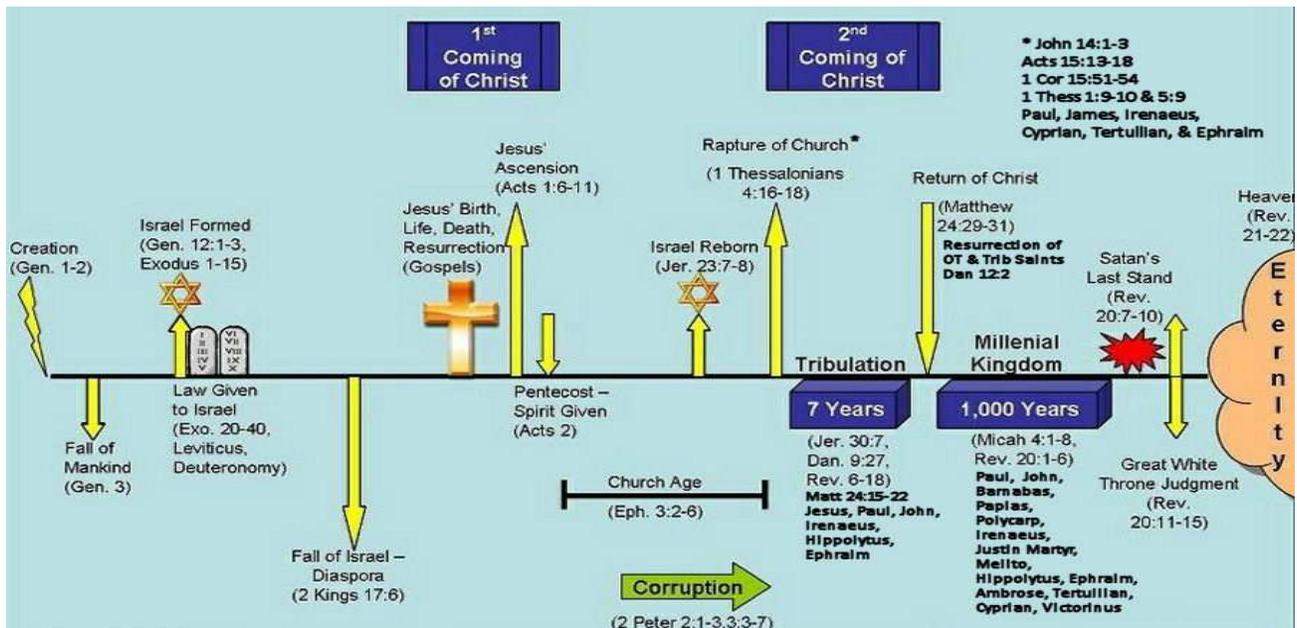


## Appendix G Early Church Fathers taught about the Rapture, Tribulation, and the 1,000 year Reign of Christ on the earth from Jerusalem.



### The salient features of Futurism are all found in the Early Church Father's writings.

- (1) The Rapture of the Church, pre-millennial and pre-tribulation.
- (2) The rule of Anti-Christ.
- (3) The seven-year (week) period tribulation, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the week.
- (4) The revival of Israel.
- (5) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of the Lord
- (6) 1,000 year reign of Christ and the saints.
- (7) Rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem
- (8) Resurrection of OT & Trib Saints before Millennial Kingdom

The reference numbers in the text below refer to the topics listed above.

**Papias**, Bishop of Hierapolis (80-163 AD). A "hearer of Apostle John" and the other Apostles: In "*Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*" Fragments 4 and 5, describes in lyrical terms the fertility of the millennial times, and in Fragment 6 affirms his belief that "*there will be a millennium(6) after the resurrection of the dead(8) when the personal reign of Christ will be established on the earth. (6)*" <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/papias.html>

**Irenaeus** (Bishop of Lyons 200 AD), was a friend of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of the Apostle John. There were a lot of heresies that were creeping into the Church. He wrote an authoritative set of books *Against Heresies* (c. 180) and it contains;

*Against Heresies* (Book 5 Chap 30:4) "*But when this Antichrist (2) shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months (3), and sit in the temple at Jerusalem (7); and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds (5), in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom(6), that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day(6); and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that "many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.(6 & 8)"*

*Against Heresies* (Book 5 Chap 35:1): "*For all these other passages are unquestionably spoken of a Resurrection of the just(8), which happeneth after the coming of Antichrist(2) and the perdition of all the nations subsisting under him(2): in which the just shall reign upon earth(6), growing by their sight of the Lord, and by Him shall be accustomed to comprehend the glory of God the Father."* <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book5.html>

**Tertullian** (120-225 AD) "But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth(6), although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection(8) for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem(6), 'letdown from heaven,' which the apostle also calls 'our mother from above;' and, while declaring that our citizenship is in heaven, he predicts of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel (4) [Ezek Chap 40-48] had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld." <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.v.iv.iv.xxiv.html>

**Justin Martyr**, living in the second century AD., was a pronounced Pre-millennialist.

"But I, and whoever are on all points right minded Christians, know that there will be a resurrection of the dead(8) and a thousand years in Jerusalem(6), which will then be built, adorned and enlarged, as the prophets, Ezekiel and Isaiah(4) and others, declare." And further, a man named John, one of the Apostles, predicted by a revelation that was made to him that those who believed in our Christ would spend 1,000 years in Jerusalem.(6)" <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/related-topics/the-millennial-kingdom-in-the-early-church.html>

**Ephraim** The Syrian (306 AD – 373 AD) Excerpts from Sermon Entitled "On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World"

.Therefore, when he receives the kingdom, he orders the temple of God to be rebuilt for himself, which is in Jerusalem(4) ; who, after coming into it, he shall sit as God and order that he be adored by all nations(2) . . then all people from everywhere shall flock together to him at the city of Jerusalem, and the holy city shall be trampled on by the nations for forty-two months just as the holy apostle says in the Apocalypse, which becomes three and a half years, 1260 days(3).

..... and there will be a Great Tribulation, as there has not been, since people began to be upon the earth .

.....And when the three and a half years have been completed, the time of the Antichrist(2 & 3), through which he will have seduced the world, after the resurrection of the two prophets, in the hour which the world does not know, and on the day which the enemy or son of perdition does not know, will come the sign of the Son of Man, and coming forward the Lord shall appear with great power and much majesty, with the sign of the word of salvation going before him, and also even with all the powers of the heavens with the whole chorus of the saints . . . . Then Christ shall come (5) and the enemy shall be thrown into confusion, and the Lord shall destroy him by the Spirit of his mouth(5). And he shall be bound and shall be plunged into the abyss of everlasting fire alive with his father Satan; and all people, who do his wishes, shall perish with him forever; but the righteous ones shall inherit everlasting life with the Lord for ever and ever."

**Pre-Tribulation Rapture** was taught by:

**Irenaeus** (130 A.D. – 202 AD) *Against Heresies* (Book 5 Chap 29:1):

And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this(1), it is said, "There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.

**Cyprian** (200 AD – 258 AD) *Treatises of Cyprian*

"We who see that terrible things have begun, and know that still more terrible things are imminent, may regard it as the greatest advantage to depart from it as quickly as possible. Do you not give God thanks, do you not congratulate yourself, **that by an early departure you are taken away, and delivered from the shipwrecks and disasters that are imminent?(1)** Let us greet the day which assigns each of us to his own home, **which snatches us hence(1)**, and sets us free from the snares of the world and restores us to paradise and the kingdom."

**Ephraim** The Syrian (306 373 AD) Sermon Entitled "On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World"

For all the **saints and elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation(1)** that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins.

The Early Church fathers' such as Barnabas (ca.100-105), Papias (ca. 60-130), Justin Martyr (110-195), Irenaeus (120-202), Tertullian (145-220), Hippolytus (ca. 185-236), Cyprian (200-250), and Lactantius (260-330) wrote on the imminent return of Jesus Christ for the Church, which is a central argument for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture view.

## Summary of Early Church Fathers:

Thus, even though Rapture/Millennialism is now a position condemned by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, people they venerate as "Saints" including the Apostle John (late 1st century), [Papias](#) (early 2nd century), Justin Martyr (middle 2nd century), [Melito](#) (middle 2nd century), Irenaeus (late 2nd century), Hippolytus (early 3rd century), and Ambrose (4th century) all believed and taught a literal millennial reign of the Lord on the earth. A Rapture of Christians followed by a 7 year Tribulation was also taught by Early Church Fathers (ECF's) who have been designated as Saints.

It appears that the first to object to the teaching were those such as [Marcion](#) and various Gnostics later branded as heretics/apostates (rightly so) by both the [Roman Catholic](#) and [Eastern Orthodox](#) churches. But sadly, later (around the end of the fourth/early fifth century) many in the Greco-Roman Churches adopted their anti-millennialist view.

Did The Early Church Teach Millenarianism? <http://www.cogwriter.com/millenarianism.htm>

These writings of these ECF's are not the same as scripture by any means. They are presented here only to illustrate that the concepts of Rapture, Tribulation, and Millennial Kingdom were first understood by these ECF's and not a modern invention like some would like you to believe.

## Scripture – The Real Meat

### **Jesus pointed out the key to all End-Times prophecy in Matt 24:15-28:**

*Matt 24:15 "When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand:)"*

*Matt 24:21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."*

Jesus makes it plain that the Abomination/Desolation is still in the future and happens immediately before the Great Tribulation occurs (Mid Tribulation = Middle of 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel). The Lord also instructs those that read this to understand it – to put some time into the study of this. He takes this seriously and wants us to do likewise. It is right after these verses that the Lord talks about His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming so again, it is a very serious subject.

The Abomination/Desolation that Jesus spoke of points directly to Daniel 9:24:

*Dan 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off (executed), but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

The word "weeks" to a Jewish reader is like the word "decade" to a Western reader. It means 7 years (rather than 10 years that decade means). So as foretold by Prophet Daniel from the time that the edict went out to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem until the Messiah would come would be 62+7 (69) weeks of years or 483 years. Sir Robert Anderson in the 1890's, a chief of Scotland Yards, documented (The Coming Prince) that it was exactly 483 biblical years (360 days/biblical year) between the Decree of King Artaxerxes given to Nehemiah (to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem) until Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem through the Eastern (Golden) Gate on a donkey declaring Himself to be King (fulfilling Zech 9:9). (Sir Robert Anderson was later knighted by Queen Victoria.) Jesus apparently held the Jews accountable in Luke 19 for knowing this prophecy. This was their Day when the Kingdom was being offered to them. We have it on excellent authority that the stones themselves would have cried out if the people had been silent.

*Luke 19:41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."*

The Lord apparently takes prophecy seriously. The generation that saw Jesus on the donkey would also see Jerusalem destroyed because they did not recognize the "Time of Your Visitation" as given to Daniel. Daniel also foretold that the Messiah would be "cut off" - the Hebrew word means "executed in making a covenant" - which happened at the cross.

2 Thess 2:4 states that the Anti-Christ will actually sit in the Temple and proclaim himself to be god. This absolutely confirms that it won't be merely a Roman flag with an image on it posted on a Temple outer wall (as some insist) but that it will be a real person sitting in the real Jewish Temple that causes the Abomination/Desolation. (Foreshadowed by 1 Macc 1:54) Rev 11:1 talks about this rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. Rev 13:14-16 also talks of an Image that will be set up that people will be forced to worship on the pain of death.



Scripture declares that because Israel rejected their Messiah, Israel has been temporarily set aside for a period of time while the Lord draws out a Bride for His Son (see below Acts 15:13-18). After drawing out His Bride, He will then return and rebuild David's fallen house/kingdom such that Israel will rule during the Millennium. Romans 11:25-27 talks about this temporary setting aside which will end "that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." The Church Age thus interrupts the 70 Weeks that Israel was given back in Daniel 9. 69 weeks of years exactly had already occurred up until Palm Sunday. Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week is still in the future. The Church Age began at Pentecost and will end at the Rapture of the Church. There looks to be a period of time between the Rapture and the Covenant Enforced i.e. beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel (7 year Tribulation). The Bride's blessings will be even greater than Israel's (which will be huge blessings – i.e. ruling the world) during the Millennium.

### **No Wrath for Bride – It's a Promise**

The Bride of Christ is promised to entirely escape the time and place of the Lord's wrath/fierce anger (*orgēn* SG#3709) which are His judgments. All of the Bride's judgments were nailed to the cross. Here are those Scriptural Promises:

1 Thess 1:10 ... *even Jesus, who delivered* (rhōmai SG#4506) *us from* (ek SG# 1537) *the wrath* (*orgēn* SG#3709) *to come.*  
 1 Thess 5:9 *For God hath not appointed us to wrath* (*orgēn* SG#3709), *but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*  
[Rom 5:9](#) *being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from* (apo SG# 575) *wrath* (*orgēn* SG#3709) *through Him.*

rhōmai (SG# 4506) --- to draw to oneself - to draw or rescue a person *to and for the deliverer.*

ek (SG# 1537) Out of but towards something --- i.e. Out of wrath and towards Himself.

apo (SG# 575) Means separation of Place & Time – i.e. taken out of the time and place of the wrath.

orgēn (SG#3709) – Wrath or Fierce Anger

Scripture therefore promises that the Bride will be kept entirely from the Time or Place of the Lord's Wrath. These Wrath/Judgments were all taken care of at the cross for the Bride. This Wrath is entirely different than Satan's persecutions which the Bride is subject to. There are several examples in scripture that the Lord removed the Righteous entirely from an area before His Wrath fell on that area. The Wrath in those above scriptural promises is exactly the same Wrath (*orgēn* SG#3709) that is declared to have already come some point before the time of [Rev 6:17](#) (which is towards the beginning of the Tribulation).

[Rev 6:17](#) *For the great day of His wrath* (*orgēn* SG#3709) *has come*\*\*; *and who shall be able to stand?*

\*\*Aorist Indicative verb tense -meaning that it describes a punctiliar act (that is to say a single act at an undetermined point in time past that does not need to be repeated because its consequence continues on into the present and the future). i.e. The Lord's Wrath has come at some time previous to Rev 6:17 and the Wrath still continues on into the Future.

Lord's Wrath is therefore declared to already have come upon the earth before this verse; therefore Zero of the Bride can be on earth when Rev 6:17 happens. The Rapture therefore has already happened sometime before Rev 6 and definitely before the Lord's Wrath falls.

Thess 4:16-17 & 1 Cor 15:51-53 talks about the actual Rapture event. It is from these verses that the Rapture gets the name from the Latin term for “caught up” – rapturo. .

Thess 4:[16](#) *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17](#) Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up (rapturo Latin) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*

1 Cor 15:[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. [53](#) For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Act 15:14-17 Describe that the Lord will come take the Church from among the Gentles (Rapture) and then afterwards return to earth a 2<sup>nd</sup> time and rebuild David’s Kingdom Israel so that the whole world will seek the Lord during the Millennial Kingdom. So these verses also layout the same timeline sequence. Rapture, then 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, then Restoring Israel for the Millennium. (Notice that there will be men still seeking to know the Lord during the Millennium. Those are the children born to the Believing Mortals that survive the Tribulation and enter into the Millennium and repopulate the World i.e. the Sheep of the Sheep/Goat Judgment)

Act 15:14-17 “Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.[15](#) “With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,[16](#) ‘AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, [17](#) SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,’

## **Summary of Scriptural View of Rapture, Tribulation, and Millennial Kingdom**

- 1) Next event is the Rapture or Catching Up of the Church. Nothing has to happen before this, it is imminent. This is why the Imminent Return of Christ was a major theme in the Apostolic and ECF writings. (A whole bunch of stuff must happen on earth before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming is NOT imminent.) The Wedding of Christ to His Bride occurs in heaven sometime before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.
- 2) There will be a 7 year Covenant Enforced by the man we call the Anti-Christ. It looks like this Covenant allows Israel to rebuild their Temple. This Covenant Enforcement begins the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel – the Tribulation. The Four Horsemen and the following events of Revelation begin to occur. There will be those people that suddenly recognize what is really going on and will turn to the Lord. There will be great multitudes of people who will be saved during the Tribulation. A lot of these will be martyred for their new found faith.
- 3) In the Middle of the Tribulation, the Anti-Christ will go into the Temple in Israel and declare himself to be god (2 Thes 2:4). This will start the Great Tribulation that is talked about by Jesus in Matt 24:15-22. This is when the Anti-Christ really starts ruling the whole world.
- 4) At the end of the Great Tribulation, there will be great signs in the heavens, darkening of the sun and moon, nations will mourn, and then the Lord will return. He will destroy the Anti-Christ and his armies. Anti-Christ and his prophet are sent to Lake of Fire. Satan is bound for 1,000 years.
- 5) The Lord will resurrect all of the Old Testament Saints and those Saints who died during the Tribulation. He will judge all of the Living Mortals that made it thru the Tribulation alive. The Goats are sent away into Hades. The Sheep will enter the Millennial Kingdom as mortals to repopulate the world.
- 6) Israel will rule the world for 1,000 years. The Bride of Christ’s blessings will be greater than those of Israel. The Lord will be King above all.
- 7) At the end of 1,000 years Satan will be loosed. He will gather an army from some of those born during the Millennium that have chosen to rebel against the Lord. The Lord will destroy them all and send all those that rebelled against Him from all of the ages of the earth into the Lake of Fire along with Satan (Great White Throne judgment).
- 8) Eternity begins with a new heaven and a new earth.

There are bunches more scripture and bunches more explanation but this is a good start.