

Christ in Prophecy
Revelation 25: A Literal Rapture or Tribulation to Endure?
Epic Battle Presentation by Tim Moore

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Opening

Nathan Jones: Greetings in the name of Jesus our Blessed Hope, and welcome to another episode of Christ in Prophecy!

Tim Moore: We are concluding our four-part series titled Epic Battles of the Bible: Genesis vs. Revelation. It is based on a very important question: Can we really take the books of Genesis and Revelation literally?

The reason for this question is that most people today, even many Christians, do not accept the plain sense meaning of these bookends of the Bible. Instead, they spiritualize their interpretation, arguing that the plain sense meaning of Scripture is not its true meaning. The result is that the beginning and ending of the Bible are the two most abused areas of God's Word, having been spiritualized into meaninglessness. We believe this results in a travesty to one's understanding of God and His plan of salvation.

Nathan Jones: To combat this abuse of God's Word, we've been showing you excerpts from our 2022 Epic Battles of the Bible Conference. Our hope is that you will gain an appreciation for the literal interpretation of the Bible. And we also hope that you will gain the wonderful realization that Genesis and Revelation are not at odds, but that these books complement each other. God's plan for the ages is meant to be understood and that is meant to provide us hope in these challenging days.

Tim Moore: In our last three episodes: Eric Hovind of Creation Today Ministries addressed a controversial debate in Genesis: A Literal Global Flood. In our second episode, Nathan addressed a controversial debate from the book of Revelation: A Literal 1000-Year Kingdom. In our third episode, Dr. Jobe Martin of Biblical Discipleship Ministries addressed A Literal 6-Day Creation.

Nathan Jones: If you missed these episodes, we invite you to watch them on our website at christinprophecy.org, our Christ in Prophecy Youtube channel, or download our Lamb & Lion App.

Tim Moore: In this fourth and final episode of our series, I will swing back to the other end of the Bible to address a controversial debate in Revelation: A Literal Rapture or Tribulation to Endure? Will Church Age Christians have to endure the horrors of the Tribulation? Let's find out! Afterwards, we'll come back and answer some of the more hotly debated objections skeptics have about the book of Revelation.

Part 1: Epic Battle Presentation by Tim Moore- Literal Rapture or Tribulation to Endure?

Tim Moore: So, what is the evidence of the Rapture in Revelation? Well, I've already touched on this. We have the example of John being swept up into the throne room of heaven, and the absence of the Church during the events of the Tribulation, but there is other evidence within the book of Revelation pointing to the Rapture of the Church.

Throughout the letters Jesus dictates to the seven churches, He says, "He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." That conveys the reality that these messages are not only for the seven named churches, but for all who hear the voice of our Good Shepherd. And the promises to overcomers are tied to those statements as well, demonstrating that the promise that Jesus gives to the people in those seven churches represent promises to believers throughout the Church Age.

But later, in Revelation 13:9, as the dragon and the beast from the sea are described, John advises, "If anyone has an ear, let him hear." Missing from that recitation of the original formula is the qualifying phrase "...what the Spirit says to the churches." In other words, John's description of the horrors that will take place and be poured out during the Tribulation is for anyone who would heed the warning. So, in the language of Psalm 2, it is for any who would "show discernment and take warning." What would they need to do? Well, if they take warning, they would need to "worship the LORD with reverence." In other words, rejoicing and doing "homage to the Son...that you not perish in the way..." And as the psalmist writes, "How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!"

Once again, John's specific language is a clue that the Church is simply not here on the earth during the Tribulation.

Here's another example. In Revelation 3:10, Jesus promises to deliver those who have kept the word of His perseverance. He said, "I will also keep you from the hour of testing, the hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth." The word that translates from in my New American Standard Version of the Bible is "ek". And according to Strong's concordance, that Greek preposition translates "out from" and denotes an exit or emission from, as in a separation from something. In other words, it means a removal from a time and a place. Other words could have been used in this passage and would have suggested another reality. The Greek word "dia," for example, could have been used had Jesus meant to convey an expectation that He would preserve His Church through the coming hour of testing that would take place on the whole world. And of course, the clear text of this verse points to a coming event that will, indeed, be experienced worldwide.

So, how can we understand the very plain sense that is spoken to in all these verses? Well, I've already said that the first key to understanding Revelation is to believe it. If you believe it, accepting Jesus' testimony as true and relevant, then you will understand it. How? By reading it for its plain sense meaning.

What do I mean by that? Well, as David Reagan says, "If the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense, lest you end up with nonsense."

This presentation advocates for a literal Rapture of the Church, with plain sense evidence woven throughout the book of Revelation. But there is another key to unlocking the supposed mysteries of Revelation, and to interpreting it literally. Within its 22 chapters, 404 verses, and almost 12,000 words, Revelation weaves in more references to the Old Testament than any other book of the Bible. It contains 49 direct references to Isaiah alone, 34 direct references to Daniel, 23 direct references to the Psalms, 21 to Exodus, 16 to Jeremiah, and 10 to Zechariah.

But it also contains passages and references to Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Kings, Proverbs, Hosea, Joel, Malachi, Amos, Job, and Micah. And there are other inferences that can only be understood in light of Old Testament texts.

For instance, when one of the elders told John to stop weeping over the fact that no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was found worthy to open the sealed book in Revelation 5, he said this, "Behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." You know, you and I are so familiar with terms like this that we overlook the fact that those titles spring from the Old Testament, from Genesis 49 and Isaiah 11 specifically. And then when John turned and saw "a Lamb standing, as if slain," he is calling Jesus by the title used by John the Baptist in John 1:29.

At other times, Revelation interprets its own symbols. So here again, when John turns and sees the "Lamb standing, as if slain," John describes Him as having "seven horns and seven eyes." And then he immediately goes on to explain that those "are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth," referring back to the seven Spirits God mentioned in Revelation 3:1 and 4:5, and described in great detail in Isaiah 11:2.

And, when Jesus promises to give overcomers the morning star in Revelation 2:28, we only have to keep reading to understand that symbolic reference. He reveals later in 22:16 that He is "the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." So, overcomers, those who "overcome the World by believing that Jesus is the Son of God" according to 1 John 5:5 will receive Jesus Himself!

The point is that as Brock and Bodie Thoene say, everything means something. The symbols woven throughout the book of Revelation are not merely fanciful figments of John's imagination. He did not craft an intricate allegory like Alice in Wonderland. He recorded the dictated words of Jesus, and he recorded the things which he had seen, the things which were contemporary to his time, and the things which will take place at some indeterminate future date.

Those of us who interpret Scripture literally realize that the Holy Spirit led the writers to incorporate beautiful word pictures. So, Jesus is called the rose of Sharon and lily of the valley, not because He is a flower that withers and fades, but because both metaphors capture His exquisite beauty, His wonderful fragrance. Entire sermons have been offered just to bring out the richness of these two poetic and prophetic symbols. But the symbols point to something, to Someone real that transcends the merely symbolic. And similarly, the symbols and metaphors in Revelation have real meaning.

And so, this brings us to, again, a literal Pre-Tribulation interpretation of the Rapture as contained in Revelation.

Anyone who denies that the Rapture will occur and that it should occur before the Tribulation has to dismiss the imminence of that coming event. They have to spiritualize the plain text of Scripture, suggesting for instance that the Rapture has already taken place in ages past or that the Church needs to endure the Tribulation and the wrath of God.

People who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly be saved during the Tribulation. We know that, unquestionably. But most of them will be martyred, hunted down by the Antichrist and his minions, and killed for refusing his edicts. A few will survive the Tribulation and will go into the Millennial Kingdom as mortal beings, just as Nathan described in his presentation.

But the Bride of Christ will not be beat up by her Bridegroom just prior to the marriage feast. Her purity is assured, not because of any inherent perfection that we have individually or collectively, but because we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and that itself is another symbolic phrase with deeply literal meaning. The white garments that we will wear throughout eternity are not something we bring with us or weave for ourself from strands of good intentions and gossamer. We know that even our righteous deeds are like filthy rags. No, our beautiful, white garments will be given to us by our Beloved, by our Bridegroom Himself, Jesus Christ.

We realize that many people have absorbed a spiritualized, amillennial view of Revelation. Like the young man I cited in my booklet, "Looking Forward to the Reign of Jesus Christ," there haven't always been an appeal toward a Pre-Tribulation Rapture position. And so many people have not come to the position of believing in Amillennialism or another timing of the Rapture because they've studied the Scripture, but because that is the default position of many churches and seminaries.

Likewise, I believe that people gravitate oftentimes toward a mid-Tribulation or post-Tribulation expectation of the Rapture just because they haven't read and studied. So, without being offensive, I think such positions run counter to the entirety of God's Word.

The idea that Christians, those who put their trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation and have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, deserve punishment for their sins, well, that idea is logical, but it is woefully unbiblical. I say logical because it does seem only fitting that we should suffer for our sin, let alone for our sinfulness. But that is the good news of the Gospel. Jesus Christ suffered for us. Isaiah foretold this wonderful truth. He said, "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried. He was pierced through for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed." That is the meaning of the word propitiation in Romans 3:25. For all who place their trust in Jesus Christ, the wrath of God was satisfied, paid in full, and exhausted. And this is the consistent theme of the entire Word of God.

Paul said, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," that in Romans 8:1. And Paul also wrote, "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Speaking of God, he told us to wait for "His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come." Again, we're not going to endure wrath, we're rescued from it, out of it, before it happens. And if you've already accepted God's offer of salvation, then, the Scripture says, "you are not lacking in any gift but are eagerly awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Part 2: Epic Battles- Q&A Session

Eric Hovind: Matthew 24. And I know anybody who studies Revelation that is a huge passage right there. Doesn't Matthew 24 prove that the Tribulation is only 3 ½ years long and not 7 years like Revelation says, and therefore is a contradiction?

Nathan Jones: That is an excellent question. What it does prove is the second half of the Tribulation or the Great Tribulation is 3 ½ years long. The Great Tribulation is the second half of the seven year Tribulation. We know that the Tribulation is seven years because Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 9, the Seventieth Week prophecy gives seven years for the Tribulation

period. Remember in Matthew 24 Jesus is addressing the Jewish people, and He is telling them about the second half where the Tribulation will be specifically hard on the Jewish people. The Antichrist will have great wrath because Satan has been kicked out of Heaven again, finally and totally and he goes on a warpath against the Jewish people and he tries to kill the Jewish people.

So, you can actually find here. I thought you might ask this so I took a few notes here. So, it is called times, times and half a time. In other words, we've got 3 ½ years there. Revelation 12:14, it consists of two 1,260 day periods, Revelation 11:3, or two 42 month periods, Revelation 11:2, and 13:5. Revelation does not tell you that the Tribulation lasts seven years, you have to go back to Daniel to find that out.

Tim Moore: And there is another aspect I think that is important to bring out, in that who is experiencing the Tribulation, and who is experiencing the Great Tribulation? We know that God's wrath is poured out throughout this seven year period we call the Tribulation on the whole earth. But there is one group of people who seems to be immune from that wrath and who are protected. As a matter of fact, they are in peace treaty even with the Antichrist for 3 ½ years, that being the Jewish people. But at the end of the 3 ½ year period when the Tribulation has already been occurring the Antichrist turns in great fury against the Jewish people, and then they come under what is known as the Great Tribulation. So, much of the emphasis in Matthew is for the Jewish people and what they will experience which is why they, and we have referred to that portion of the Tribulation as the 3 ½ year Great Tribulation. So, there is a distinction that we need to understand that is a nuance.

Nathan Jones: The trick with Bible prophecy is that you have to not take just one or two verse and say, "Okay, well that is the answer." There is a bigger picture. There is a context that you have to go throughout the Bible and look at all the verses that apply to that subject, and then make your conclusions based on that. And that's what some people do with Bible prophecy, they will cherry pick a particular verse, or a particular thing and say, "Oh, well, there it is, there is your answer." And you're like, "Well, not what about this verse?" "Oh, I didn't know about that verse." "Or what about this verse." You have to look at it in the bigger context. I'm sorry Dr. Martin.

Jobe Martin: So, the idea then of the seven year Tribulation, and in particular the last half is to bring the Jewish people to salvation.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Jobe Martin: To finally save the people, like it says in Romans 11, they will be saved as a nation.

Tim Moore: To bring them to the end of themselves. That is an important point because people think, well this Tribulation sounds like God is just pouring out wrath, and He is, but there is a purpose to wrath. And so, in wrath remember mercy is what Habakkuk appealed to the Lord. The Lord always remembers mercy. So, even the purpose of His wrath will be to drive men and women and the Jewish people to the end of themselves, and to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Jobe Martin: Amen. And that's why it's called the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

Tim Moore: Exactly right. Another theme.

Eric Hovind: Hey, doesn't the whole idea--I mean I know we've got the three different views, the different views on Revelation, you guys are presenting the literal view. Could the Rapture actually happen sometime in the last half of the Tribulation? Like at the end of the Tribulation?

Jobe Martin: Now, tell us what the Rapture is first.

Tim Moore: Tell what the Rapture is.

Nathan Jones: Well, the Rapture of the Church--

Eric Hovind: Can you give us a date? If you give us a date for it we give you an extra ten points, okay.

Tim Moore: Oh, no. They'll have me discredited all together. We can't do that. Wouldn't do that.

Nathan Jones: Three times in Matthew 24, no one knows the day or the hour of the Rapture.

Eric Hovind: You didn't fall for that one, alright.

Nathan Jones: Well the word rapture is in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 it is the word in Greek "harpazo." It was translated into Latin which was "rapio." And then transliterated into English Rapture, it means to be caught up or snatched up. And the Bible teaches that one day the Church, in other words if you are a believing Christian, you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, that Jesus will come for His Church and catch up or snatch up and take you up to Heaven before His wrath comes upon the Lord like the Tribulation. Sounds a lot like the Flood doesn't it? God rescued His believers before His wrath came. Same thing but this wrath will be a series of 21 judgments during the book of Revelation.

Now, this is where it gets confusing because a lot of people will take the Rapture, which is Jesus Christ coming for His Church, and confuse it with the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation where Jesus returns with His Church. And so, they'll take the verses and they'll put them in a blender and they'll get them all mixed up and say, "Well, the Rapture has to happen at the end when Jesus returns." But that is not the case, the Rapture verses are all tied to the fact that Jesus says that we shall not endure the wrath of God, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, and 5:9, also Revelation 3:10, that we will not have to endure the hour of the trial that is coming upon the whole earth.

So, the Rapture there are a number of views about when the Rapture will happen. There is the Pre-Trib Rapture view, in other words it happens before the seven year Tribulation, which is what Tim and I believe, and I'm sure Dr. Martin as well.

We also have the Mid-Trib Rapture view that it happens half-way when the Antichrist desecrates the temple and is revealed. And a lot of people will pull 2 Thessalonians 2 and say, oh, that is where that is.

You have the Pre-Wrath view that discounts the wrath of God being all 21 judgments and says that it happens about three-quarters into the Tribulation. But Jesus opens the very first Seal, He opens all the Seal Judgments, so the entire Tribulation is the wrath of God.

And then you have the Post-Tribulation Rapture people who think that after God has destroyed the world and there are only enough people to fit in one valley, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, that

somehow then He raptures them and they make a U-turn in the sky and come back with God in the Post-Rapture view. Well, I think the biggest argument against that is that after Jesus returns and sets up His Kingdom those who survived the Tribulation in their earthly bodies will live on into the Millennial Kingdom and have children. Well, if you are raptured up to Heaven you are given your glorified body, which Jesus says does not reproduce. So, if you have all these glorified people living in the Millennial Kingdom, they are not having children. So, the Post-Trib Rapture view can't make sense. And there's of course a number of other arguments for it.

Tim and I believe that the Pre-Trib Rapture view has the most support because God again, promises the Church, His Bride, that they will not endure His wrath. After all we are all married here, right? Did we let our fiancés get beat up for seven years and then go and marry them? I don't think my wife would have married me. God treats the Church the same way, when He sends His Son to get His bride, His bride is protected from His wrath.

Tim Moore: And the Bride of Christ is the Church. That is a promise made to us, that being the Rapture, the Rapture is a promise made to the Church, the Bride of Christ that our Bridegroom will come back to get us.

And Eric you tried to trip us into giving a date or time, Scripture says even Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom doesn't know the day or time. And this is a beautiful picture from the Jewish wedding tradition where the bridegroom would betroth with a bride, in other words they would enter into a covenant to where they were committed to one another. This was Mary and Joseph prior to Jesus' birth. But they were not yet one as man and wife. In other words, they had not come together to consummate that marriage, but they were in a covenant relationship. And at a time chosen by the father, the son would be sent to go and get your bride, to bring her back to the father's house where the son had built on a room. So, the Lord Himself said, I got to prepare a place for you, I will come back for you. He is the bridegroom coming back for us His bride.

And the other point that Nathan made beautifully is that the wrath of God is poured out throughout the Tribulation. Some people say, well, that only starts half-way through. No, even the people enduring the wrath during the first half of the Tribulation recognize where it is from. They don't turn to the Lord in repentance and accept His offer of salvation, but they shake their fist and curse Him. So in Revelation chapter 6:16, and we are talking about the very Seal Judgments, the people on the earth, the kings of the earth, great men, commanders, the rich, the strong, every slave and every free man. In other words, everyone hid themselves in caves among the rocks of the mountains, and here is verse 16, "And they said to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.'" They recognized what is happening, and why they are enduring such great tribulation, but we won't be here to experience that, because there is now no condemnation for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ. The wrath of God that we deserved. And people will say, "Well, I deserve a little bit of punishment." Yeah, you did. You deserved a whole lot of punishment. So, did I. That was poured out on Jesus Christ at the cross at Calvary.

Jobe Martin: Amen. That is excellently said.

Closing

Tim Moore: Well, I didn't have the time to show you all of the evidences for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, you can get the entire Epic Battles Conference on a 3-DVD album for gift of \$25 or more, and that includes shipping. Just contact us at the online or at the number below.

Nathan Jones: We hope that this series has helped you gain the wonderful realization that God's plan for the ages is meant to be understood literally so that you have hope in these challenging days. We're going to leave you with one final Q&A that sums up this entire series. Maranatha!

Nathan Jones: One final question for us all. Does Genesis and Revelation harmonize or are they at war with each other?

Jobe Martin: The simple answer is they are perfectly in harmony with each other. If we take it as it is intended, which is literally, and there are figures of speech in there but they are obvious, it is absolutely, they go with each other.

Tim Moore: We call them the bookends of the Bible in one of our recent "Lamplighter" editions because they encapsulate all of the Word of God, but they fit together like bookends to show the beginning and the end. And the only person that can testify is God. You know I spoke about speaking recently from Ezekiel 37. I love the picture that is presented there because the Lord brings Ezekiel to a valley of dry bones and asks him a very pointed question: Can these bones live? And I've thought about that a lot, as an engineer, as a technical person, my answer would have been well, no, there is no way, they cannot. It is impossible from my perspective.

But then I reflect back on a movie quote that I used even in this lesson from a Marx Brothers film, "Duck Soup," which one of the guys said, "Who are you going to believe me or your own eyes?" So, sometimes I think this is a perfect example where the Lord is really asking of us, "Who are you going to believe?" And I have decided, Jobe as you said in your own testimony I am going to believe in the Lord God. I'm going to believe His testimony of the beginning; He was the only one there to see it. I'm going to believe His testimony about the end; He's the only one who knows it. And so, even when my eyes seem to be leading me astray I'm going to believe Him and His wisdom. Ezekiel's answer was, "Oh, Lord God you know." And indeed, He does. And so, beginning and end and everything in between God knows the things He has chosen to reveal. I believe absolutely.

Nathan Jones: Eric, we didn't give you a chance to respond.

Eric Hovind: No, you could not end on a better note. If you are watching this and you haven't really trusted in God's revelation to mankind you need to start understanding and getting in God's revelation to mankind and trust His words over anything else. Specifically, you start with the fact that Jesus Christ came, died, was buried, then rose again the third day according to the Scriptures for your salvation. Repent and trust in what Christ did and continue to search the Scriptures, understanding this is God's revelation to mankind, and He's written it to bless us, to help us, to give us the truth that we need to live in life. And this will help you in every area of life. This will help your marriage, your finances, your relationship with your kids, your community, how to act and love one another. It's got history. It's got prophecy. It's got truths about science, and its right on everything. My friend you and I need to know these truths and then go share these truths with others. That's why I'm taking notes because I want to be able to go tell this stuff to other people and I hope you do too.

End of Program