

## Prophecy devo #12 – The Church and the Tribulation

“Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet” (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

Daniel’s seventieth week is a name for the Tribulation. It is a period of seven years for the Lord to bring Israel back to their land. It is also a time of judgment on unbelieving nations of the world. Revelation 6 to 20 is a series of judgments unlike anything this world has ever experienced. The church is nowhere to be found in these judgments. The church is mentioned 19 times in the first three chapters of Revelation. After that it is called up to Heaven. “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this” (4:1). Chapters 4 & 5 contain a vision of the church in Heaven represented by the 24 elders seated on thrones. The church is not mentioned again until the last chapter after the tribulation is over. The Book of Revelation was written to churches in Asia Minor. The last invitation in the Bible is given to the church: “Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come...” (22:17). The last thing Jesus says to the church is “I come quickly” (22:20). “Come” is the operative word. In describing the rapture to the apostles (the foundation of the church) Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will ‘come’ again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3). Describing the rapture Paul says: “For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). That is what Jesus meant when He said, “I come ‘quickly.’” He will come and remove the church from the wrath of God which is mentioned 13 times in the Tribulation. The church will not experience the wrath of God. “...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (I Thessalonians 1:9-10). “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...” (I Thessalonians 5:9). What is the rapture? It is the Lord snatching out the church from the wrath to come “in the twinkling of an eye.”