

Rapture Confusion

Rapture: Though this word is not found in the Bible, it is the term commonly given to the "catching up" of the saints described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

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The rapture is then:

1. A resurrection of the dead in Christ (not of the lost dead)
2. A catching up and translation of the living people who have trusted Christ Alone as Saviour.

The term catching up is elsewhere translated "pluck" in John 10:28, "pulling" Jude 23, "take by force" in Act 23:10, and "catcheth away" in Matt. 13:19

1 Corinthians 15:50-53 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

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So then, what is the confusion?

Primary confusion is **when** these events will occur.

Among those who believe these scriptures to refer to a literal event (there are those of course that do not), there are basically three positions:

1. Pre-Tribulation (rapture happens before the 7 years Trib.)
2. Mid-Tribulation (also Pre-wrath Rapture - middle of Trib.)
3. Post-Tribulation (rapture happens at the end of Trib.)

Positions 2 & 3 are both NOT taught in the Bible and result from a confusion between - wait for it.....

Israel and the Church

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Church-Age believers (true Christians) are Promised Salvation **FROM** Wrath, not through.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-10 (v. 10 "from the wrath to come")

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (v. 9 "hath not appointed us to wrath")

Romans 5:8-9 (v. 9 "saved from wrath")

Revelation 3:7-10 (v. 10 "from the hour of temptation")

People holding to the mid tribulation view argue (pre-wrath) that God's wrath on man does not happen until man's wrath on man is over in the first half of the 7 year period.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Some people holding to the post tribulation view argue that the WRATH of God in view in the promised deliverance is simply eternal WRATH, hell and the Lake of Fire.

This reasoning is...wait for it...

WRONG!

How do we know that the WRATH spoken of in these verses refer to God's WRATH during the tribulation? Context.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 5 again with this in mind.

Look at 2 Thessalonians 1:4-9 with this in mind.

Look at Revelation 3:10 again with this in mind ("try them"...))

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

The "Day" of God's WRATH is clearly defined the Bible

Psalm 110 (v. 5 "the day of his WRATH")

Isaiah 13:6-13 (v. 13 "WRATH of the LORD of hosts...day of his fierce anger")

Revelation 6:12-17 (v. 16 "WRATH of the lamb", v.17 "great day of his WRATH")

In the history of the true church, the suffering and persecution endured came at the hand of the devil and wicked men, not God. God's WRATH is poured out on the earth during the 7 year tribulation period (Rev. 14:14-20)

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

The promised deliverance of true saints from God's wrath **cannot** be speaking of the period **during** of the tribulation.

What happens to the Saints during the tribulation:

Rev. 13:1-7: Contrast with Matt. 16:16-18 - Promise to the church

So then, if you are saved during the tribulation period, you are not promised deliverance from the wrath to come, but will be overcome by the beast.

Reason #1 that church age believers in Christ will be raptured before the tribulation period is:

We are promised deliverance from / removal from the wrath of God poured out on the world during the Tribulation.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #2 that church age believers in Christ will be raptured before the tribulation period is:

Church age saints are promised not to be prevailed upon (overcome) by the gates of hell. Tribulation age saints (those who call on Christ as Saviour during the tribulation) are not promised any such thing, in fact the scripture reveals that the saved during the tribulation will have war waged upon them by the beast and they will be overcome. The scope of the beast's power during this time is over all kindreds, tongues, and nations.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

The Tribulation period is specifically stated to be the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" and specifically stated to be for the people of Israel - to turn them to Jesus Christ - their Messiah.

Jer. 30:7 "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the **time of Jacob's trouble**: but he shall be saved out of it" - notice not from it, but out of it. Refer to Jer. 30: 1-24

To be clear, Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Gen. 32:28)

Daniel 9:24 - Seventy Weeks determined "upon thy people and upon the holy city". 69 Weeks are past, 1 Week remains which is the 7 year tribulation. Each day in these weeks represents one year. Each day for a year as in Eze. 4:6.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #3 that church age believers in Christ will be raptured before the tribulation period is:

The Tribulation period is the 70th week (7 years) determined upon the people of Israel by God prophetically.

The church in general is not in view here at all. Her sins are forgiven, washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Our Lord Jesus took our iniquity upon himself on the cross.

Israel, the adulterous woman who was divorced of God has to be restored to her Husband (God the Father) by the most troubling time that has ever come upon the earth.

(Zec. 14:1-11)

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #4 that church age believers in Christ will be raptured before the tribulation period is:

The Church is pictured seated in Heaven BEFORE the first judgement seal is opened in Rev. 6:1

Rev 4:4 - And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

To discern who these 24 elders are, we need context of course. Rev 1:1-20

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

The 24 Elders are characterized by:

A Title: Elder

A Number: 24

White Raiment

Sitting up seats

A Location: Around
the Throne

Wearing Crowns of Gold

Who sits upon a "seat" wearing a crown? A King

Who is given white raiment to wear? He that overcometh

Revelation 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Who is it that overcomes?

1 John 5:4-5

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Bible Numerics: What is the number 24 used for?

Giants: six fingers and six toes = 24 (probably not helpful to us)

Number of priestly courses (1 Chron. 24)

John the Baptist's father, Zechariah was of the course of Abijah (Abia in N.T.) - the 8th course. (Luke 1:5-8)

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Who is given the title Elder in the Bible?

Someone older than a given reference person or people

Someone who has a position of leadership and authority based upon age, service, and ability. (Ex. 3 - "gather the elders of Israel").

A representative head (leader) of a subset of people in the nation of Israel.

In the New Testament, the church office of pastor and bishop is also called an elder in places.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Location is around the Throne

If the seats of the elders are around the throne, then the throne is in the **MIDST** of the elders

Rev 1:12-13, 20. Who is in the MIDST of the candlesticks?

Son of Man (Jesus) v. 13

What do the candlesticks represent?

The Seven Churches (v. 20)

Jesus is in the midst of the churches in Rev 1 and we see that Jesus is in the midst of the elders in heaven - same imagery!

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Who wears crowns in the Bible

Kings of course

What about priests? Are they ever pictured wearing crowns?

Never, they wear a Mitre (Ex. 29:6)

Did kings ever perform priestly duties?

Yes, but they always got in trouble.

King Saul - Kingdom was taken from him

King Uzziah - became a leper (2 Ch. 26)

The only exception was the King of Salem (Melchisedec)

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Who wears crowns in the Bible continued...

New Testament Believers, are depicted as having crowns for rewards of service

2 Tim 4:8 - Crown of Righteousness

James 1:12 - Crown of Life

1 Peter 5:4 - Crown of Glory

Is there then a people that would have the potential of being shown as having white robes, wearing a crown, worshipping the Lamb of God around His throne - showing them to be Priests and Kings?

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Identity of the 24 Elders

Can be none other than representative heads of the church of Jesus Christ. No other body fits the imagery.

Revelation 1:5-6

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, **And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father;** to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Compare to what the Elders say in Rev 5:10

Compare what is said about the spiritual house: 1 Pe 2:1-10

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #4 that church age believers in Christ will be raptured before the tribulation period is:

The Church is pictured seated in Heaven BEFORE the first judgement seal is opened in Rev. 6:1

There is no other body of people in scripture that wear robes of white (the righteousness of Christ), wear crowns, are pictured with Jesus in their midst, and claim to be kings and priests. The church then is in heaven, worshiping the Lamb of God, BEFORE Revelation 6 when the first seal is broken.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

To further illustrate this fact, consider:

The pattern: Rev 1:19

The things which thou has seen

The vision of the Son of Man (Jesus), the stars and candlesticks

The things which are

Rev 2, 3 - The letters to the churches or simply the churches

The things which shall be hereafter

After what? That would be the churches. Consider Rev. 4:1 (things which must be hereafter - after they come up hither). Door? John 10

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Consider the precedent events of the Rapture

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Notice: Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Do you think it coincidence that John is called up to heaven through a door, with a voice as it were a Trumpet?

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

To further illustrate this fact, consider: continued...

The constant references to "church" cease at the end of Rev 3

The word church is not used again until the close of the book of Revelation (22:16)

The elders are seen, always around the throne in heaven after the judgements start (Rev 7:11,13, 11:16, 14:3, 19:1-21). During all of the tribulation period then, the church is shown in heaven worshiping around the throne!

The marriage supper of the lamb also depicts a wife made ready. The imagery is that of the church being presented to Christ. After this, the armies of heaven go forth to put down the beast and the rebellious world.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Could the 24 Elders be 12 Tribes of Israel + 12 Apostles?

This is a prevalent theory, you might even have been taught this in Baptist circles. Consider what one person claims (who doesn't believe in a pre-tribulation rapture):

For what it is worth, here is an opinion on this matter of the 24 elders. And it is just that, an opinion. If we look at [Revelation 21](#) we see the New Jerusalem descending from heaven. We see that it has 12 foundations. These 12 foundations represent the 12 apostles. The Holy City also has 12 gates representing the 12 tribes and 12 patriarchs of Israel. I believe these offer some valuable clues as we seek to look into this matter of the 24 elders.

Could this be so?

ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Here is the simple reason why.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Could the 24 Elders be 12 Tribes of Israel + 12 Apostles?

The simple reason why this could not be true:

What nationality would the 12 Tribes of Israel be?

They would be Jewish

What nationality would the 12 apostles be?

They would also be Jewish

To be clear then, how many nations would be represented by this 12 + 12 theory?

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Could the 24 Elders be 12 Tribes of Israel + 12 Apostles?

The simple reason why this could not be true:

How many nationalities are represented by the 24 Elders?

REV 5:8-10

...EVERY kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation

If the Biblical shoe does not fit, DON'T WEAR IT!

I can't think of any instance where one nation would be equal to every nation, tongue and people. This also shows us that the number 24 here is representative because why?

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Could the 24 Elders be only the church saints past?

The simple reason why this could not be true:

Who is the
rapture for?

Only those who are dead?

No, dead in Christ shall rise first, and then those that are alive and remain are caught up together with them in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:16-17)

The rapture treats the dead in Christ and the living in Christ the same - together as one entity - the Church

Why then, would they be pictured in Heaven incomplete?

The answer is they would not be presented incomplete and here is why:

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Could the 24 Elders be only the church saints past?

The church must be shown complete in heaven as the 24 Elders because they already have their crowns!

When do believers receive their rewards?

The judgment seat of Christ
2 Cor. 5:10 also Rom 14:10

The judgment seat of Christ is not a perpetual judgment, it is depicted as "the day".

1 Corinthians 3:11-14 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

Rev 22:12 When does the Bible say Jesus will bring his reward? When he comes! "I come quickly and my reward is with me"

John 5:21-24, 27, 30 All Judgment has been committed to the Son by God the Father!

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #5 that the church will be raptured before the 7 year tribulation period is:

True Christians are Ambassadors for Christ. Ambassadors do not go through a war, they are recalled before the fighting starts!

2 Cor 5:17-21 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming... Review

Reason Review #1 - #5

- #1 Israel is appointed Wrath, N.T. Believers, the Church are not appointed unto Wrath, but are promised deliverance from the Wrath to come.
- #2 Tribulation Saints are overcome in war by the beast, the church is promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.
- #3 The Tribulation period is the 70th week (7 years) determined upon the people of Israel by God prophetically. The 70th week has nothing to do with the church.
- #4 The Church is pictured seated in Heaven BEFORE the first judgement seal is opened in Rev. 6:1 - that being as the 24 Elders
- #5 True Christians are Ambassadors for Christ. Ambassadors do not go through a war, they are recalled before the fighting starts!

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #6 that the church will be raptured before the 7 year tribulation period is:

Consistent typology / events in the Old Testament which we can look back and see must characterize the N.T. Church

Is there scriptural justification for typology? Yes - Similitudes, Figures

Similitude: Likeness; resemblance; likeness in nature, qualities of appearance; as similitude of substance (Web. 1828) Used 12 times in the KJB

Hosea 12:10 I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Hebrews 9:9 "Which was a figure for the time then present"

Some types, pictures, figures are obvious, some not as much.

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Type: Symbol; Illustration; picture (Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity, page 600)

- I might add "shadow"

Further N.T. Evidence for O.T. Types (Typology)

Hebrews 9:1-9 (Figure)* Hebrews 8:5 (Shadow of heavenly things)

1 Peter 3:18-22 v. 21 "The Like Figure"

1 Cor 10:1-11 (Spiritual meat & drink)* (for examples v.6 & ensamples v. 11) = Israel in the Wilderness were typical of spiritual truth

1 Cor 5:7-8 Passover and Leaven are used as types

John 3:14,15 The O.T. Brazen Serpent is used by Jesus as a type.

Gal. 4:21-31 Paul uses O.T. story "allegory v. 24" as types of the two covenants

Caution: Do not confuse typology with the incorrect practice of spiritualizing the obvious literal meaning of a passage to its destruction

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Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Typology Discussion: What might be shadowed by:

Passover

Moses & the two "water" instances (ex. 17, Nu. 20)

Life of Joseph - Typological of the life of Jesus (Gen 50:20)

Jonah

Nebuchadnezzar's Image / Dream

Typical Categories

Persons

Events

Colors

Ceremonies

Structures

Numbers

Be aware as we study the Bible of the words "As" and "So": such as "and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14)

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #6 that the church will be raptured before the 7 year tribulation period is:

Consistent typology / events in the Old Testament which we can look back and see must characterize the N.T. Church

Type #1: Pattern of Noah's Flood. There are:

- A. Those that perished in the Flood (judgement of God)
- B. Those that were preserved through the flood (by God, Ark)
- C. Those who were removed prior to the flood and God's judgement

Genesis 5:19-24 - Enoch removed, Hebrews 11:5, Jude 14-15. (How Many Churches were there in Rev 1,2 & 3?)

Was Enoch Pre, Mid, or Post Flood? Pattern for the Tribulation Period Judgment is the same as the Great Flood Judgment

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Type #2: The search for Isaac's Bride (Gen 22-24), Hebrews 11:13-19

- A. Isaac is not "seen" from the time of sacrifice until his bride is ready
- B. The "eldest servant" is unnamed that seeks the bride
- C. The virtues of the servant's master and Son are extolled.. servant does not speak of himself (typical of? - John 16:13).
- D. The Father of the servant's master (the son) has given the son all that he hath (compare Gen 22:35 & John 16:14-15)
- E. The bride's marriage is voluntary on her part! (will you go with this man?)
- F. The bride is BROUGHT to her groom, and she covers her face before they meet

What does all of this have to do with the Rapture of the Church? We must likewise be prepared, voluntarily, to be taken to the groom (Christ). There is no war, deliverance or judgement pictured.

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Type #3: Deliverance of Lot BEFORE the destruction of the cities (Gen 19)

- A. Lot and his family were firmly entrenched in the city Sodom
- B. Two angels were sent to destroy the cities of the plain (there were 5)
- C. These two angels were not allowed to destroy the city until Lot was removed
- D. Lot wanted to stay and convince all of his family to leave (v. 14)
- E. The two angels finally laid hold of Lot, his wife and his two unmarried daughters removing them by force. This removal before the destruction is called God's mercy (v.16)

God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (2 Pe. 2:5-9)

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Type #4: Daniel and the Fiery Furnace episode (Chapter 3)

- A. Image created - based on 60x6 cubits
- B. All people, nations, and languages compelled to worship the image
- C. Punishment for not worshipping was to be killed in a furnace of fire 7 times hot
- D. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - thrown into the furnace, but preserved through the 7 times hotter trial by God himself who protects them.
- E. The deliverance of the Hebrews, results in a proclamation to cause people to honor the Lord and speak no ill thing against Him.

We can see so many typological events here, but may I ask a question?

WHERE IS DANIEL?

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Type #5: Boaz (Kinsmen Redeemer) & Ruth (Gentile) - Chapter 3

- A. Threshing floor - typical of what perhaps? Judgement (Jer. 51:33, Micah 4:11-13)
- B. Ruth a Gentile - pictured at the feet of the redeemer during the threshing
- C. Could this be an anticipatory type of the church and her place during the Tribulation period?

Rapture Confusion

Evidence for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is overwhelming...

Reason #7: The Holy Spirit's Influence On the World Through the True Church of Jesus Christ, is REMOVED BEFORE the Antichrist is revealed to the World. 2 Thes. 2-10

V. 3: Falling away = apostasia (apostasy) - moving from a true position to a false one

V. 7: Something called "he" is removed prior to v. 8 and the revealing of the Antichrist

There is then a he in v. 7 which "letteth". What does that mean?

Tennis anyone? Let here means to hinder, to impede, obstruct or prevent (ARCaic Words - L. Vance)

Who then is removed prior to the Antichrist showing up? The Holy Spirit!

But how? - Through the Rapture of the Church - every believer indwelt (Rom 8:9)

How much sense would it make to leave the church here and the Holy Spirit leave?