

# SIX

## THE GAP

Many of the Pre-Tribulation eschatologists teach that there is a *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation. Most say the *gap* is a few days, weeks or months; some even argue that there could be years or decades between these two events. Not one passage in the Bible implies a *gap*. The *gap* theory was invented to defend the doctrine of *imminence*.

Since the Antichrist will rise to prominence prior to the start of the Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2.1-3), the teachers of *imminence* must have a *gap*. Without the *gap*, all Christians, according to them, would be watching for the rise of the Antichrist before the Rapture. That is exactly what the early Church fathers taught, as we saw in the previous chapter.

The *gap* theory was also invented as a way to argue that the *warning signs* of the approaching Rapture/Tribulation are not *signs* of the Rapture. Instead, we are told they are only *signs* of the approaching Tribulation and Second Coming, because the Rapture could happen at *any moment*.

The eschatologists who argue there is a *gap* of an indefinite period of time between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation create a serious problem for themselves. If the Rapture had taken place 1000 years ago, who would have carried out the Great Commission to preach the gospel to the world? The Lord would have needed to raise a special group of people to do this. Would these people and their converts be part of the Church, part of the nation of Israel or a new group of believers? The Bible says that the disciples and their converts will preach the gospel, and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28.19-20). After they finish their ministry (are “caught up” to be with the Lord), He will commission a special group of 144,000 witnesses of the nation of Israel to preach the gospel (Revelation 7.1-8). The Bible does not leave room for another group of evangelists.

Some *gap* proponents speculate that millions of people will watch old recordings left behind by Christians, and they will be saved. Dr. Timothy LaHaye put that concept in his *Left Behind* fiction series. It is unlikely the lost will be saved in this manner. The Antichrist will have an excellent explanation for the disappearance of millions of Christians, and virtually everyone will believe it. This idea has no biblical support.

### Arguments for a Gap

**Clarence Larkin**  
(1850-1924)

Dr. Clarence Larkin, a Baptist pastor for over 30 years, wrote several books about the Bible. His masterpiece, *Dispensational Truth*, was published after 25 years of diligent study of the book of Revelation. He believed that there could be a *gap* of indeterminate time between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation. The following is from his pamphlet, “The Second Coming of Christ,” published in 1918:

And further, we must not forget that the “Rapture” may take place **some time** before the “Tribulation Period” begins and Antichrist is revealed. So if we could fix the exact date when this century will close, and count back 7 years, the Rapture might occur, 5, 10 or even 25 years before that, so as to give time for the rebuilding of Babylon and other events that are to occur before the Tribulation Period can begin, otherwise the Rapture would not be a surprise. It is not for the Christians to look for “Time” and “Seasons” and “Signs.” To do so will put him in the class of those who say: “*My Lord delayeth His coming*” (Luke 12:42-48), and he will become preoccupied with other things and neglect to be watchful. Let us live as if we expected the Return of our Lord at any moment. (p. 43, emphasis added, C.L.)

Larkin correctly noted that certain events must occur before the Tribulation would start, such as the rebuilding of the ancient city of Babylon. He believed in the doctrine of *imminence*, which forced him to argue that there must be a *gap* between the Rapture and the Tribulation. That is why he taught that Christians should not look for the “times and seasons” of the Rapture.

Paul told the Thessalonians that they did not need anyone to teach them about the “*times and seasons*” of the Rapture, because they already knew about it (1 Thessalonians 5.1-2). He had explained to them before, and again in his letter, that the “*falling away*” of the Church from the faith and the revealing of the “*man of sin*” would come before the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 5.3). Those two *signs* will alert Christians as to the “*times and seasons*” of the Rapture.

### Earl Radmacher

Dr. Earl Radmacher, former president of the Western Conservative Baptist Seminary of Portland and a graduate of Dallas Seminary, believes there may be a *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation:

I realize that someone will respond by saying that prophetic fulfillments cast their shadows before them and that, although there are no prophecies to be fulfilled before the rapture, there are after the rapture. The weakness of this argument, however, is that **we have no idea of the length of the time period between the rapture and the first prophesied event**, the manifestation of the Antichrist. (*Signs of a Signless Event?*, p. 8, emphasis added, R.K.)

Radmacher places a *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation. This *gap* does not resolve the problem that there are no *signs* of the Rapture. If we see *signs* of the Tribulation, it is obvious these *signs* also point to the Rapture because the Rapture takes place before the Tribulation. If Christians “watch” these *signs* of the Tribulation closely, they will be able to determine if the Rapture is a few decades, years, or even months away.

### Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith, founder of the Calvary Chapel movement and host of the talk radio program, “Pastor’s Perspective,” said he believes there may be a *gap*. A caller cited

the example of judgment falling on the lost on the very day Noah entered the ark (Luke 17.27), and Lot departed from Sodom (Luke 17.29). Jesus said, “*And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man*” (Luke 17.26). The clear message is that judgment fell upon the unsaved on the same 24-hour day that the righteous escaped. The caller asked Smith if he believed the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation would take place on the same day. He replied:

Well, well I still believe the judgment of God in the great Tribulation probably won't be the moment the Church is taken out because of the fact the Church, it seems that the Church would be taken out, I believe, at that time the Antichrist would be revealed. (KWVE, 107.9 FM, 12.10.2007)

He made a confession concerning the example of judgment falling on Sodom the same day Lot departed the city:

And so it would appear that with, with Lot you know, that in the day that he went out that the judgment came. (Ibid.)

Smith went on to explain why Christians would not identify the Antichrist before the Rapture:

I think that the problem with that position is that it would have us looking for the Antichrist rather than the looking for Jesus Christ. And I would think that would be quite a feat for Satan to, you know, get us all interested in who is the Antichrist and watching for him to establish his reign rather than waiting of our Lord Jesus Christ to come and to catch us home. (Ibid.)

In conclusion he answered by saying it is “plausible” for the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation to take place on the same day:

So, I... I don't... you know, it's a plausible thing, but I don't quite see it that way myself. (Ibid.)

(It is not unusual for prophecy teachers to be uncertain on specific aspects of eschatology. It is a complicated subject. At the end of this chapter a clear explanation is given as to why the Rapture will take place on the day that the Tribulation starts.)

### Hal Lindsey

Hal Lindsey believes in a *gap*. In his books, *The Rapture* (1983), and *Vanished Into Thin Air* (1999), he argued that the Antichrist must rise to power prior to the start of the Tribulation:

#### Events Just before the Tribulation

It is apparent that **sometime before the seven-year Tribulation begins**, the **Antichrist will receive a mortal wound**, be miraculously healed, be indwelt by Satan and take over the **ten nations** out of what we now know as the **European**

**Union** (Revelation 13:3). These things **must first occur** in order to give him the political position and power base from which to **sign the protection treaty with Israel, which officially begins the Tribulation**.

A **False Prophet**, or pseudo-Messiah to Israel (Revelation 13:11-17), **will be manifested before the Tribulation begins**, for he is the leader of Israel who will make the covenant with the Roman Dictator (the Antichrist).

The **great falling away** or **apostasy** of the professing false church also takes place **before** the beginning of the **Tribulation** which is sometimes called “the Day of the Lord” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). (*The Rapture*, p. 7; *Vanished Into Thin Air*, p. 214, emphasis added, R.K.)

Lindsey’s argument that the Antichrist must rise to power before the start of the Tribulation is what the early Church fathers taught. He is also convinced that the False Prophet must rise to power, and that the apostasy of 2 Thessalonians 2.3 must take place before the Tribulation. He speculates that there will be a *gap* of “several weeks” between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation (*Vanished Into Thin Air*, p. 387).

Since there is no *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation, the rise of the Antichrist and the False Prophet are important *signs* for which Christians should “watch,” just as the early Church fathers said.

### **Timothy LaHaye**

Dr. Timothy LaHaye explained the need for a *gap* in his first book on prophecy, *The Beginning of the End*:

A very common misconception of those who hold to the pretribulation rapture position is that the rapture of the Church begins the tribulation. According to Daniel 9:27, the signing of a political covenant between Israel and the Anti-christ for seven years, inaugurates the tribulation. Some have assumed that the events are simultaneous, but there is nothing in the Scripture to indicate this. Because the rapture at the end of the Church age coincides approximately with the beginning of the tribulation period, many have made that assumption.

Nothing in prophecy strictly forbids the possibility of an interim period between these events. Suggestions of prophecy teachers have run anywhere from a week to twenty-five years. Those who favored the long periods wrote many years ago when it seemed there were a number of events still awaiting fulfillment. If they lived today I am confident they would shorten their estimates. (p. 83)

The Rapture and Tribulation start on the same day (Luke 17.29-30). The Bible forbids the possibility of an interim period between these events.

LaHaye’s confession that the men in the past (who said there could be a long interim period) would change their minds if they were alive today is important. It proves that numerous prophecies have to be fulfilled before the start of the Rapture and Tribulation.

In his answer to the question of whether Russia will attack Israel before the Rapture, he says that he is not certain, and that there may not be a *gap*:

With all this background, we may now proceed with the question: Will Russia invade Israel before the rapture? A very simple answer would be: It's possible, but I wouldn't count on it. I say this because it seems there is a possibility that a brief, worldwide reorganizational period will follow the destruction of Russia, during which time many people will turn to Christ, and then he will come to rapture his Church. However, it is also possible that Christ will first come for his Church, Russia will invade Israel, and then the Antichrist will make his covenant with Israel. The Bible simply is not definite on this point. The only passages of which I am aware that touch on this are the deliverances from judgment already mentioned – “Lot and Noah.” Here we find that day Noah entered into the ark the floods came, and the day Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone (Luke 17:27-30).

The time between the rapture and Israel's signing of the covenant with the Antichrist could be a day or a short period. If a period of time separates them, we will not see Russia's destruction; if it's just a day, Russia's defeat would seem to precede the rapture. Since the Scripture is not clear on the subject, it is dangerous to be dogmatic on the issue. The best thing for Christians is to be prepared either way. As our Lord said many times, “*Watch and be ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh.*” Make sure you are ready whether he comes before or after the invasion of Russia. If, however, you see the destruction of Russia as she attempts to invade Israel, you can expect the rapture of the Church very soon. (*The Beginning of the End*, pp. 83-84)

The Bible is clear, Russia will attack Israel before the Rapture because the Rapture takes place on the day that the Tribulation starts, as LaHaye shows by citing Luke 17.26-30. On the day that Noah entered the ark and Lot departed Sodom, judgment fell on the wicked.

The invasion of Israel by Russia is an important *sign* that all Christians should “watch” for, as LaHaye noted. He says the Bible is “not definite on this point” and that it is “not clear on this subject.” The Bible is “clear” and Christians will see Russia attack Israel.

LaHaye further clarified his position concerning the time of Russia's invasion of Israel in a book published in 1984:

I will show that Russia must be destroyed *at least* three and one-half years before the Tribulation. Therefore, this era of peace must precede that period of seven years. (*The Coming Peace in the Middle East*, p. 101)

LaHaye is correct that there must be a period of peace prior to the Rapture/Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5.3). To explain why Russia must attack, he quotes from Ezekiel and then comments:

*This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it? You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you . . .”* (Ezekiel 38:14-15) (NIV)

We will see in a later chapter that this nation from *the north* can only be Russia, and “Gog” signifies her head of state. Moreover, the time of peace will occur at least three and one-half years *before* the tribulation period. There will actually be two peace treaties: the one we are discussing which will provide time

for Israel to become so prosperous that Russia will want to attack her *personally*, and the one foretold by the prophet Daniel (9:27) between the Antichrist and Israel that will officially start the tribulation period.

What possible event or world conditions could occur to bring about such a peace in Palestine? No one knows, but we might speculate on some possibilities. These are only possible conditions in an imagined scenario. (*The Coming Peace in the Middle East*, p.102)

He listed these scenarios:

1. If Russia stops arming the Arabs
2. A Russo-American arms treaty (Salt III)
3. A worldwide economic collapse and depression
4. A “scorched earth” attack by Israel
5. A glut of world oil
6. The discovery of oil in Palestine
7. An Arab-Israeli religious truce
8. A natural disaster
9. None of the above. (Ibid., pp. 102-107)

He concluded his teaching on a Russian-led invasion of Israel by writing:

It is possible, of course, that the decisive factor leading to a peace treaty between Arabs and Jews is not included in any of these eight scenarios. Or it might be a combination of these events.

But of this I am certain: Israel will enjoy tranquility in the land before Russia sweeps down to take her captive. Israel will probably make a peace treaty not only with the Arab nations, but also with the Russians. Without Russia’s cooperation in a peace initiative, there will be no peace. Yet we should not be surprised when Russia eventually breaks the treaty. The Russians have already violated fifty-two such treaties. This philosophy of utilitarianism and deceit will cause them to totally disregard this treaty once it is established, but only after it has provided unprecedented peace and prosperity to Israel and possibly other parts of the Middle East.

Biblical prophecy makes it clear that, like it or not, Russia will always be a factor to contend with in the Middle East puzzle. (Ibid. p. 107)

Russia will attack Israel some time before the Tribulation begins as he explained. Though the Bible is not clear how long before the Tribulation, this attack will take place, we know it will take place at least 3½ years beforehand as explained at the bottom of page 33 of this book.

LaHaye is not sure if the Rapture takes place before the Russia-led invasion of Israel or after:

Any chronology of the Rapture and the invasion of Israel is speculative and should be given wide flexibility. However, it is instructive to examine some of the possibilities. (Ibid., p. 148)

The Rapture may occur in any of the four possible time sequences: before Russia is destroyed, immediately afterward, long afterward, or simultaneously with the signing of the covenant between the Antichrist and Israel. (Ibid., 150)

If he is correct in saying the Rapture takes place before the invasion of Israel by Russia, then there should be a *gap* of 3½ years. That is impossible because the Bible does not permit a *gap* as explained at the conclusion of this chapter. Since there is no *gap* between the Rapture and the Tribulation, the invasion of Israel by Russia is an extremely important *warning sign* for us to “watch.” The last possibility is correct. The Rapture will take place “simultaneously with the signing of the covenant between the Antichrist and Israel.”

LaHaye confirmed his continued belief in a *gap* during a radio call-in show. He told a caller on Calvary Chapel’s, “Pastor’s Perspective” show, hosted by Brian Brodersin, that there will be a gap between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation. A caller asked him if there will be a period of “*peace and safety*” (1 Thessalonians 5.3) before the Rapture and if the Rapture will take place on the day that the Tribulation begins. LaHaye answered:

Actually that’s a couple questions in one. Let me deal with the last one first. That’s the easiest one. The Bible doesn’t say that it’s going to start the Tribulation. That’s a false assumption that many have made through the years. The Bible says that, in Daniel 9, that the signing of the covenant between Israel and the Antichrist that starts that peace treaty or that peace-time, that will start the Tribulation. Seven years start from there. Now it’s possible there could be an interim period. Who knows? It could be 35 days, 150 days, two or three years between the Rapture of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation period. There’s going to be a transition time necessary for these things to take... (KWVE, September 11, 2007)

He then explained that there would be a need for the world to recover from the Rapture:

The world will be in a shambles. In America, where you have more Christians than any other place it will just fall apart internally. So that there will be a time of change. So an interim period might be necessary. (Ibid.)

He did not cite Scripture to support his belief in a *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation. He just said many have made a “false assumption,” thinking the Rapture starts the Tribulation.

### **Chuck Missler**

Chuck Missler, author, teacher and founder of Koinonia House, believes there may be a gap between the Rapture and the Tribulation:

The Rapture is not necessarily the trigger point for that 70th week of Daniel. It could precede it by some period of time. (“To Every Man an Answer” radio program, 9.24.2001)

## Arguments against a Gap

**John Walvoord**  
(1910-2002)

John Walvoord did not teach that there is a gap:

The **first thing** that's going to happen **after the Rapture** is that we're entering a new period called the "Day of the Lord"... This is a day of grace, God's withholding judgment. **Once the Rapture occurs it changes immediately.** It's the "Day of the Lord"... Now the **"Day of the Lord" is going to begin at the time of the Rapture** according to 1 Thessalonians 5, and it's going to continue, I think, through the whole end time period even the 1000 year reign of Christ on Earth. That whole period is a time when God deals in direct judgment upon sin... **So that's going to be the beginning.** ("The Second Coming" audio tape, date unknown, tape available, emphasis added, R.K.)

We do not agree that the term "Day of the Lord" refers to the 1000 year reign of Christ. The consistent meaning of the "Day of the Lord" is that it only refers to the judgments of the seven-year tribulation period.

**Harold Lindsell**  
(1913-1998)

Dr. Harold Lindsell, former associate editor of *Christianity Today* magazine, and co-founder of Fuller Seminary, believed there is no *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation. We quote him again because of his clear statement concerning the *gap* theory:

The overwhelming verdict of those who hold to a pretribulation rapture is that this so-called *signless event* is followed immediately by the seven-year tribulation period. Thus, immediately following the rapture of the Church, Israel and the Antichrist will enter into a covenant. (*The Gathering Storm*, p. 137)

**Oliver Greene**  
(1915-1976)

Oliver Greene, independent fundamental Baptist evangelist, author of over 100 books and booklets, and founder of the Gospel Hour radio ministry, left no room for a gap between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation in his theology:

**Immediately after the Rapture, the false Messiah will make his appearance.** He will be riding upon a white horse (a symbol of peace) with a bow – but no arrow – in his hand (another symbol of peace). (The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians, p. 157, emphasis R.K.)

**Dave Breese**  
**(1926-2002)**

Dave Breese, a notable televangelist and pastor, founded Christian Destiny Ministry, helped form the AWANA Youth Association and served with Youth for Christ for 13 years. He taught the Pre-Tribulation Rapture during his distinguished ministry, yet he did not believe there would be a *gap* between the Rapture and the Tribulation. In his essay, “The Rapture,” he explains:

The Tribulation is the beginning of “the day of the Lord.” As we have seen, the Christians were conscious – because they read about it in the Old Testament – that there was a time of fearful judgment coming upon the world called the day of the Lord. The churches, however, needed instruction as to how to discern the presence of the day of the Lord and the way to know that the day of grace was finished. Concerning this, the apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, saying, “*Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Christ is at hand*” (2 Thess. 2:1-2).

The apostle Paul is, therefore, saying that the rapture of the Church, concerning which he had carefully instructed the Thessalonians, was the **watershed point ending the day of grace and beginning the day of the Lord**. In that the Rapture had not taken place, the day of the Lord was not yet present.

Here, the apostle Paul gives us a **clear line of demarcation** between the Church Age, the day of grace, and the day of the Lord, which is the day of divine judgment. That **line of demarcation is the rapture of the Church**. (*Storming Toward Armageddon*, pp. 298-299, emphasis added, R.K.)

The Rapture is the event that separates the “Day of Grace” (Church Age) from the “Day of the Lord” (Tribulation). Some Pre-Tribulationists understand this, and do not allow for a *gap* between those events.

**J. Dwight Pentecost**

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, a theologian best known for his book *Things to Come*, is the Distinguished Professor of Bible Exposition, Emeritus, at Dallas Theological Seminary, one of only two so honored. During his academic career he has taught biblical subjects for 6 decades (Philadelphia College of Bible, 1948-55; Dallas Theological Seminary, 1955-present). He is a leading Pre-Tribulationist who does not make room for a *gap*. His book, *Things to Come*, states that the Tribulation begins immediately after the Rapture:

The only way this day could break unexpectedly upon the world is to have it begin **immediately after the rapture of the church**. It is thus concluded that the Day of the Lord is that extended period of time beginning with God’s dealing with Israel after the **rapture at the beginning of the tribulation period** and extending through the second advent and the millennial age unto the creation of the new heavens and new earth after the millennium. (*Things to Come*, pp. 230-231, emphasis added, R.K.)

## Jack Van Impe

Dr. Jack Van Impe, a noted televangelist, host of the “Jack Van Impe Presents” television show and an avid teacher of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture for over 50 years, teaches the doctrine of *imminence*, yet he makes no allowance for a *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation:

Multitudes today are unaware of the fact that there are two stages or phases within the process of the second coming – the Rapture and the Revelation – and that these events are **separated by a seven-year** period of time. (*11:59 and Counting*, p. 8, emphasis added, R.K.)

The Rapture is not Christ’s appearance upon earth, but a meeting in the heavenlies – an intermediary evacuation of believers from earth before the storm. **Seven years later**, Christ does come to earth, touching down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). (*Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, emphasis added, R.K.)

Van Impe says there is a time of just 7 years between the Rapture and the Second Coming. Therefore, there could not be a *gap* between the Rapture and the beginning of the 7-year Tribulation. In his television show that aired on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (April 20, 2009), clarified his position:

The **first night** of the **New World Order** is when a leader goes to Israel and makes peace between the Arabs and the Jews; **that is the night we’re gone**. Then that government **lasts for 7 years**, then Christ comes back to stop the New World Order, and set up His kingdom here. That’s how near it is.

Remember, we’ll not know who he (**Antichrist**) is because the **Rapture takes place the night before this one comes to power**. That’s how near it is. (emphasis added, R.K.)

Van Impe is right that there is no *gap*, but students of eschatology will recognize the Antichrist long before he makes his covenant with Israel.

## Salem Kirban

Salem Kirban has been writing prophecy books for over 40 years, and firmly believing in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture and in *imminence*, yet he does not see a *gap* between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation. Concerning the concept that human history will last 7000 years, he wrote in 1978:

The 6th day then, according to this suggestion would end at about the year 1996. The Millennium would then be ushered in and the thousand year reign of the saints with Christ would begin. If this assumption was correct, then the **Rapture** would take place at **seven years before the Millennium**. (*Guide to Survival*, pp. 136-137, emphasis added, R.K.)

### Thomas Ice

Dr. Thomas Ice does not believe there is a *gap*. From his website, in an essay concerning the *signs* of the times, he tells us:

The present church age is not a time in which Bible prophecy is being fulfilled. Bible prophecy relates to a time after the rapture (the seven-year tribulation period). However, this does not mean that God is not preparing the world for that future time during the present church age – in fact, He is. But this is not “fulfillment” of Bible prophecy. So while prophecy is not being fulfilled in our day, it does not follow that we cannot track “general trends” in current preparation for the coming tribulation, **especially since it immediately follows the rapture.** (*Signs of the times and Prophetic Fulfillment*, **emphasis added, R.K.**)<sup>1</sup>

### Perry Stone

Perry Stone, televangelist and host of the “Manna-Fest” television program, said there is no *gap* between the Rapture and the Tribulation:

Everything changes in **one day**. In **one day’s time** the **Rapture happens**. In that **same time** when the Rapture happens, in that **same hour**, it **introduces the day of the Lord**, the day of God’s judgment, the day of God’s wrath.

We have the Rapture which is the day of Christ. It’s the gathering together unto the Lord the Bible talks about. But that **Rapture**, day of Christ, **introduces the beginning of the day of the Lord**. The day of the Lord then goes for **7 years**, the great **Tribulation period**. The first part is the wrath of the Lamb, the second half, the second 42 months, is the wrath of God poured out on the Earth. (“Manna-Fest” TV program, 3.09.2009, **emphasis added, R.K.**)

### Dave Hunt

Dave Hunt, a Christian apologist, speaker, radio commentator and author, has been in full-time ministry since 1973. He founded the Berean Call ministry in 1990, and has written numerous books on theology, prophecy, cults, and other religions. He stated that the Rapture takes place 7 years before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ:

One cannot escape the fact that Christ and His apostles gave definite signs to watch for that would herald the nearness of His return. Why give these signs if some generation at some time in the future was not expected to recognize them and know that His Second Coming was, as He Himself said, “near, even at the doors”?

Yes, but if the **Rapture occurs seven years prior to the Second Coming**, then those signs are not for us. (*How Close Are We?*, p. 115, **emphasis added, R.K.**)

## Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith, founder of the Calvary Chapel movement and author of numerous books on Bible prophecy, made the following comment concerning the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation in 2003:

Well, I believe that the **7-year period** will probably, pretty much take place **as soon as the Church is out**. As I see the events in the Bible, when Israel is invaded by this army, great army of combined Muslim nations in Ezekiel 38, and God then rises to their defense supernaturally, and destroys this army that is coming against Jerusalem, that in chapter 39 of Ezekiel in that day He is going to pour His Spirit again upon the nation of Israel. He'll no longer hide Himself from them, and that, I believe, will **correspond with the Lord taking His Church out of the Earth**. ("To Every Man an Answer" radio program, 4.01.2002, emphasis added, R.K.)

And I believe that the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within the Church today is the only thing that is keeping the Antichrist from taking over the world at this very moment. And I do believe that **the moment the Church is taken out that the Antichrist will be revealed along with the False Prophet**. ("To Every Man an Answer" radio program, 5.15.2003, emphasis added, R.K.)

## Brian Brodersen

Brian Brodersen, associate pastor at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, California, and the son-in-law of Chuck Smith, stated that he believes the Tribulation will start when the Rapture occurs:

The things that are building up to the Rapture or that Tribulation period of time, and we see the **Rapture as being simultaneous with the Tribulation beginning**. There is some guess work involved and sometimes we're close and sometimes we're not so close. ("To Everyman an Answer," radio program, 5.07.2002, emphasis added, R.K.)

The idea of the **Day of the Lord** is not restricted to one 24-hour day. It is a period of time, which probably, you know, it's a bit speculative, but it probably **begins with the Rapture**, because of course, Jesus speaks about His coming as a thief in the night, and He seems to indicate that that is going to be the time that what we call the **Tribulation** or the judgment **begins** to be poured out on the Earth. ("Pastor's Perspective," radio program, 10.02.2008, emphasis added, R.K.)

## Don Stewart

Don Stewart, associate pastor of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, does not believe there is a gap:

His coming is what we call His revelation; that's at His Second Coming, and that is what is in view here. The Rapture is an event that precedes it. Now the question, of course, is how long does it precede the revelation of Christ? Is it instantaneous

or almost the same? Or is it like we believe here, we believe the Bible teaches, **7 years before?** (“To Every Man an Answer,” 3.27.1998, emphasis, R.K.)

The Second Coming is in two stages, first the Rapture of the Church and then **7 years later** the revelation of Christ. So Christ comes first for the Church, takes the Church back to Heaven, the Rapture, then the revelation comes **7 years later.** (“Pastor’s Perspective,” 5.12.2009, emphasis, R.K.)

### **Justin Alfred**

Justin Alfred, former Calvary Chapel pastor and instructor at Calvary Chapel Bible College, and founder of Word in Life Ministries, does not believe in a gap. When asked what event starts the Day of the Lord he answered:

I personally believe that it’s going to be the Rapture. **And that’s going to begin it.** It’s going to go through that and we’ll have the 7 years of the Tribulation. (“To Every Man an Answer,” 4.24.2002, emphasis added)

### **The Days of Noah and Lot**

Jesus taught that the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation take place on the same 24-hour day:

*And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not return back. Remember Lot’s wife. Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. (Luke 17.26-33)*

Noah entered the ark in a literal 24-hour day, and on that day the flood began. The Genesis account tells us:

*In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. (Genesis 7.13, 17)*

It is clear that the flood started on the same 24-hour day that Noah entered the ark. Jesus said that on the day that the Rapture takes place the Tribulation will start. On the day that Lot departed Sodom, God brought judgment upon it:

*And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters that are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of*

*the city. But he lingered; and the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, Jehovah being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. (Genesis 19.15-16)*

*The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot came unto Zoar. Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. (Genesis 19.23-25)*

The flood began on the very 24-hour day Noah and his family entered the ark. Sodom was destroyed on the same 24-hour day that Lot departed. Therefore, the Rapture will occur on the 24-hour day that the Tribulation starts. A “day” must be a normal 24-hour day or the statement about not going down from the rooftop or back to the house makes no sense (Luke 17.31).

## **Conclusion**

The Rapture/Tribulation takes place on the same 24-hour day. Jesus said that on the very “*day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all*” (Luke 17.27), and “*in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all*” (Luke 17.29). He then said, “*After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed*” (Luke 17.30).

To order your copy of **WHEN?** call 928.227.0760