

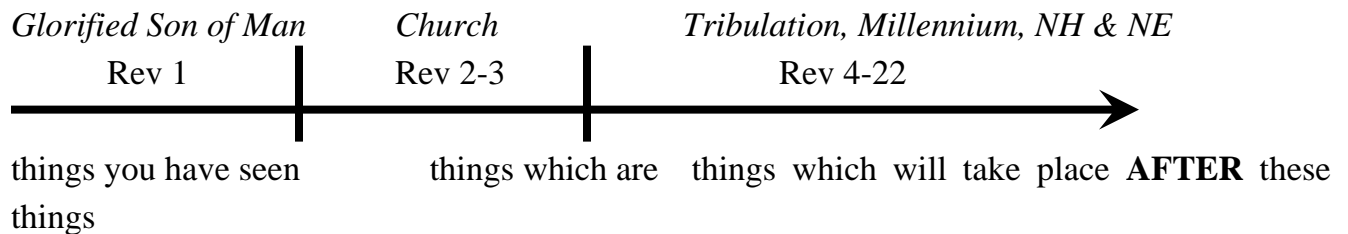
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A0526 -- Jun. 26, 2005 – Revelation 3-4 – The Mystery Rapture

I. 3-FOLD OUTLINE OF REVELATION

Revelation 1:19 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

- the things which you have seen Rev 1
- the things which are Rev 2-3
- the things which will take place after these things Rev 4-22



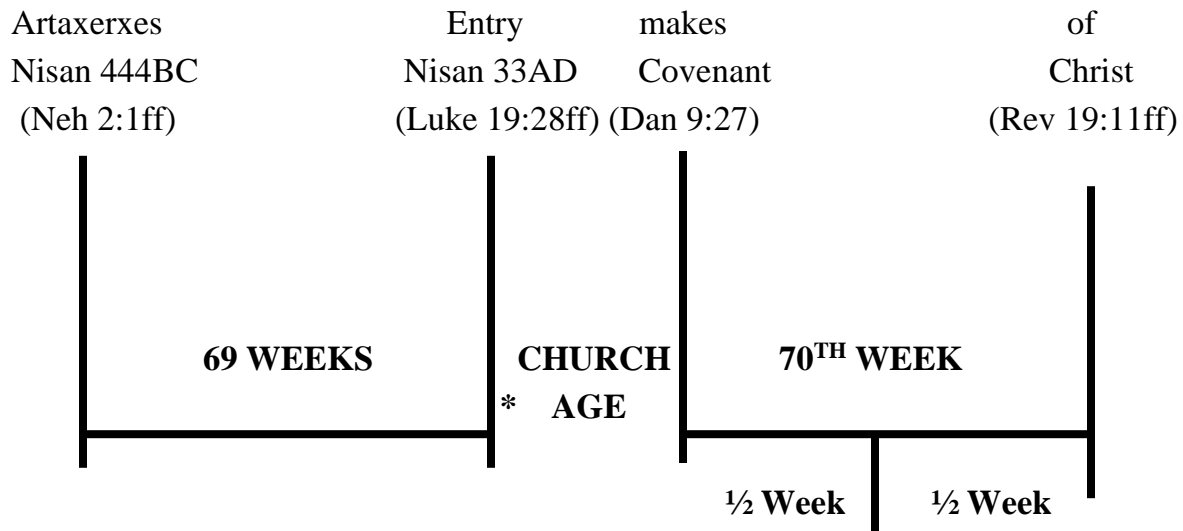
II. 70TH WEEK OF DANIEL

Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city,

70 weeks = 490 years which began with the Decree of Artaxerxes (Nisan, 444BC)
- 69 weeks = 483 years which ended with the Triumphant Entry (Nisan, 33AD)
1 week = 7 years

This last week of 7 years is known as the 70th week of Daniel. It is decreed for **Daniel's people** and **Daniel's holy city** which is "Israel" and "Jerusalem". It is NOT decreed for the Church.

Decree of Triumphant Antichrist 2nd Coming



III. WHERE IS THE CHURCH DURING THE 70TH WEEK (Rev 4-19)?

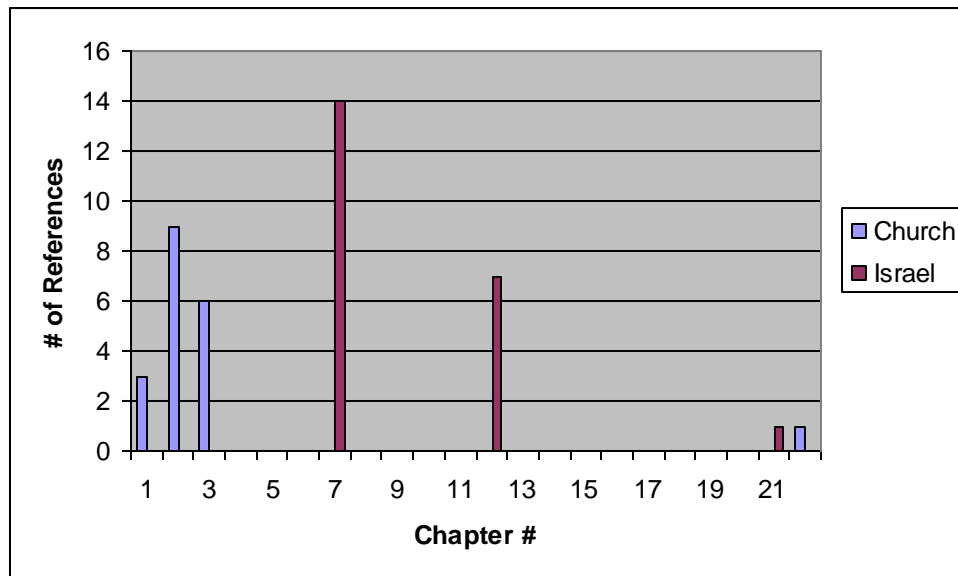
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Church	3	9	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

The church is referred to 24 times in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 1:4, 11, 20; 2:1, 7f, 11f, 17f, 23, 29; 3:1, 6f, 13f, 22; 19:7, 8; 21:2, 9; 22:16, 17). The words “church” or “churches” are used 19 times in the Book of Revelation. Twice she is referred to as the bride, twice she is referred to as the Lamb’s “wife” and once she is referred to as both “bride” and “wife” of the Lamb. In chapters 1, 2, and 3 the church on earth is referred to with high frequency. Why is the “church” not referred to as being on earth even once during the Tribulation period? I suggest it is because she is not on earth during the Tribulation but in heaven. This can be shown by looking at three lines of evidence.

First, the church is probably represented by the 24 elders in heaven. The twenty four elders are mentioned 12 times in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:5f, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4). The 24 elders are never found anywhere else in the Bible even though the four living creatures they are commonly associated with are mentioned in Ezek 1:5ff.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Church	0	0	0	2	5	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

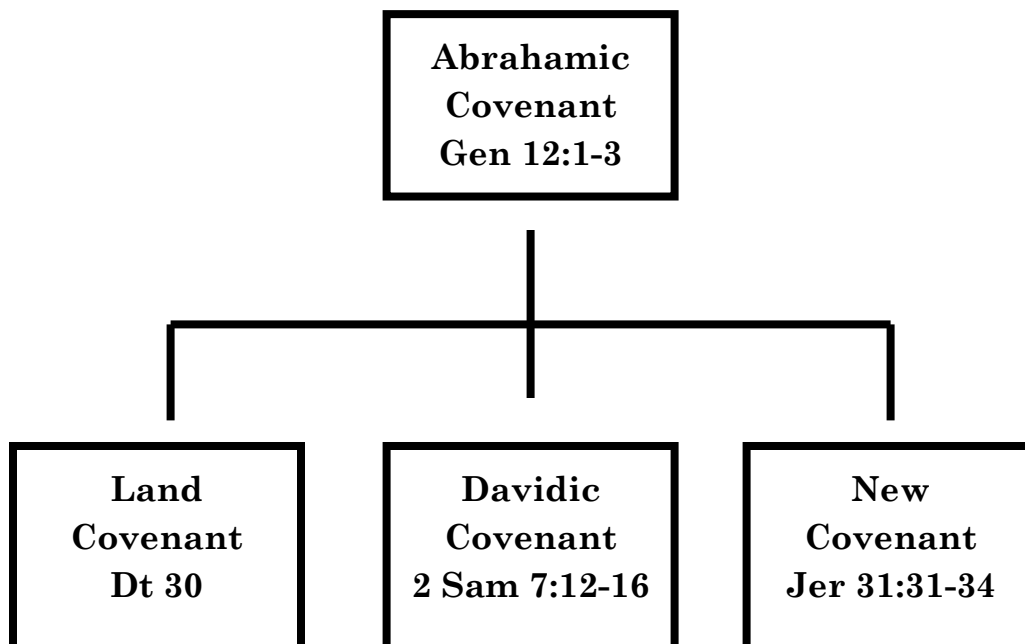
This is exactly what we would expect if God has two distinct peoples in His one eternal plan. The significant conclusion can be gained from looking at a final chart.



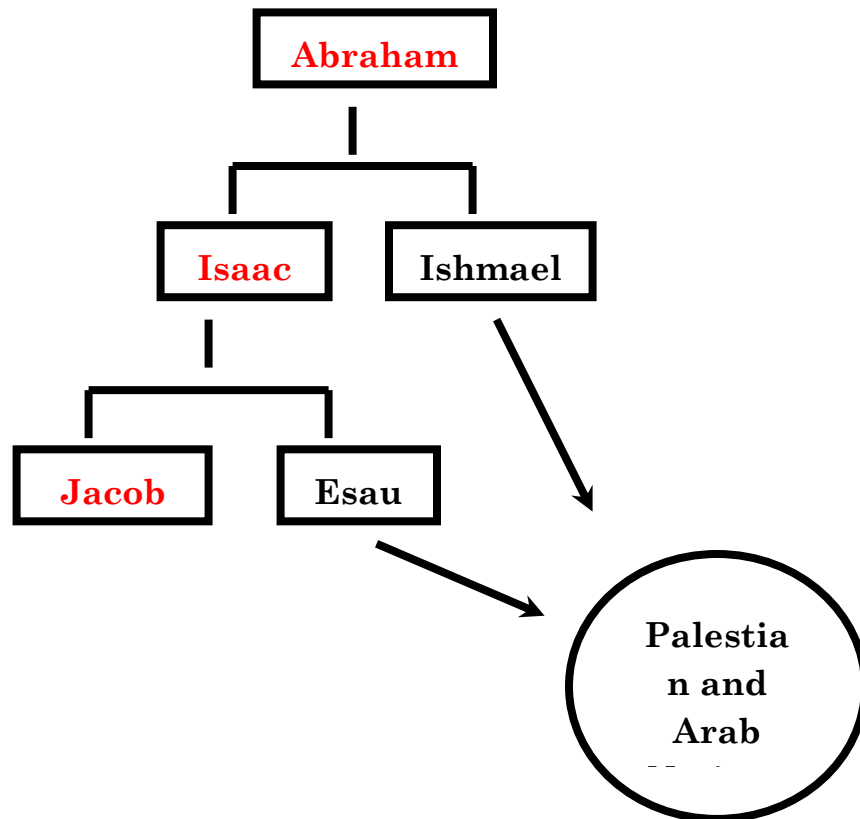
Why do we find such distinctions between Israel and the Church? Because God has two distinct peoples within His one eternal plan.

V. GOD'S PROGRAM FOR ISRAEL

Israel is God's chosen nation. God chose out Abraham from among all the people on earth and made a covenant with him. We call it the Abrahamic Covenant. It promised three basic things to Abraham and his believing offspring.



This Abrahamic Covenant was repeated to Isaac, not Ishmael and to Jacob, not Esau so that it must be fulfilled to Jacob's believing descendants.



These four covenants are unconditional covenants. This means God is responsible for fulfilling these covenants to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their believing descendants. Jacob was later named Israel and through Israel came the 12 tribes of "Israel". God has a covenantal program with Israel which God is responsible to fulfill. He has never fulfilled these covenants. But, because God is faithful He must fulfill them. Israel has earthly promises that must be fulfilled on earth, hence, the 2nd Coming of Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom. One major purpose of Daniel's 70th Week which is for Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city is to purge Israel to believing that Jesus is the Messiah. The major point is that the Tribulation is for Israel, not the Church. Israel has an earthly destiny but the Church has a heavenly destiny.

VI. GOD'S PROGRAM FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles who have been united by Spirit baptism into one new man, the Church (Eph 2:11-3:9). The Church IS NOT an extension of Israel, the Church IS NOT a new Israel, the Church IS NOT spiritual Israel, the Church HAS NOT replaced Israel. The Church is an entirely new entity of believing Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:15).

When did God's program for the Church begin? We say Acts 2. Why do we say this? Well, there is a four step procedure to proving this: 1) We must show that the Church did not exist before Acts 2. 2) We must show that Spirit baptism is required for one to enter the church. 3) We must show that the church is equivalent to the body of Christ. 4) We must show that this happened in Acts 2. Every believer ought to be able to prove that the church began in Acts 2. This is a crucial point in theology.

First, let's prove that the Church did not exist before Acts 2. To do this turn to

Matthew 16:18 I will build My church

Clearly Christ was not in the process of building His church at this time. The beginning of that building was still future. This means incidentally that the Church did not exist in the OT but we know that Israel did exist in the OT. Therefore, the Church cannot be Israel.

Second, let's prove that Spirit baptism is required for one to enter the church. Turn to

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

All this passage proves is that Spirit baptism places us into "one body". It does not prove that this "one body" is the "church". To prove that we have to turn to

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Here, the church is clearly identified as His body so that we have proved that Spirit baptism is what is required for a person to enter the church. Lastly, all we have to prove is that this began on the Day of Pentecost. To do this turn to

Acts 1:4-5 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Clearly, Spirit baptism was still future in Acts 1:5. Now turn over to

Acts 11:15-17 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them [Gentiles] just as *He did* upon us [Jews] at the beginning [Day of Pentecost]. ¹⁶ "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' [Acts 1:5] ¹⁷ "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as *He gave* to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

This four-fold proof is an airtight case for proving that the church is a distinct people of God in His one eternal plan. The thing that makes the Church unique is Spirit baptism into Christ's body, the church. Only Church saints are said to be "in Christ". Neither OT Jewish saints or Tribulation saints are ever said to be "in Christ". The way one is put "in Christ" is through Spirit baptism. Thus, the church did not begin until the Day of Pentecost and we are not Israel. Further, we may now move to show an additional proof; that the Church was a mystery in the OT.

VII. CHURCH A MYSTERY

Turn to

Ephesians 3:3-6 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief [2:11-22 or simply 2:14-16]. ⁴ By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now [in the present] been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets [NT apostles and prophets] in the Spirit; ⁶ *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs [with Jews] and fellow members of the body [the Church], and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

A mystery (*mysterion*) was something totally unknown in the OT because unrevealed. This means that no matter how long and hard you search the OT Scriptures you will never find one single verse referring to a new entity composed of believing Jews and Gentiles. That

truth is not taught until the NT. If it was a mystery then it certainly could not have been in existence. There are 12 such mysteries in the NT. A second mystery related to the church and only the church is the mystery of the rapture.

VIII. RAPTURE A MYSTERY

Turn to

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Since a mystery was something totally unknown in the OT because unrevealed then this means there is not one passage in the OT Scriptures that teaches the truth that not all will sleep but all will be changed. This is a reference to the rapture of the church. Both were mysteries and both have now been revealed. It is the consistent testimony of Scripture that the timing of this event will be pre-tribulational, that is, before the Tribulation begins, before the 70th week of Daniel. The subjects of the rapture will be “all” saints, not just those who have reached a certain level of spirituality (partial rapture).

IX. CHURCH NOT DESTINED FOR WRATH

Lastly, let's look at three verses that teach that the Church is not destined for wrath (1 Thess 1:9-10; 5:9-10; Rev 3:10). First, turn to

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 ⁹ For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

We are not waiting on Antichrist but on Jesus Christ. The verb **to wait** is a present infinitive meaning continual expectancy. They were continually expecting Jesus because Paul had taught them that Christ could come at any moment. Second, Paul uses the pronoun **us** which includes himself as one who will be rescued from the wrath to come. Paul did not know if there would be a delay of this event or not. He believed it could happen without any notice, perhaps even in his lifetime. Lastly, believers are rescued **from the wrath to come**. We

are not promised to be rescued “out from within” the wrath that is coming but from it altogether. D. Edmond Hiebert said,

If they [the Thessalonians] had been taught that the Great Tribulation, in whole or in part, must first run its course, it is difficult to see how they could be described as expectantly awaiting Christ’s return. Then they should rather have been described as bracing themselves for the Great Tribulation and the painful events connected with it.ⁱⁱ

Chase said, “He brings us clean out of the reach of future judgment.” And by the way, the **wrath to come** refers to the entire 7-year period of the Tribulation as I will prove when we get to Rev 6. We will be taken totally out of reach of future Tribulation judgment.

With all this said, and there is very much more on this topic. We could spend literally about 2 months on the rapture. But with what we have seen today I want to impress upon you the fact that the Church will not enter the Tribulation but will be raptured sometime in between Rev 3 and 4. And do not forget, if you have a question about some text of Scripture related to this event then please put that in the box and I will answer it next week.

ⁱ John P. Burke, *The Identity of the Twenty-Four Elders: A Critical Monograph on Rev 4:4* (Grace Journal 2:3 (Fall 1961), 19-28.

ⁱⁱ Renald Showers, *Maranatha Our Lord Come!* (), 193.

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