**The Rapture--(The Imminent Gathering)- Christianity's most preposterous belief?- Distinguished from the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.**

Can you prove there is a Rapture of the Church- = many Christians believe- the Rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus are the same event.

Many Christians do not believe in the rapture being a separate event from the Second Coming-

- This view originated in the Medieval church- 1st the Catholic Church and then later on in the Protestant Church.-They both believed they were the same event.

--(the problem at that time was the Catholic Church did not adhere to the scriptures-they did not teach them- they only acted in a manner resembling the O.T. Priests-- they were intercessors-)

-(latter on the Protestant Church-after Martin Luther--began to study the Bible but it wasn't until after the turn of the 20th century that seminaries began to teach a Rapture--and many did not hold the view until the 1960's and 70's.--It is safe to say that only in the last half of the 1900's did the Church really differentiate between the two Comings of Christ.)

Let's examine some theories of Eschatology

**The Great Tribulation--**

When the Bible speaks about this period of time it is always directed to the Jews.

Matt 24:3-15

Matt 24:3-==The disciples ask Jesus to tell them when the end will come.

**1st**-many will come in His Name-

some of the men who have claimed to be the Messiah--(supposedly they really think they are)-they are deceiving many for there are actually many people following them.)

Pius IX saud :I alone despite my unworthiness and the successor of the apostles, the Vicar of Christ. I alone have the mission t guide and direct the Braque of Peter; I am the way, the truth, and the life"

Pius X state the Pope is not simply the representative of Jesus Christ, on the contrary, he is Jesus Christ Himself."

Is 42:8 says " I am the lord, that is MY Name and My glory will I not give to another."

-(there have been others that have thought they were the Messiah as well.)-

**2nd**-you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.---We are hearing more and more about the great war.(notice Jesus says these things must happen)-

**3rd**-Nation will rise against Nation.

**4th**  -There will be famines and earthquakes.--(15% of the world is not able to supply itself)- (there are continuing earthquakes)-

**===Notice these are the beginning of the birth pains!!!--**

v-9-you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death.-(remember He is talking to the nation of Israel-- who were the object of the holocaust -6,000,000 Jews killed--also they are hated by every nation -why???--because of Jesus--(they say they killed Him)-

v-10-Many will turn away from the faith--(today the Jews are very liberal in their faith---the only ones who really believe the O.T.- is the Hassidics--many others do not even believe the scriptures are real.

v-12- the love of many will grow cold--The Jews are not sticking together anymore--(look at the Jews in the Obama Administration--Raul Emmanuel--Axelrod- are totally against the Nation of Israel--)although that's true- what it means is-The Jews will turn away from their love for God--and consequently for each other.

v-13-'He that stands firm to the end will be saved'--(what does this mean--first it's the most misquoted verse in the Bible--Christians use it (Calvinists)- to show that if you are truly one of the saved that God has chosen- you will endure to the end.--But what it means is if you stand firm in your faith in the Tribulation Period (the Jews)- you will be delivered from God's wrath-- or he who has persevered to the end shall be preserved from destruction.

(remember Zeckariah 13: 8-says 2/3's will be struck down and perish yet 1/3 will be left in it and He will bring them into the fire and refine them and they will call on His Name and He will answer them--these Romans 13 says will be the ones who look on the Lord when He returns and acknowledge Him as the Messiah.

v-14-'and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come'- (what is the gospel of the kingdom ?)-That the Messiah will return and reign for 1000 years during the kingdom age)-This is different from the gospel of grace to the church.

v-15-Jesus refers to Daniel's prophecy of the Anti Christ standing in the temple-this will be the sign to all Jews that it's time to leave Jerusalem because there will be centered the war.

**v-16-24**-describes the events that will occur -Jesus says He has told them ahead of time so they should not be caught unaware.

v-27- starts the description of the return of the Messiah--

This Great Tribulation precedes the second advent- as noted in Revelation 6-through 19 which describes the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to judge the nations and rule in the Millennium.

**---This is the Second Coming** ----(note the Lord is speaking to the Jews -the church has not been mentioned-- Jesus has not been crucified-the New Covenant has not been put into effect-- Jesus has not Risen yet, Jesus has not Ascended into heaven yet, the Holy Spirit has not birthed the Church yet.

--(the Church becomes a mystery--not seen in the O.T. )

--1st mention is in Daniel 9: 69- in the prophecy of the 70 weeks. the 69 weeks were calculated into days whereby a day was one year--thereby making a week 7 years. (69x 7=483 years) or 173880 days. This started on March 14, 445 BC with the Proclamation signed by King Artexexes.

**The Rapture**

1. Preceding

--A. Christians will fall away from the faith. 1 Tim 4: 1- says in the latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons"

-Today the 'Emerging Church' is teaching positive thinking---positive spiritual position-. They avoid teaching repentance of sins--they avoid teaching about hell--(they are preaching 'tare' gospel--for those who want to go to heaven but do not want to change their lives from sin.) This is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2nd Peter 3:9 says "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." We are told in 1 John 1:9 that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgives us and cleanse us from all our unrighteousness." (That word 'confess' means to name our sins and agree with Him that they are wrong.)- We are not given a free ticket to go on sinning after we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. No, we admit that we have done wrong, we have sinned, and now we will strive to follow the Lord Jesus Christ with His admonition in 1 Peter 1:14-16, "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be Holy for I am Holy".

The teachers that teach a 'half gospel', not the whole gospel, are misleading many today.

**2nd Thess 2: 1-11**

v-1- "concerning the coming our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him-don't be alarmed that the rapture had already taken place and the Day of the Lord had begun."

The Church had received a false report that the day of the Lord had already come--and they were not aware of the teaching of Jesus concerning the signs before that Day would come.==(so here again Paul points out what has to happen before the Day of the Lord happens--or the Tribulation Period begins.)-Paul had told them in his first letter about the rapture and they thought they missed it.

v-3- "don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the 'REBELLION' occurs-and the man of lawlessness is revealed-the man doomed to destruction" -(Paul is going to give them some signs regarding the Tribulation Period beginning.

--(the word for 'rebellion' hers is 'Apostacia' -transliterated to our word 'apostacy'--which means a 'falling away'-- )---same meaning as in 1 Tim 4:1--some will abandon the faith.=These verses related to the last church noted in Revelation 3--the Laodicean Church which Jesus says is a cold church (meaning spiritually lost)- which thinks they are good and have no spiritual needs-- but Jesus says they are poor- spiritually--and He was to vomit them out of His mouth.--(are they really a church--(called out ones)?-or are they the transition from the Philadelphia Church who is still here in a minority capacity.

It appears this apostacy has occurred--as we are witnessing it today. However, the same verse says when this happens the 'man of lawlessness' will be revealed.

There is no denying his identity --as he is the same man described by Daniel as the 'little horn'-(king)-who copies his predecessor-(Antiochus IV-)-He will call himself God.

v-6- says "and now you know what is holding him back-so that he may be revealed at the proper time"-in other words -what has to first happen-(up until now there has not been this apostacy-which is occurring).

v-7-'for the secret power of lawlessness is already at work--but the One who now holds it back will continue to do so till He is taken out of the way"-(-The **Holy Spirit** is the One holding back the revealing of this man. The Holy Spirit birthed the Church on Pentecost, and He now lives within each person who has been saved-when the Church is called out -(caught up to Jesus-1 Thess 4:16-17)- the Holy Spirit will be called out as well.)

v-8-"and then the lawless one will be revealed"-- the purpose of the Church will be completed -the Church Age will be over- then God will once again deal with Israel--meaning the 70th week of Daniel will begin--(the tribulation period---)==the White Horse--(fall peace)-with the 'man of lawlessness'. Daniel 9:27-reveals that the lawless one will be manifested at the beginning of the 70th week.

2. The Church called out. 1 Thess 4:13-18

This is called **'The Imminent Gathering'**--note that there are no signs given before this could happen as there is at the second coming.--(Christians are to be prepared continuously as the Lord could appear for them at any moment of time.)

v-16-17-notice the words 'caught up'--this is the Greek word "Harpazo"--it is the equivalent word to the Latin word "Raptus"--(which is noted in the Vulgate translation of the Bible)- this of course is where we get our word "Rapture"- translated 'caught up'- in v-17.

Two men who were raptured:

Enoch--(Genesis 5:24, Heb 11:25.; Elijah -( 2nd Kings 2:1,11)--(these two are the two witnesses noted in Revelation 11 that will die physically at that time)-

Differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming:

1. Translation of believers-go to heaven. -- No Translation involved --(saints return to earth with Jesus.)

2. Earth is not judged. -- The earth will be judged.\

3. Could occur at any moment. -- Follows definite predicted signs.

4. Not in the O.T. -- Predicted in the O.T.

5. For believers only. -- Affects all men on the earth.

6. Before the Day of Wrath. -- Concludes the Day of Wrath.

**The different views --**

**The PreTrib view** ---The belief that the Rapture of the Church takes place just before the Tribulation Period --(the 70th week of the prophecy of Daniel.)- then Jesus returns to earth and the saints with Him and He rules in the Millennial Period (1000 years)- on the earth.

Rev 3:10-the church will be excluded from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole earth . (tribulation period).

Rev 6-19-The Church is not the object of God's wrath. (He died for the Church)-

**The Middle Half view**--The Church will not be Raptured until the middle half of the Tribulation Period.-(they hold this view based on Rev 10:7 -"in the last days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished"-==they hold to the view that the 'mystery of God' is the church -meaning it is still here--will now reach completion--and the resurrection and catching up of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 become symbolic of the rapture.

They believe Revelation 11:l1 which states "after three and a half days " represents 3 1/2 years (the first half of the tribulation period)-then in verse 12 which states 'a loud voice from heaven saying to them **'come up here'** represents the voice of the Lord's presence noted in **1 Thessalonians 4:16** and the trumpet is the trumpet of the same verse.

They further state that these two witnesses are representative of two major groups--the dead and those who are still alive at the rapture, and they are called up in the clouds while their enemies looked on. (Rev 11:12)

They deny the interpretation of the Scriptures and deny the strict distinctions between Israel and the church.

Rev 11:4 states " these two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth"--(Zech 4:2,3 would therefore prevent them from representing the church. (they state these two witnesses are Moses and Elizah who represent the dead and the translated at the rapture.

**This position denies the Doctrine of Imminence .**

They believe the tribulation is divided into two halves--with the first half being absent of any judgments and the last 3 1/2 years to be the tribulation period of judgment., ( or Great Tribulation). To do this they have to symbolize the first half of the tribulation period then they apply the literal interpretation to the last half .(this is against all proper methods of hermeneutics-(the science of interpretation)-

**The Pre Millennial view-** This is held by those who believe that Jesus Christ will return to the earth as Revelation 19:11-16 describes His return to defeat the nations who have warred against Israel. Afterwards, He will then rule the earth as King and as the heir to David's throne for one thousand years.

**The Post Trib view---**

They believe the Church takes the place of Israel in the N.T.-and disregards the 70th week of Daniel has already been fulfilled. They state that this 70th week (or 7 years)- started with John the Baptist, from his first public preaching the kingdom of God and continued for the 7 years and therefore the 490 year prophecy of Daniel has been completed. They therefore apply the major passages of Scripture that outline God's program for Israel (Matt 13; Matt 24-25)-(Rev 4-19) to the church in order to support their views.

They deny a literal exposition or interpretation of Scripture and spiritualize the events.

They deny the Doctrine of Imminence -which says that the Lord may come at any time

They do not believe in the actual meaning of the book of Revelation and they spiritualize most all events.

Their position rests on a denial of the Scriptural teaching concerning the nature and purpose of the tribulation period-that it is to bring God's wrath, judgment, on sin and to bring the nation of Israel into repentance-which in turn will prepare them for the appearing of the Messiah.

They deny the distinctions between the rapture and the second advent, making them one and the same event.- That at the end of the Tribulation period the church will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air as He is returning to the earth .-(it's up and down**)- The posttribulation rapture interpretation is out of harmony with the principle of literal interpretation and therefore must be denied.**

**The Post Millennial view** - That Jesus Christ will return after the Millennial period. They believe we are presently in the Millennial period and that there is going to be a world wide revival of the church which will greatly influence Jesus Christ to then return to His Church.

**The A Millennial view.--No Actual Millennium**.

Original teachings of the Catholic Church-namely the great theologian, Augustine, who shaped Catholic theology.

The theologian known as Origen completely allegorized the book of Revelation.

Most protestant denominations today are A Millennial and Post Tribulation in their belief of future things.