saw Him come in the sky, take His church home. You've been waiting seven years now, He's coming back. Where did the blood come from? How come He's got blood on His robe? He didn't have blood on His robe when He rose from the dead. Where's the blood? But if you believe that the days are gonna be cut short. And there's a time where Jesus gathers His saints where we all go to heaven with Him. And then He begins to pour out His judgment. And it fulfills all the old Testament prophecy where He's thwarting His enemies. You get a picture like Braveheart, where He's coming back with blood all over his robe to pick up His church and say, "Let's go take over the earth again. It fits. I mean, for me, the reason I land, where I land is because I don't feel like I have to shift any part of scripture to get where this tells me to go. I just wannabe scriptural. So when I'm looking for, in the book of Revelation is there any place at all in the book of Revelation that talks about what it's gonna be like after the great tribulation of those days and before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Is there any place in the book that says this is the great tribulation, this all stuff happened but before God pours out His judgment, here we go. You know what? There is open your Bible to Revelation chapter seven because you would expect that after God Jesus opened the sixth seal, that immediately He'd opened the seventh, but we get chapter seven. The seventh seal is not open till

chapter eight. There's a span of time. There's an interlude. And there's three different elements that take place after the great tribulation. And here's what you're gonna see. The first is this, that the angels will be given instruction. Notice chapter seven, verse one. "And this, I saw "four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, "holding back the four winds of the earth "so that no wind would blow on the earth "or on the sea or on any tree. "And I saw another angel ascending "from the rising of the sun, "having the seal of the living God. "And he cried out with a loud voice "to the four angels "to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea saying "do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees "until we have sealed the bond servants of our God "on their forehead." So what do we see? We see five angels, four are standing at the four corners of the earth. This does not mean that the earth is flat. Okay, what this means is they're holding back all the corners so that nothing can harm the earth at this time. And one angels an archangel, giving them instruction saying the earth is gonna be harmed but don't harm it yet. There's two things we're gonna have to do before God pours His judgment out on the earth. So he gives the archangel gives the other angel instructions as to what needs to take place before God pours his destruction on the earth. And the first opportunity they have the first thing that these angels need to do is they need to see that 144,000 Jews will be sealed from God's wrath. Notice verses four through eight. "And I heard the number of those who were sealed "144,000 sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel." So God is gonna seal or mark these 144,000 Jews. You say, well, Jeff, how do you know it's 144,000 Jews? 'Cause my Bible says it's 144,000 Jews. I see no reason to take that scripture any differently. Some have

tried to turn it into the church. Someone tried to make all these things come to pass. It says 144,000 Jews. What do they do? They're sealed. What is a seal? The seal is ownership and protection ownership and protection. God is gonna seal, 144,000 Jews. He's gonna own them. He's going to protect them. So that's what's going on here. Now how do you know that, that's true? Cause He gives us verses five, six, seven, and eight just to highlight exactly what He's gonna do, "From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, "from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, "from the tribe of Gad, 12,000, "from the tribe of Asher, 12,000, "from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 "from the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000 "from the tribe of Simeon 12,000 "from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 "from the tribe of Issachar 12,000 "from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000 "from the tribe of Joseph 12,000 "from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000 were sealed." Pastor Jeff why do you have to keep reading that? Why did he put that in the tech? 'Cause he wants you to know that there were 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. He's making no bones about it. So there is a remnant. The first fruit of Jews are gonna be grafted back in that God is going to seal. He's gonna own and protect these bond servants by putting a mark on their forehead. You'll see later in the book of Revelation what's the Antichrist gonna do? He's gonna try to get people to take his mark on their forehead or on their hand, right? God is sealing those who are His. Pre-tribulations will tell you, these are 144,000 Jewish evangelists. I don't see any evangelists here. It doesn't say that they're evangelists. It doesn't say they're going around the world. I mean, this is past the midpoint of the tribulation. So if these are Jewish evangelists then the next part we read is all the martyrs that they led to the Lord. It means there's more martyrs that will be martyred

in about a period of a year than there has been the church every generation up until then. So it's going to happen here. What God is saying is after the sixth seal is open and all the Kings of the world are calling for the rocks to come fall on them. And everybody's hiding from the glory of Christ and God's wrath is about to be poured out. And He's asking the question who can stand? We see these angels say, "Before you destroy the earth "couple of things, couple things, couple of things. "seal the 144,000. "So they're protected and don't get hurt "because God's gonna do something special with the Jews "and there's one other element He's gonna do." And this is one of my favorite passages one of my favorite passage in all of scripture. And after the great tribulation here's what you're gonna see. The resurrection and rapture will occur simultaneously. Look at this, "After these things, "I looked and behold a great multitude, "which no one could count." Now, how come he couldn't count it? I mean, in Revelation, chapter five, verse 11 "He looked and heard the voice of many angels "around the throne and the living creatures and the elders "and the number of them was myriads of myriads "and thousands of thousands." 10,000 times, 10,000 is a hundred million. I mean, he can count into the hundreds of millions. That's not uncountable for John but when he sees this group, this is like beyond countable. Like this is billions. Like this is, I've never seen a group of people this big in my entire life. And where did they come from? From every nation and all tribes and all peoples and all tongues. And what are they doing? Standing before the throne, and before the Lamb clothed in white robes and palm branches were in their hands. Palm branches are a sign of freedom, security, joy, blessing, honor to the one who has saved them.

And they cry out with a loud voice saying salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. When we seen the 24 elders and the four living creatures and all the different angels, celebrating the Lord. Here's what they've been saying, "Blessing and honor to you 'cause you saved them." Now what are you seeing? Now you're seeing a group of people that are saying, "You saved us. "You delivered us." This is the church. This is the church. "And all the angels were standing around the throne "and around the elders and the four living creatures. "And they fell on their faces before the throne "and worship God.' Here's another way you notice the church. 'Cause it's distinct from the elders and the four living creatures and the angels. And what were they saying? Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might be to our God forever and ever, amen. You say, 'Well, Jeff, how do you know that's the church? Glad you asked, 'cause John's gonna find out too. Verse 13 it says, "Then one of the elders "answered saying to me "those who are clothed in the white robes, who are they? "And where did they come from?" Like, who are these people and how come they're here? And John says to him, "My Lord, you know." He's not calling him, God. He's just saying, sir, you know. I mean, if this was one of the other apostles, he wouldn't be saying, sir, you know he would know this is a angelic being. That's asking him this question. He's like, you know, I don't know. And what does he say? And he said to me, "These are the ones "who have come out of the great tribulation. "And they have washed their robes "and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Who has washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? Every single one of us who has redeemed from every tribe, tongue and nation. That's the picture that

we see. "For this reason there before the throne of God. "And they serve him day and night in his temple "and He who sits on the throne "will spread His tabernacle over them. "They will hunger no more, nor thirst anymore "nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat." Why? "For the Lamb in the center of the throne "will be their shepherd and He will guide "to the springs of the water of life. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eye." Is that awesome or what? This fits everything Jesus says, this fits everything Paul says, this fits everything John says, so let's look at some rapture passages. Let's see if it fits the rapture passages. In John chapter 14, the disciples are concerned when Jesus is going to leave them. He says, John chapter 14, one to three, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. "Believe in God. "Believe also in Me, "in my father's house there are many dwelling places. 'If it were not so I would have told you "for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you "I will come again and receive you paraLambano again, "receive you to myself that where I am "there may you be also." Jesus promises disciples. "I'm going to heaven. "I'm gonna prepare a place for you. "Then I'm gonna come get you "and receive you to myself." That's the rapture. First Thessalonians chapter four verses 13 and following Paul writes, "But we do not want you to be uninformed brethren "about those who are asleep, "that's who's died "so that you will not grieve "as do the rest of those who have no hope "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, "even so God will bring with Him "those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." In other words, if you have relatives those older, those younger, that knew Jesus and they're no longer here because they died. You can grieve, but you can grieve with hope because God's gonna bring them back

when He appears in the sky, you're gonna see them again. Your loved ones you'll see them again if they knew Christ, you'll know them again you'll recognize them again.

"For this, we say to you by the word of the Lord "that we who are alive and remain."

That means to endure. That means to go through a significant time of trial and still survive. Would that fit the context of everything we're talking about? Absolutely. "Those who are still alive and remain "who haven't been martyred until the coming of the Lord "will not proceed those who have fallen asleep "for the Lord himself will descend from heaven, "with a shout with the voice of an archangel "with a trumpet of God "and the dead and Christ will rise first." Now picture this, my problem with a secret and silent rapture of the saints is that the Bible is secret and silent about a secret and silent rapture of the saints. There's nowhere in the Bible where all of a sudden we're just snatched out of here and we're gone and only Kirk Cameron knows and he's running around trying to tell everybody. And by the way, Kirk Cameron, from what I know he'll be with us anyway, right? He knows Jesus. My point is, we've been trained a certain way to think but I mean, think about what's going on here. You have Jesus Christ giving a command, right? How loud is that gonna be? I mean, how loud is that gonna be?

Then you have the voice of the archangel and you have the trumpet of God. Now we played a trumpet in here before but that was a trumpet of man. Can you imagine the trumpet of God? And then you're gonna have all the dead in Christ rise. Like how loud that gonna be. I mean, I don't think it's gonna be some secret event. As a matter of fact, what you see in scripture and what you get the picture of is that in Genesis all the way back in Genesis chapter one and verse three, you see that Jesus turned on all the

lights, let there be light, there was like, what you see in Revelation 6:12 is that he's gonna turn off the lights. Sun's gonna have sack cloth. Moon's gonna turn to blood. It's gonna be dark. And then what are you gonna see? You are gonna see the sign of the son of man coming on the clouds in great glory. And everybody will see Him. It's exactly what Jesus told the high priest in Mark chapter 14, verse 62 where you will see the son of man coming on the clouds. It's exactly what He says in Revelation 1:7 that every eye will see Him. There is no secret in silent rapture. When Jesus comes back, everybody in heaven and on the earth and under the earth are gonna know that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, everybody will see Him. Not one person won't see Him. And those who don't know Him will mourn, and those of us who do are gonna celebrate like never before. Why? Because the dead in Christ are gonna rise. I mean, there's nothing in the scripture that says the dead in Christ are gonna, and we're gonna and we're gonna get resurrected bodies on the way to heaven. Doesn't say that. So the dead in Christ will rise. Do you realize when Jesus rose from the dead in Matthew 27 the graves opened up and people that have been dead were up walking around. I believe what's gonna happen is the dead in Christ are gonna rise on the earth. And everybody's gonna see that Jesus resurrects the dead. Then we who are alive are gonna get our resurrection body. And together on planet earth, everybody that knows Jesus is gonna be completely resurrected, looking at Him in the sky. And then collectively, here's what the text says is gonna happen. "Then we who are alive and remain "will be caught up together. "We're all going together with Him in the clouds "to meet the Lord in the air. "And so we will be always with the Lord, "therefore,

comfort one another with these words." Here's what He's saying. There will be a generation of the church at some point in time that will enter Daniel 70th week. And there will be a generation of the church that sees the Antichrist and the falling away of those who aren't true believers. And there is a generation of the church that will see martyrdom. And there's a generation of the church that will see cosmic disturbances. And when you do know the time is near you won't know the day or the hour but you'll know He's about ready to come. And when He is, you look up because when you see Him He's gonna bring all the dead with Him. He's gonna resurrect those of us and give us glorified bodies who know Him. And then He's gonna take us all to heaven. And everybody on the earth will know that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father, isn't that awesome? That's the blessed hope. That's what Jesus is spelling out. That's what the book of Revelation is trying to tell us. Not that we won't go through challenge. Not that we won't go through tribulation, but that when we do, we can look up 'cause our hope is near. Now, dispensationalist go to great lengths to tell you about how the rapture and the second coming are so different. They'll show you slides that looks something like this. I'm borrowing these from Dr. Alan Carson. Who's a friend of mine. Who's a Greek scholar. You'll see a slide that looks something like this on the board. It's just pre-tribulational contrast. And you'll see the rapture coming. Like when the rapture comes, Jesus will come for His church. Then the second coming, He'll come with His church. And at the rapture, He comes in the air. But at the second coming, He comes to the earth and the rapture, there's no signs, it's eminent but the second coming they're signs it's not eminent. And in the rapture, only His own see Him,

but in the second coming, every eye will see Him in the rapture tribulation begins, but in the second coming, the millennium begins. But this looks really good until you start thinking about it. The challenge of slicing and dicing scripture like that is that that's not what the scripture is highlighting. I mean, we can do the same thing, if we took contrast from a passion narrative. I mean, if we did this with the passion story, we'd say, well, on one side, Peter defense Jesus, but on the other side he denies Jesus on the night of his betrayal. At one time, He is a silent before His accusers and then He speaks at one point in time, Jesus carrying the cross and then Simon's carrying the cross. Jesus is ridiculed here but then He's recognized over there a soldier pierces Jesus side but then here, the soldier confess Jesus Christ as the son of God must be two different passion narratives. It's one story when Jesus Christ comes back, He's coming.