

Where Have All Those Christians Gone?

The Rapture!

Rene Valdes

Front cover photo by Rene Valdes

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By Jose (Rene) C Valdes

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Dedication

To Bible-reading Catholics everywhere,

To all who, in seeking the Truth,

Are beset with disturbing questions,

To all who feel trapped in dilemmas,

But yearn to obey

Only Him who is Lord,

May you insist on the narrow path of obedience,

And experience the exhilaration

Of coming into

God's marvelous light.

And A Thanksgiving

To God,

In obedience to Whose leading this book was written,

To my wife Syl,

Whose faithful support was essential to my writing,

And to all who reviewed the manuscript of this book,

Offering God-honoring comments and suggestions:

Pastor Robbie Casas

Bro Tony and Sis Gina

Bro Ces

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Preface

Are You Presently An Unbeliever In The Absolute Authority Of The Bible, and Not a Born-Again Christian? Wondering About All This Talk Of The Impending Rapture?

Perhaps you are not a Bible-believing Christian now, not someone who has unconditionally surrendered himself to Christ, and have not accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and you are wondering why you are reading this book. But you may have heard of the Rapture, and have been wondering about it, as you don't quite understand or believe it all right now. If so, you may want to know more about it here.

You may have had born-again evangelical Christian friends who have tried to interest you in God's gift of salvation, but that has always sounded so – so highly theological. Not your cup of tea. And so you rejected it. Or at least postponed making a decision to become serious about it. You may have felt no pressing need for it. There will always be an opportunity to turn to God, you felt. You will have many opportunities to do something about it. But of course, if you suddenly died now, you would have missed your chance, permanently and tragically.

But God in His mercy may have arranged for you to be given *just one more chance*, at the Rapture! That is when God will take His saved children away from the earth, all the Christians, and leave behind the unbelievers like you, to give you *one more chance!* Yes, the Rapture is a coming reality! It is not something a man dreamed up to scare people like you. God in

the Bible prophesied it. Yes, God Himself! But if you, as someone who rejects the absolute authority of the Bible as God's Word, who rejects the condition set by Jesus that unless you are born again you will not see the kingdom of God,¹ will not do anything about it now, you will miss the Rapture, by which God will take His people out of the evil earth, and bring them safely to Heaven. You will find yourself left behind, with only evil people for company. You will find yourself in an unbelievably wicked and twisted world, and you will face the grave risk of ending up in Hell.

So, think seriously about your future eternity! You surely do not want to end up in Hell. Perhaps God right now is calling you, to respond to His grace and accept His free gift of salvation. Do not risk going to Hell, for the passing comfort of an uncommitted life. Read on, about what God has ordained for the near future.

Are You A Christian Reader?

As a committed follower of Christ, you have most probably approached many unbelieving friends, presenting to them the Gospel message, telling them about the love of God and His free gift of salvation. And like many, many Christians before you, you have probably experienced rejection, being turned down. And your unbelieving friends have remained unbelievers.

With the Rapture imminent, you have probably wondered: what will happen to your unbelieving friends and loved-ones after you are Raptured, and have gone to be with the Lord? With all Christians gone, will there be no one to tell your unbelieving friends what is to come, and what they are to do to

¹ John 3:3

be saved? *Will your evangelistic efforts have to cease with the Rapture?*

If you have ever wished there were something you could do for your unbelieving friends *after the Rapture*, perhaps this book is for you. *You can give them a copy of this book now!* Perhaps, just perhaps, even if they do not accept Christ now, even if the Rapture will leave them behind, perhaps they can remember to turn to this book then, and it can guide them to the Bible during the time after the Rapture! Perhaps your evangelization to them can continue even then to help them accept Christ!

Would you think now about taking this step: *Today, put this book into the hands of your unbelieving friends!*

Has The Rapture Taken Place? Were You Not A Born-Again Christian, And Therefore Have Been Left Behind?

Has the Rapture already occurred? Are you one of those left behind? Perhaps you were never intending to be a born-again Christian, and all of them have already disappeared. Somehow this book has fallen into your hands.

You are bewildered. All your old friends, your fellow unbelievers, are still around. But those whom you used to disdain and laugh at, those who were the objects of your jokes, those crazy Christians, are all gone. Why? Where have they gone to? What now?

Do you know what the Bible says will next occur? Are you aware that you will now experience the most unbelievably horrible times the earth has ever seen, incredible tribulation? Did you know that these severe trials were designed by God to

judge the world, and incredibly, also to give you one more chance to come to Him? Are you aware of the coming massive war between the evil Antichrist, and Christ the Lord? You will now be asked to follow and obey one of them. Whom of the two of them will you choose? What will be the consequences of each alternative? You will want to know some answers, and to read of them in this book. Thank God you have come across this book, which can now tell you what to expect, and what to do.

What Is The Assumed Sequence Of End-Time Events?

The author recognizes that there are two main schools of thought about the prophesied sequence of events leading to and following the Rapture. The minority opinion sees the Rapture occurring at the end of the Tribulation, while the majority opinion sees the Rapture before the Tribulation, followed by the Second Coming of Jesus. For purposes of this book, the sequence of events assumed will be the one taught by the majority of bible scholars, as follows:

- The Rapture
- The 7-year Tribulation
- The Second Coming of our Lord Jesus
- The 1000 years of peace of the Millennium
- The Last Judgment
- Eternity

This book will concern itself with the first three of these: the Rapture, the Tribulation, and the Second Coming.

Section I – The Rapture

What is the “Rapture”?

To many non-Bible-believing persons, those who do not accept the absolute authority of the Bible, this is often an unfamiliar term. The fact that it does not even actually appear in the Bible is proof, to many, that it is an imagined concept. What is it really all about?

Briefly, it refers to the “taking up” or snatching up (from the Latin work *rapio*, to seize, snatch, carry away) of God’s people, the believers who have accepted Christ’s offer of salvation and have accepted Him as Lord and Savior, from the earth, to be with Him in Heaven, prior to the Tribulation and His Second Coming.

If the word Rapture itself is not in the Bible, is the concept discussed at all in Scripture? It most certainly is, in several verses in God’s Word, His Scriptures.

This section will discuss the concept, and the biblical proofs, of the Rapture, a most glorious prophecy that is joyfully anticipated by born-again Christians, and rejected by those who choose not to trust God’s Word.

Chapter 1 Where Have All The People Gone?

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. [NIV]

Who has not heard of mysterious disappearances of people? History records many such instances, mostly political in nature. One of the most well-known were the *Desaparecidos*, “the disappeared ones” of South America in the 1970s and 1980s, when tens of thousands of political detainees were rounded up, imprisoned, and never heard from again.²

Thousands also disappeared in Chechnya in recent years. Political dictators, whether in Uganda, Iraq, the Soviet Union, or even the Philippines, have caused thousands of their own citizens to disappear without a trace.

As mysterious as those disappearances have been, there is a coming world-wide occurrence of massive disappearances that will reduce the earlier ones to the stature of relatively insignificant events.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forced_disappearance

At the imminent Rapture of Christians out of the earth, hundreds of millions of God's children from all over the world will disappear without a trace! Yes, they will suddenly vanish, as they are taken up to Heaven by the Lord!

Can you imagine the world's disbelief at this occurrence? Can you imagine the world-wide headlines? "Where did all those hundreds of millions of people go?" everyone will ask. "Have they been kidnapped?" But police won't be able to help with any leads. "Did they go somewhere?" But calls to suspected destinations will turn up no helpful information. "Have enemies of the state managed somehow to snatch away millions of citizens?" But all the earth's leaders will be clueless.

"Perhaps some extra-terrestrial beings have landed and have carried away some of the earth's population? Is this possible?" But no one will be able to come forth as possible witnesses to the assumed kidnappings by extra-terrestrials.

Or has a cruel God pulled off a cruel joke? Atheists won't think so – they do not believe there is a God at all. But God-haters will gleefully suspect so. How could He do such a cruel thing?

Meanwhile, there will be chaos all over the world! At the moment of the Rapture, vehicles driven by Christians suddenly become driverless, and crash into other vehicles or other objects. Planes piloted by Christians tragically crash to earth. Trains suddenly without Christian engineers are driven off the tracks.

Fires seem to erupt everywhere, with many kitchen stoves left untended by suddenly absent Christian cooks! And where did all the Christian firemen go?

Sporting events attended by thousands suddenly lose Christian players about to shoot a goal, and also lose many spectators! Hospital surgeries lose either their Christian surgeons, or their Christian patients. And the babies! Innocent infants disappear from their cribs, or from the arms of astounded, unbelieving, mothers! Important meetings held in spacious hotel ballrooms suddenly find themselves without their Christian speakers, leaving the unbelieving attendees puzzled and groping for answers.

Homes will suddenly be without owners. As will bank accounts. In subsequent days, puzzled lawyers will try to deal with a situation they have never dealt with before: surviving relatives will suddenly lay claim to abandoned properties, with lawyers mystified as to whether such heirs are entitled to the properties, the previous owners not having been declared officially dead yet. Gone, yes. But dead?

And what are adult unbelieving children to do, now that parents who were Christians are gone?

Everyone left behind is now in a world that seems to have gone mad!

Chapter 2 Is This What All Those Christians Were Talking About?

Luke 24:25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [NIV]

After the Rapture, the following speculation of unbelievers left behind will be typical. Many of them will suddenly recall stories earlier told them by the vanished Christians. With much effort, they will try to remember the words they had heard, the Bible verses they had so often heard quoted, and rejected.

Unbelievers everywhere will be lamenting, "I do remember that my friend was saying something about angels with loud trumpets calling God's children. Was he talking about this verse that I now read in my Bible?"

Matthew 24:30-31 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. [NIV]

“What about that unbelievable story about Christians’ bodies being transformed into something else, able to penetrate solid walls, and to travel at the speed of thought? It sounded to me then like science fiction! I never could accept all that mystery. But now I read this from my Bible. Was this what they were talking about?”

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed -- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. [NIV]

“Oh yes, I remember those wild stories of certain people floating up to the sky, while others are left behind. But who could believe them? I certainly did not! But now I read this from my Bible, which I admit I never paid much attention to earlier.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. [NIV]

“I know, I know. I heard that story too. We were warned that the Rapture would take place when no one would expect it at all. We were told that all of us would be conducting business as usual. I myself was out with some friends having some beers when the whole thing happened. We realized the disappearances had occurred when an ongoing TV report started to sound excited, very excited. The story we had earlier heard sounded very much like this:”

Luke 17:26-30 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. [NIV]

“Was this what they were talking about then?”

Was this what Jesus meant when He rebuked His followers for their slowness of heart in believing all that the prophets had earlier said?

Luke 24:25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [NIV]

Chapter 3 Why Would God Do This?

Zechariah 1:3 Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty. [NIV]

Are the disappearances from God? But why would a God of love do something as cruel as this? What is His purpose? What is His plan? Is there any way the Rapture can be understood?

To those who were the children of God, to those who were saved, to those who revered God and believed in the authority of His Bible, the Rapture was something they understood, and looked forward to in great anticipation, as a child looked forward to a birthday celebration.

But to those who were unsaved, to those who did not believe in the Gospel message, to those skeptical of prophecy, to those who had no use for God, to those who trusted so confidently in their own wisdom and wealth, to those whose hearts were hardened to His message of love, the Gospel message was foolishness to them.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. [NIV]

Still, God's compassion was persistent. He sent to evil men trial after trial, pleading with them to return to Him. But they were hard of heart, and would not return. Over and over God reminded men of their hardness of heart, and of the persistence of His love, and His search for the lost.

Amos 4:6-10 "I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. "I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up. People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. "Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, I struck them with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. "I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD. [NIV]

For centuries, and throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, God had always pleaded with sinful people to repent of their sins and return to Him. Typically, He said,

Zechariah 1:3 Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty. [NIV]

Isaiah 45:22 Let all the world look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other. [TLB]

But throughout the centuries, men were usually proud and arrogant and unrepentant, and hard of heart. God described His own people, the Israelites, those who should have been the first to obey Him; He described them to Moses as “a stiff-necked people.”

Exodus 32:9 "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. [NIV]

Again and again they sinned, and again and again God warned them of impending disaster, threatening them of escalating punishment. He pointedly said to them, repeating His message over and over, to ensure it was understood,

Leviticus 26:18 "If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. [NIV]

God was extremely patient. Even after men paid no attention to His rebuke, He still warned them of yet more escalation of penalties if men persisted in their sins.

Leviticus 26:21 "If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. [NIV]

God knew the hard-heartedness of men. He anticipated their recalcitrance. So He warned them yet again:

Leviticus 26:23-24 "If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. [NIV]

One final time, God issued His stern warning. “I Myself will punish you,” He declared, “with increased penalties.”

Leviticus 26:27-28 "If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over. [NIV]

But men persisted in their pride and human wisdom. They mocked God. And so the wrath of God was aroused, till there was no remedy.

2 Chronicles 36:16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. [NIV]

“I called, but you did not answer,” God said, “and you chose to do what displeased Me.”

Isaiah 65:12 I will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter; for I called but you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me." [NIV]

“The Lord will execute judgment upon all men!” declared the Lord. Men cannot say He did not give them enough warning!

Isaiah 66:15-16 See, the LORD is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For with fire and with his sword the LORD

will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by the LORD. [NIV]

Because men repeatedly tried God's patience, and did not respond to Him, "I in turn will laugh at your disaster!" God said. "I will mock when calamity overtakes you!"

Proverbs 1:24-26 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you -- [NIV]

Jesus Himself warned us, when He was here on earth, of the coming Tribulation subsequent to the Rapture. He said,

Luke 21:10-11 Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. [NIV]

Luke 21:25-26 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. [NIV]

Do we now see how extremely patient God has been? Do we see His loving warnings of impending disaster? Do we still dare ask why God saw fit to bring upon mankind the horrors of the coming Tribulation?

Do we see how men have driven God to tread the winepress of the fury of His wrath?

Revelation 19:15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. [NIV]

As author John Piper expresses it,

“... Jesus himself is pictured as treading the winepress of this fury. That means that those who rebelled and did not repent are like grapes under the feet of the fury of Christ, and are crushed until their blood runs like wine from the press.”³

In the end, God’s patience is exhausted. He separates those whom He had chosen to save, and whose hearts are humble and contrite and broken and repentant, and takes them up to Heaven with Him at the Rapture, leaving the hard of heart, those rebelling against Him, to suffer the Tribulation. “They shall not enter My rest” He firmly declares.

Hebrews 3:7-11 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" [NIV]

³ March 6, 2005 sermon of John Piper entitled, “The Present Effects of Trembling at the Wrath of God”

Chapter 4 Who Will Be Those Left Behind?

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [NIV]

Those left behind must now face the bitter truth: They are left behind because they had not been saved by grace through faith, and had not accepted the sovereignty of God nor humbly accepted God's gift of salvation, and had not accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, **it is the gift of God** -- not by works, so that no one can boast. [NIV]*

Only those who have been saved by grace through faith will be taken; all else will be left behind.

The Rapture will have the effect of "reverse surgery." In normal surgery, a few bad cells are excised out, leaving the majority, the good cells, intact in the body. In the Rapture, all the few "good cells" are excised, leaving behind the majority, the "bad cells" on the earth!

Therefore, if you are left behind, you will literally be living with the scum of the earth!

But that is not all the horror of being left behind! Remember that before the Rapture, there were Christians on earth, those who had repented of their sins and had accepted the Lordship of Jesus and His saving grace. Christians are the salt of the earth and the light of the world⁴, and are an effective foil against evil on earth. Christians also have the Holy Spirit residing in them⁵, having the effect of restraining evil on this earth. After the Rapture, with all the Christians gone to be with the Lord, there will be no salt nor light left on earth, no Holy Spirit in the world to restrain evil. Evil will have free rein in all the earth!⁶

So who will be those remaining on earth?

They will all have one common characteristic. They will be the proud and unrepentant, those who have insisted on rebelling against God, refusing His offer of salvation, and refusing to submit to Him in humility.

There will be the atheists, they who denied outright the existence of God. They will be in a real quandary, refusing to believe that God, who they claimed did not exist, was behind the disappearances.

There will be the patently wicked. The murderers, bank robbers, rapists. They who were in outright rebellion against God, and refused to bow to Him.

⁴ Matthew 5:13-14

⁵ John 14:16-17

⁶ What In The World Is Going On? By David Jeremiah, p. 112

There will be those who were not in open rebellion against God, but they never took Him seriously either. They had a patronizing attitude about God, did not care much about Him, perhaps joked about Him, and had no need of, nor use for, Him.

Then there will be the leaders, the arrogant, the proud, the powerful, the leaders of prominent organizations, and of countries. These were they who thought they, not God, determined the destinies of men. These were they who had no fear of God, who pushed Him aside, believing themselves to be their own powerful gods. These were they who had not learned that God said,

*Isaiah 45:18 For **this is what the LORD says -- he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited -- he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other. [NIV]***

But these were not the only arrogant leaders on earth. There will be those who were even more proud, who regarded themselves more highly than the earthly politicians. These were the spiritual leaders who, like the Pharisees of old, saw themselves above the Word of God, proclaiming their own teachings based on human wisdom and on human traditions. They will be the self-proclaimed shepherds who did no shepherding work, who did not seek the lost, nor bind up the wounds of their injured flock, but instead ruled harshly over their flocks. These will be they of whom Jesus had said,

Matthew 23:5-6 "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; [NIV]

Tragically, these false shepherds had many followers, perhaps some even calling themselves Christians, boastfully believing themselves to be so, refusing to believe what God was telling them in His Scriptures.

There will be those who actually thought themselves saved, but did not meet God's requirements for salvation according to God's Word.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God -- [NIV]

These actually believed themselves accepted by God, proclaiming their love for God, but, it turned out, were unrighteous in God's all-seeing eyes, even if disguised from human view by their hypocrisy. Jesus had earlier commented about such people.

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men -- robbers, evildoers, adulterers -- or even like this tax collector. [NIV]

Finally, there will be those who had actually been chosen by God for His gift of salvation, who may have considered coming to Him for forgiveness, but had not made the act of repentance necessary for salvation. If, at the time of the Rapture, they were still unrepentant, they too will be destined to suffer the extreme trials of the Tribulation. But somewhere in the midst of it, they will finally be touched by God's grace, and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, and they will be saved! What a load of trials they could have avoided if only they had come to repentance sooner!

It will be to the deluded souls, to those who thought they were saved and looked upon with favor by God, but who were left behind, that the Rapture experience will be the most painful!

Do we have any idea how many will be saved, and how many will be condemned? Jesus Himself said that the road to Hell is wide, and that the gate to Heaven is narrow, and that few will find it.⁷ That sounds very much like less than half of the total!

In the end, the Rapture will prove itself to be the great and final arbiter of the question about the trustworthiness of one's Christianity, or the authenticity of one's faith. Speculations we may have always had in mind about people's faith will be forever settled. "Was this person truly saved? Was he a false Christian? Had that person accepted the Lord? Or was he still rebelling against God?"

The Rapture will end all such conjectures. God will at that time show the whole world who was His, who truly was saved! He will end all arguments on this matter! For those continuing to rebel against His authority, those unwilling to submit to the Lordship of Jesus, those who rejected His gospel of salvation, will surely be left behind at the Rapture!

⁷ Matthew 7:13-14

Section II – The 7-Year Tribulation

What is the “Tribulation”?

The Tribulation is a seven-year period very specifically prophesied in many verses in Scripture, a period immediately following the Rapture, a period of such severe divine judgment of men that Jesus Himself described it as a time “such as has not been from the beginning of the world.”⁸ The Tribulation will follow the Rapture and precede the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

In a great sense, it will be a culmination of God’s patience with man’s wickedness and rebellion throughout history. In prior times, God had already once exercised His justice on an evil earth during the time of Noah, when He wiped out the world’s entire population, all of it evil, save for the family of Noah.⁹ He also manifested His detestation of sin when He destroyed the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.¹⁰ Because His own people, the Israelites, persisted in their practice of idolatry time and time again, in rebellion against God’s majesty, He sentenced them to centuries of exile to foreign lands.¹¹

But man has continued in his wickedness, and has always chosen to rebel against God’s authority.

⁸ Matthew 24:21

⁹ Genesis 6:9-7:24

¹⁰ Genesis 18:20-19:29

¹¹ Deuteronomy 28:36, 1Kings 14:15, etc

In anticipation of Christ's Second Coming, God in His sovereignty has planned on the 7-year Tribulation, a time of extremely severe judgment over men's unrepentant sinfulness.

Should the Tribulation surprise man? It should not, for God has foretold it in Scripture countless times. In the following Chapters, we shall see what God has sovereignly purposed to do.

Chapter 5 What Now? What Horrors Await Those In The Tribulation?

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now -- and never to be equaled again. [NIV]

Are we horrified by the evil in the world these days? Do we recoil at news of genocides of dictators who think nothing of killing millions of their own people? Are we aghast at the continuing terrorist killing of innocent hundreds? Or do we react with revulsion at the slaughter of an estimated 46 million unborn babies worldwide every year?¹² Or perhaps we have personally suffered the trauma of a loved one senselessly killed by a drug addict?

As horrifying as the present evil is on earth these days, there is even greater tribulation stored up for the wicked of the world in the near future. Jesus Himself warned us about this.

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now -- and never to be equaled again. [NIV]

¹² <http://www.abortiontv.com/Misc/AbortionStatistics.htm>

Will there really be such a period of severe judgment? What would be some of the horrors that could be expected to occur? The Bible is surprisingly detailed in its enumeration.

For starters, there will be unbelievable inflation! A loaf of bread for the equivalent of a day's wages, we are told! Do the math; how much would that be today?

Revelation 6:6 And a voice from among the four Living Beings said, "A loaf of bread for \$20, or three pounds of barley flour, but there is no olive oil or wine." [TLB]

Wars and famines and sicknesses would kill an astonishing one-fourth of the earth's population! Think of it! If earlier, and for the sake of argument, we assume that 700,000,000 Christians are Raptured of the earth's 6.2 billion people, that would leave 5.5 billion. One fourth of that would be 1.375 billion people killed! Even the simple burial of this number of dead people would be an enormous problem for the survivors!

Revelation 6:8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. [NIV]

Keep the math clearly in your head. **Of the earth's original 6.2 billion people, 1.375 billion would initially perish!**

The might and power and majesty of God as He displays His sovereignty is so awesome that, Scripture tells us, leaders and rulers of the earth, the rich and powerful, as all other men, are cowed in deadly fear, and implore the rocks and mountains to fall on them to cover them from the wrath of God.

Revelation 6:15-16 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! [NIV]

We have all witnessed fires. Perhaps some fairly large ones. One fire is coming that will be the mother of all fires. It will consume an entire third of the earth! A third of all trees will also be burned up, as will *all* green grass. Talk of an ecological disaster!

Revelation 8:7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. [NIV]

More terrors follow. John, the writer of the book of Revelation, tells us of something fiery, as large as a huge mountain, thrown into the sea, resulting in the death of a third of sea creatures, and the destruction of a third of the ships of the oceans. What force could be this powerful? While we do not know for sure, it sounds very much as if John of 2000 years ago was witnessing an atom bomb explosion of our present day.

Nuclear war? But why not? With the Nuclear Club nations of the earth now zealously guarding a total of 8,400 working nuclear warheads, 2000 of which are on high-alert status, capable of being launched within minutes¹³, the likelihood of a spark igniting this highly combustible situation is immense.

¹³ Time Magazine issue of June 22, 2009, p. 9

Revelation 8:8-9 The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. [NIV]

And now a new calamity. What could turn a third of waters to become “bitter”, killing many people? Could it be radioactivity? Could it be another nuclear device contaminating earth’s waters and killing many people?

Revelation 8:10-11 The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water -- the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter. [NIV]

We have all heard of volcanic eruptions like the one of Mount Pinatubo that resulted in so much ash being blown skyward as to shield the earth from the sun’s rays. Revelation tells us of a massive event, possibly caused also by volcanic eruption, that reduces the sun’s rays by an astonishing third. Imagine the effect on the earth’s crops. Imagine the effect on the earth’s plants and animals. An ecological winter!

Revelation 8:12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night. [NIV]

We have also all heard of locust infestations, where huge swarms of locusts attack areas of the earth, devastating

everything green. Revelation tells us of a different type of locusts, those that do not eat the greenery of the fields, but sting, like scorpions, those who were rebels against God. But the sting is much more painful, enough to make victims scream for death, in vain. What are these locusts? We do not know, but they are part of God's awful judgment on man.

Revelation 9:3-6 And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. [NIV]

More widespread global deaths! This time, a third of the earth's population! Earlier, only 4.125 million people had been left. **If another third of these are killed, that would be another 1.375 billion!** The remaining population will now be only 4.125 minus 1.375 or 2.75 billion people. That would be less than half of earth's original 6.2 billion!

Revelation 9:15 And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. [NIV]

Considering the initial 1.375 billion people killed, and adding this new number of 1.375 billion, **a total of 2.75 billion people by this time would have died!** There would probably be a resulting severe shortage of coffins. As a result, mass burials will be resorted to, in which corpses will simply be dumped into bulldozed pits and covered up with earth.

As horrible as those plagues are, will men then repent of their sins, and acknowledge the sovereignty of God? No. Men will remain hard-hearted and arrogant. They will continue to refuse to bow their knee to God, but will continue to worship the gods of their own choosing.

Revelation 9:20 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood -- idols that cannot see or hear or walk. [NIV]

Chapter 6 Will There Be No End To These Horrors?

Ezekiel 7:4 I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will surely repay you for your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD. [NIV]

At this point, is God done yet? Will God's wrath be spent at this time, and will His mercy and grace now finally take over?

Not yet. Scripture tells us that there is more tribulation coming.

Then is introduced another source of great evil, the Antichrist. This is the world leader who initially presents himself to the troubled nations of the earth as a brilliant savior of mankind. After winning the world's trust, his true evil nature is soon revealed, and he enslaves all the people of the earth. He is described as "another beast." We probably know him better as the man associated with the number "666".

Revelation 13:11, 16-18 Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead,

*so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. **His number is 666.** [NIV]*

The Antichrist will require all people to worship him! And to ensure compliance with his instructions, he forces all to accept a mark on his forehead or on his hand. But all who do agree to worship him “will drink of the wine of God’s fury!” Those left behind will truly be severely tested by God!

Revelation 14:9-10 A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. [NIV]

Those who choose to worship and follow the Antichrist will be an abomination to God, who will cause ugly and painful sores to break out among them. Choosing the Antichrist and declaring one’s allegiance to him rather than to almighty God will have its very painful consequences!

Revelation 16:2 The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. [NIV]

And yet new catastrophes. Can anyone imagine a sea without fish, or any other living creature in it? Yet God’s Word tells us that it *will* happen. *Every living thing in the sea will die!* What will then happen to all fishermen? Of what use will all

the fishing boats be? Can men live without seafood in their diets? Yet it will happen!

*Revelation 16:3 The second angel poured out his bowl on **the sea**, and it **turned into blood** like that of a dead man, and **every living thing in the sea died**. [NIV]*

Yet one more unthinkable trial to add to men's misery. Can anyone now imagine a situation where drinking water will become unavailable? Yet Scripture tells us that this will happen! No, the earth will not dry up and run out of water, as some futurists now claim to be able to foretell. Water will remain on earth, but it will turn to blood!

*Revelation 16:4 The third angel poured out his bowl on the **rivers and springs of water**, and they became **blood**. [NIV]*

Without drinking water, what else can add to the misery of men? How about intense heat? Heat hot enough to sear and scorch people. John the writer of Revelation describes it as the heat of the sun. Yet, we are told, as serious as the calls of God to repentance are, hard-hearted men will still refuse to repent and glorify Him!

*Revelation 16:8-9 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and **the sun was given power to scorch people with fire**. **They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God**, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him. [NIV]*

All the fish in the sea have died. All the water has turned to blood and have become unfit to drink. Fire has scorched men. And now, a new plague: Darkness!

*Revelation 16:10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of **the beast**, and **his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony** [NIV]*

If you were left behind, and were experiencing all the above, could you stand any more of God's wrath? Could there be more of His plagues?

There is more! How about a powerful earthquake, the mother of all earthquakes? One described by Scripture as "No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth..." How high on the Richter Scale would it register?

*Revelation 16:18 Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and **a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.** [NIV]*

What else can happen? Could there possibly be even more catastrophes? Will God's anger never cease? Let us look at just one more disaster that God has ordained for this time of great tribulation. Unprecedentedly large-sized hail. Would you believe hail of about a hundred pounds each? As heavy as a large-sized rock! Yet, unbelievably, the hearts of some men will continue in their rebellion against a God who has repeatedly shown them His might and power.

*Revelation 16:21 From the sky **huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.** [NIV]*

The foregoing are only *some* of the plagues of the Tribulation according to God's Word! God's wrath, His holy abomination

of and intolerance for sin, will be fully manifested during this time. In previous times, His anger against the sins of mankind has alternated with His mercy, which, we are told 26 times in Psalm 136, endures forever.

But God has appointed a time for His mercy to be taken over by His justice, and the time of the great Tribulation is that time. Scripture tells us that God will not look upon man with pity at this time.

Ezekiel 7:4 I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will surely repay you for your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD. [NIV]

Chapter 7 **Can Those Left Behind Still Be Saved?**

Luke 21:36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." [NIV]

Thank God, His Word tells us that if we are left behind, He does give us one final chance for salvation!

In the book of Matthew, Jesus describes the Tribulation days as being shortened for the sake of His elect, i.e., for the sake of those who have been chosen by Him for His gift of salvation. He said,

Matthew 24:22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. [NIV]

But, you might ask, what are the elect doing in the Tribulation? Haven't those whom God had chosen been earlier Raptured? The elect described here are those who, while chosen for salvation, had not earlier accepted God's gift, but were careless with it, and had, till then, refused to accept His grace.

In the Old Testament, Daniel, in prophesying the evil deeds of the Antichrist during the Tribulation period, describes how the saints, the elect who have finally come to Christ, are oppressed by the Antichrist for three and a half years.

*Daniel 7:25 **He will speak against the Most High and oppress His saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. [NIV]***

John, in the book of Revelation, also tells us of these elect who repent and wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. John clearly states that they came out of the great tribulation.

*Revelation 7:13-14 **Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes -- who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [NIV]***

They are further described as they who were victorious over the Tribulation-era beast and his infamous image. This passage tells us of a great spiritual battle between the elect and the evil beast.

*Revelation 15:2 **And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God [NIV]***

Many of those who find themselves left behind, and subsequently accept salvation, and who suffer through the Tribulation, are martyred, and die honoring the name of Christ. John calls them the blessed ones.

*Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: **Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.**" "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." [NIV]*

Like other victorious children of God, the elect who are martyred erupt in jubilant song, praising the Lamb and His judgments, considered just and true.

*Revelation 15:2-4 And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "**Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.**" [NIV]*

So, if any of us are left behind at the Rapture, can we still be saved? Most assuredly. That is the comforting message of God's Word, which is always filled with invitations to repentance. Those left behind will have one more chance to repent!

Of course, it is well for us to heed the words of Jesus, who advised us that it would be far, far better if we could come into His presence without having to suffer through the Tribulation.

*Luke 21:36 Be always on the watch, and **pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen,***

and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man." [NIV]

Section III – The Second Coming

What is the Second Coming? Who is coming?

It is an absolutely amazing thing, but it seems that the majority of people on earth these days are unaware of the imminent second coming of the Lord Jesus – in much the same way that the world was unprepared for His first coming!

But the Bible is very clear that Jesus is coming again, and soon. His first coming was to save us. His second coming will be to judge us.

If we are prepared, if we are submitted to His Lordship, if we have heeded His commands, if we have accepted His offer of salvation, we would be absolutely excited, looking forward to His coming, as we would eagerly look forward to the coming of any dignitary. Jesus' second coming will be that of the Dignitary of dignitaries, and those who are ready will be thrilled to welcome Him.

However, if we are unprepared, our anticipation will be with great dread, for the Supreme Judge of the Universe will pass judgment on us all.

And just when is the Second Coming to be expected? Sooner than many think. The next chapter will seek to explain just how imminent this supremely important event is.

Chapter 8 But Is Christ's Second Coming Truly Imminent?

Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." [NIV]

Is Jesus truly coming again soon?

Many would say "No", stating that for centuries, people have claimed He was coming, and so far, nothing has happened.

But in fact, Peter prophesied that in the last days before Jesus comes, scoffers will come, saying precisely that.

*2 Peter 3:3-4 First of all, you must understand that **in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."** [NIV]*

And then, there are the numerous Scriptures that foretold events that would precede the Second Coming of Jesus, *which have actually been fulfilled, or are being fulfilled!* This is not a simple case of just one or two prophecies being fulfilled, but of several, and, as we shall see, the statistical probability of these happening in our lifetime without any meaningful relevance is very slim indeed.

What are these prophecies? Let us take a look at a few of them.

1. **Psalm 83:2-5 prophesied the present and ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.** Note that in the verse cited below, the call to destroy Israel, is almost exactly the wording quoted in an October 27, 2005 report of CNN of a diatribe of Iran's President Amadinejad and Ayatollah Khomeini against Israel, calling for Muslims to "wipe it off the map."¹⁴

Psalms 83:2-5 See how your enemies are astir, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more." With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you -- [NIV]

2. **Zechariah 14:12 prophesied a plague which seemed impossible to happen at that time, but is entirely possible now, possibly via nuclear blasts, among other possibilities.**

Zechariah 14:12 This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. [NIV]

¹⁴ <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/10/26/ahmadinejad/index.html>

3. **Isaiah 13:19 prophesied the rebuilding and destruction by God of Babylon.** That ancient city, totally destroyed, began to be rebuilt by Saddam Hussein. Before his capture by U.S. forces, Saddam had spent \$1 billion in his attempt to restore Babylon to its former glory, conceitedly causing his name to be inscribed on every brick used in the restoration.

Isaiah 13:19 Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. [NIV]

4. **Isaiah 27:6 prophesied the restoration of fertility in the lands of Israel.** It is now well known how present-day Jews have developed their land agriculturally, inventing, among other things, drip irrigation, to make their land the most agriculturally efficient, according to the U.N., producing, among other products, citrus fruit for the world. We are seeing in our day the beginnings of the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Isaiah 27:6 In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit. [NIV]

5. **Isaiah 2:2 prophesied the rebuilding of the Jewish temple.** As early as October 22, 1990, Time Magazine reported that Jewish youths nearly caused a riot when they carried a ceremonial brick to the proposed site to lay it down as the cornerstone of the new temple.

Isaiah 2:2 In the last days Jerusalem and the Temple of the Lord will become the world's greatest attraction, and people from many lands will flow there to worship the Lord. [TLB]

6. **Revelation 13:5-8 prophesied the emergence of a one-world government** under the Antichrist. Despite the fact that 2000 years ago when this prophecy was written, nations were scattered, and the idea of a one-world government would have seemed preposterous, we are now beginning to see this, with the formation of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and the World Court.

*Revelation 13:7 **He (the Antichrist) was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.** [NIV]*

7. **Revelation 6:8 prophesied worldwide pestilence leading to the Tribulation which leads to the Second Coming.** Who can deny that this has started to come about, with the aids plague of a few years ago, among others, and the present-day pandemic of swine flu?

*Revelation 6:8 I looked, and there before me was a **pale horse! Its rider was named Death,** and Hades was following close behind him. **They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague,** and by the wild beasts of the earth. [NIV]*

8. **Matthew 24:7 prophesied worldwide famine.** With frequent TV reminders about starving people all over the world, who can deny that this is happening in our midst, the beginning of the worldwide famine prophesied?

*Matthew 24:7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. **There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.** [NIV]*

9. **Revelation 13:16-17 prophesied the mark of the Beast**, without which no one on earth would be able to make any commercial transaction. At the time this was prophesied by John, it was inconceivable for the population of the whole world to be so marked or controlled by any one man. But as we now know, this is already distinctly possible, with microchip technology.

Revelation 13:16-17 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. [NIV]

10. **Matthew 24:30 prophesied that all nations of the earth will witness the second coming of Jesus.** This could be an entirely miraculous event, or perhaps God will use the facilities of worldwide TV networks to achieve His purpose.

Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. [NIV]

11. **Daniel 12:4 prophesied that education and knowledge would increase enormously, and it is, and that people would travel widely, and they are.**

Daniel 12:4 "But Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal it up so that it will not be understood until the end times, when travel and education shall be vastly increased!" [TLB]

12. **Second Timothy 3:1-4 prophesied that evil will increase to incredible levels.** Can anyone dispute present day evils as outlined by Paul to Timothy?

2 Timothy 3:1-4 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- [NIV]

13. **Revelation 9:15-16 prophesied that a certain country would be able to mount an army of 200 million,** at a time when that number was estimated as the population of the entire world! Today, China is perfectly capable of organizing such a massive army.

Revelation 9:16 The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number. [NIV]

14. **Revelation 16:12 prophesied that the great river Euphrates would be dried up.** This is now possible, with the building by Turkey of the Ataturk Dam which can, for the first time in history, shut off the waters of the great river whose waters have flowed continuously since the days of the Garden of Eden.

Revelation 16:12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. [NIV]

15. **Ezekiel 37:21 prophesied the most incredible of prophecies, that a nation of people, Israel, scattered (by**

God) all over the world 2500 years ago would never lose its national identity, and will in fact be gathered again (by God) into the revived nation of Israel, a prophecy fulfilled in our day on May 15, 1948.

Ezekiel 37:21 ... and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. [NIV]

Is it mere coincidence that these prophecies have either been fulfilled in our generation, or are in the process of being fulfilled? What are the odds against these prophecies happening merely by chance in our time?

In answer to this, prophecy author Grant Jeffrey offers an interesting explanation.¹⁵

In the Bible, one lifetime generation is usually reckoned as 70 to 80 years. However, one governing generation, such as those of Gideon, King David, or King Solomon, consists of 40 years. Using this number, we see that in the 2000 years since the days of Christ, there have therefore been about 50 of these 40-year generations. Again, what are the chances of simple coincidence that these prophecies were fulfilled in our generation, rather than in any other of the past 49 generations?

This can be understood by taking a simple example in statistics. If we take a coin and flip it into the air, the chances that we will get heads are 1 in 2 chances. If we wished to get two heads in a row, the chances would be 2 times 2, or we

¹⁵ The Signature of God, by Grant Jeffrey, p. 200, Frontier Research Publications, Inc.

would need to throw the coin, on the average, 4 times, to get the 2 heads in a row.

Extending the idea, the chances that 1 prophecy would occur merely as a coincidence in our generation, which is one of 50 during the last 2000 years, is 1 in 50. The chance fulfillment of 2 prophecies being fulfilled in our generation would therefore be 1 in 50×50 , or 2,500. If we **calculate the odds for the fulfillment of only 10 of the above 15 prophecies**, the results would be 1 in 50×50 ten times. This would be **1 chance in 97.5 quadrillion, that Jesus' Second Coming in our generation would be by mere chance! In other words, it is, statistically speaking, a virtual certainty!**

Of course, this is not to take the position that we now know for certain exactly when Jesus is coming. For Jesus Himself said that no one knows.

Matthew 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. [NIV]

He did say, however, that we should learn to read the signs of His coming! Jesus said,

Matthew 24:32-33 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. [NIV]

And listen to what He further said, after talking about the events surrounding His Second Coming.

Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." [NIV]

All the prophecies enumerated above have begun to take place!

Therefore, look up! Jesus is coming soon! Jesus is saying to those who are saved, "Your redemption is drawing near!" Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

And the Rapture, which Scripture simply tells us will take place seven years before the virtually certain Second Coming, can therefore take place any day now!

Chapter 9 Epilogue

Malachi 3:7 Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty... [NIV]

What then shall we conclude?

Will the Rapture truly take place? Will the Tribulation and all its horrors really be experienced by all who will be left behind?

God's Word clearly state so. There can be no doubt. Only the truly hard of heart will fail to see the warnings of God. And any person who has any modicum of humility will see the threat of God's power about to be unleashed upon intransigent sinners.

But it does take humility to see this. Those who choose to remain in their pride and arrogance will not have a chance. For they will be choosing to take the ridiculous role of the mouse defying the elephant. No, the far more ridiculous role of the puny human creature shaking his tiny fist against the almighty Creator of the universe!

So what should we then do?

If we are saved now, and if we have accepted Jesus offer of salvation, and accepted Him into our lives as Savior and Lord, if we have repented of our sins and asked Him for forgiveness, and have accepted His free gift of salvation, we are safe, and can look forward to the Rapture to be with the Lord and be saved from the horrors of the Tribulation.

If we are foolhardy enough to reject God's offer of salvation now, we will find ourselves left behind, and will suffer through the seven years of the Tribulation.

Yet God will, in His mercy, offer us yet one more chance for salvation during that time. But refusing God then will inevitably destine us for Hell. We would have chosen damnation rather than redemption. It would be our deliberate choice, not God's lack of mercy, that will doom us.

But why take that risk? It would be like studying the option of taking out insurance against a known impending calamity, insurance we are perfectly capable of taking, but nonchalantly postponing the decision, and carelessly exposing ourselves to grave risk.

Perhaps we console ourselves and postpone our decision to turn to the Lord with the thought that the Rapture is still in the distant future.

But as we have seen, the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus is imminent, and therefore, so is the Rapture. The Rapture can conceivably happen any day now!

So we should be ready, and avoid postponing taking that crucial step that we desperately need to take, our acceptance of Jesus as our Savior and Lord. We have no time to lose. Let us keep in mind God's never-ending and loving plea. "Return to Me, and I will return to you."

*Malachi 3:7 Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. **Return to me, and I will return to you,**" says the **LORD Almighty...** [NIV]*

Appendix

What We Need To Know About Salvation By Grace Through Faith

We must accept the absolute authority of the Bible as God's Word, and revere it, and obey it, and believe every word it says, and regard it as the *only* written Word of God!

Isaiah 66:2 "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. [NIV]

Every word of the Bible speaks truth; there is nothing false that is written there!

Psalms 119:160 All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal. [NIV]

Can anyone risk unbelief in the Bible? Will God allow unbelief in His Word?

Proverbs 13:13 Despise God's Word and find yourself in trouble. Obey it and succeed. [TLB]

We must not add to or subtract from God's Word!

Deuteronomy 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God... [NIV]

Beware of human tradition!

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. [NIV]

We must learn to trust God's Word, not men's.

Psalms 118:9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. [NIV]

Jeremiah 17:5 This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. [NIV]

Psalms 146:3 Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. [NIV]

Life is not about us, but about God, and the proclamation of His glory!

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. [NIV]

God is a holy God! His holiness is infinite, and in the presence of such holiness, our smallest sin is, in God's view, infinitely wicked, deserving of infinite punishment in Hell! He will not tolerate sin!

Exodus 15:11 "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you -- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? [NIV]

Isaiah 6:3 ... "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." [NIV]

Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong... [NIV]

In God's eyes, we in our sins are wicked, and totally depraved!

Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. [NIV]

When man sinned, he lost his fellowship with God, and became separated from Him.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [NIV]

Jeremiah 2:22 Although you wash yourself with soda and use an abundance of soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me," declares the Sovereign LORD. [NIV]

Because of sin, death came, to our bodies, and to our souls.

*Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way **death came to all men, because all sinned** - [NIV]*

*Romans 6:23 For **the wages of sin is death** [NIV]*

*Ephesians 2:1-2 As for you, **you were dead in your transgressions and sins**, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. [NIV]*

Sinful man became the object of God's wrath. In our fallen state, we were headed for Hell!

*1Corinthians 6:9 **Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?** ... [NIV]*

*Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. **Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.** [NIV]*

*Revelation 20:15 **If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.** [NIV]*

Man in his sinfulness was incapable of restoring his fellowship with God. God in His mercy had to take the initiative to restore that fellowship.

*John 3:16 **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** [NIV]*

*John 6:40 **For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.**" [NIV]*

*Romans 5:8 **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** [NIV]*

Jesus was God's only provision for man's sin.

*John 6:44 **"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.** [NIV]*

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** [NIV]*

2Corinthians 5:21 **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**
[NIV]

When we sin against an infinitely holy God, our sins deserve infinite punishment in Hell. But Jesus absorbed the wrath of God for us, by dying on the cross the death that should have been ours!

Galatians 3:13 **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."** [NIV]

2 Corinthians 5:21 **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**
[NIV]

We need to trust in Jesus, that what He did on the cross for us, substituting for us, was sufficient to save us.

Ephesians 1:13 **And because of what Christ did, all you others too, who heard the Good News about how to be saved, and trusted Christ, were marked as belonging to Christ by the Holy Spirit, who long ago had been promised to all of us Christians.** [TLB]

Psalms 34:22 **The LORD redeems his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.** [NIV]

But the sinful mind is hostile to God, and to depraved mankind, God's Good News of salvation is foolishness.

Romans 8:7 **the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.** [NIV]

1Corinthians 1:18 **For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.** [NIV]

Friends may tell you that they will pray for you after you die, to get you to heaven. But God's Word says that after we die, there is immediate judgment, after which there is no longer any possible appeal.

Hebrews 9:27 **Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,** [NIV]

Only by accepting Jesus as Lord, and as Savior, do we become saved. Jesus MUST be Lord!

Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [NIV]

Only by repenting of our sins, by turning our back on our wicked life, by manifesting a changed life, by being born again, do we become saved! Jesus Himself said,

John 3:3 ... Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." [NIV]

Only after we accept Jesus as Savior do we become children of God, not before!

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - [NIV]

As children of God, we also become His heirs of all the biblical promises. But we do not become heirs if we are not children of God!

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ ...[NIV]

Galatians 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. [NIV]

"So when John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave . . .", the giving is God sending his Son to earth on a mission to die. It's just as amazing—only a million times more so—as if you should say to your son, "There is something I want you to do for me: **I have some enemies that deserve to perish, and I want you to go and die in their place, so that they can have eternal life.**" Whatever else you know about God, make sure you know He is like that." - John Piper, from his sermon of May 3, 2009, entitled "God So Loved The World, Part 1"

We must understand God's gift of Salvation. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!

By grace alone.

Romans 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. [NIV]

*Ephesians 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - **it is by grace you have been saved.** [NIV]*

Through faith alone.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For **it is by grace you have been saved, through faith** - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - **not by works**, so that no one can boast. [NIV]*

*1Peter 1:9 ... **you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.** [NIV]*

In Christ alone.

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** [NIV]*

*Acts 4:12 **Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.**" [NIV]*

*1Thessalonians 5:9 For **God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.** [NIV]*

*Hebrews 5:9 ... **once made perfect, He (Jesus) became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him** [NIV]*

Know this too, that man, once saved, is assured of the security of his salvation!

*John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, **whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.** [NIV]*

*John 6:39 And **this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.** [NIV]*

*John 10:28 **I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.** [NIV]*

*John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?**" [NIV]*

*Hebrews 7:25 Therefore **he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.** [NIV]*

1 Peter 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you, [NIV]

Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. [NIV]

Romans 11:29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. [NIV]

That then is a Biblical basis for God's free gift of Salvation. Know the truth!

A Prayer For Salvation

If God has touched your heart, and you now see how you in your sins have profaned His holy name, express, in your own words, your repentance over your sins, and your great need for a Savior, who is Christ alone. Here is a sample prayer that can serve as a guide.

Lord Jesus, I have always belittled my sinfulness. Now I realize how grievously I have offended you. I confess my past rebellion against You, and I ask for Your forgiveness. Be my Savior. I ask also that You be my Lord, and that You come into my life. Live Your life in me from now on. Let me obey only You. Thank you, Lord, for Your gift of faith and salvation, which I now gratefully receive from You. Amen.

What Has The Lord Prepared For Those Who Love Him?

1 Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him" -- [NIV]

Tests For Salvation

Are we now saved? For many of us, the answer might be an emphatic "Yes!" But are we? Should we take steps to make sure of the authenticity of our salvation? We are urged to do so.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you -- unless, of course, you fail the test? [NIV]

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure... [NIV]

For the very purpose of helping us know the certainty of our salvation, John wrote the book of First John.

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. [NIV]

There are many tests available. Some of them are:

The Life Test

Are we living a new life in Christ, rooted in His Word, bearing fruit, bringing others to Christ?

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! [NIV]

Psalms 1:2 ... his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. [NIV]

Matthew 7:16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [NIV]

Galatians 5:22-23 But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; and here there is no conflict with Jewish laws. [TLB]

The Sin Test

Do we continue in our habitual sins? Over and over, John says that he who has been saved will not sin continuously. *If we continue in some habitual sin, our salvation may not have been authentic!*

1 John 3:6 No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. [NIV]

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. [NIV]

*1John 5:18 We know that **anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.** [NIV]*

The Love Test

Do we exhibit a new capacity to love others whom we did not earlier love, and whom we now want saved, growing in the knowledge of Christ?

*1John 4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. **Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.** [NIV]*

*1John 4:20 **If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.** [NIV]*

*1 John 3:14 **We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers...** [NIV]*

As in any test, if we fail, there are consequences. What is the significance of a failure to pass these tests?

We must take serious note. Failure to pass these tests seriously put into question the salvation we may be claiming!

If we are not saved and not headed toward Heaven, where are we actually headed? Toward Hell!

For we will go to either of only two places in eternity, Heaven or Hell!

If we fail the tests, we must review the biblical basis for salvation, and ensure we have started with a humble and contrite heart, that we acknowledge our need for the Savior, that we repent of our sins, and that we desire to be forgiven, all to ensure our rebirth! Our future in eternity depends on it!

*John 3:3 ... Jesus declared, **"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."** [NIV]*



The author now resides with his wife Sylvia in Baguio City, Philippines, in retirement after a 40-year career as a corporate executive. He is now a member of a Christian evangelical church, Guiding Light Christian Church. His four children and eight grandchildren all reside in Manila, blessed by the Lord.

Some of his books are viewable at:

<http://josevaldes.com/>

He may be contacted via email at:

rene@josevaldes.com