

## GroupStudy #2 Tribulation

You will now get to practice interpreting Scripture. In the next two studies, you will get an opportunity to apply the rules of interpretation to the two main passages of Scripture that every End Times student uses for the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church. Determine for yourself if the Church is raptured out before the Great Tribulation.

Why is this important? Your belief of the rapture really determines the rest of how you interpret the end times. The predominant teaching in America by most preachers and seminaries is the Church will be raptured to heaven before the Great Tribulation. However, by their own admission, there is not one verse of Scripture in the Bible that clearly teaches the Church will be raptured to heaven before Tribulation. At StoneWater, we want you to know how to accurately interpret Scripture for yourselves. We don't want to tell you what to believe. We want you to wrestle with the Scriptures yourselves and depend upon the Holy Spirit to guide you. The rapture and end times is a non-essential belief, meaning, we can all have different viewpoints of the end times and still worship together and enjoy eternity living next to each other. There are many great people who believe the Church will be raptured and are smarter than all of us combined. But, I worry that some people have never heard a different viewpoint. As you interpret these end times passages, use the rules of interpretation and rely upon the Holy Spirit inside you. I love you, and I am so glad we are family! Enjoy!

**Question:** Will the Church go through the Great Tribulation or be Raptured before it?

*Scripture #1: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (NASB) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore, comfort one another with these words.*

**Practice Interpreting this Passage of Scripture: (Answers found on the next page)**

1. CONTEXT- What is the main point of this passage and overall theme of the surrounding verses?
2. AUTHOR'S INTENT- Why did the author write this? What was the original purpose?

3. AUDIENCE'S UNDERSTANDING- What did they understand? How did they teach it to others?
  
4. MISINTERPRETATION- What is this passage not talking about?

### Answers:

1. Context: The main point of this passage of Scripture is describing the resurrection of the believers who have already died before Jesus' return. The original audience was concerned that Jesus had not already returned, and they were worried about their loved ones, who were believers, who had recently died before the return of Jesus. This passage also describes what happens to believers who are alive when Jesus returns.
  
2. Author's Intent: Informing believers of what happens to the dead and to those alive when Jesus returns. Goal was to comfort, bring hope, and help them not grieve, knowing that Jesus will resurrect their loved ones who have died at His return.
  
3. Audience's Understanding: Jesus will return from heaven. The dead in Christ will be resurrected. The ones of us who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds and meet Jesus in the air. They will be with Jesus forever.

#### 4. Common Misinterpretation:

- Does this passage of Scripture discuss the Rapture of the Church before the Great Tribulation?
  - Answer: No.
  
- What time-frame does this passage discuss?
  - Answer: These events happen when Jesus descends, voice of archangel, trumpet of God.
  
  - Answer: Some argue that this is not Jesus' final return, but it's a secret return for Jesus to Rapture the Church to heaven before the Great Tribulation. By applying the hermeneutical rules, the most accurate interpretation would be this event is simply describing the return or 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus. One must "Jump Through Hoops" to find the Rapture of the Church.

o If you disagree with this interpretation, feel free to share your thoughts with me by emailing [Joey.White@StoneWaterChurch.com](mailto:Joey.White@StoneWaterChurch.com)

**CONCLUSION:** This passage is about the Resurrection of the dead and those alive at Jesus' return.

- We should use this passage to talk about the Resurrection and Resurrected Bodies.
- *Read also 1 Corinthians 15:12-14 The resurrection of the dead.*