

#### 4) The alleged Book of “The Revelation Problem”

According to Dr. Kurschner and company, the Church is found on earth during most of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (the 1<sup>st</sup> half and part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half) **in several passages of the Book of Revelation**, undergoing persecution by the Antichrist, suffering through the Great Tribulation, and then raptured *before a single judgment or any wrath of God is poured out, which commence with the arrival of the “Day of the LORD.”*

As will be demonstrated, there are indeed a number of insurmountable problems when it comes to the Book of the Revelation, *but all on the side of schemes that deny or obscure dispensational truth.*

First, refer back to the refutations of the first three alleged problems, the “Precursor Problem,” “Olivet Discourse Problem,” and the “2 Thessalonians Problem,” to avoid further repetition, as those sections answer a number of foundational errors inherent in the invention of this fourth problem, “The Revelation Problem.”

We are told by Dr. Kurschner and his associates that:

“The 5th seal is an interesting one, and this is where many Prewrathers begin their argument that **these seals cannot be a part God’s Wrath.**”

“The martyrs that are depicted in the revelation at the fifth seal, in my opinion, is **one of the strongest arguments for the Prewrath position.**”

“Pretribulationists claim that the seals on the scroll, the seven seals scroll, **the seals are all God’s Wrath, but that’s contradicted by the fifth seal.**”

“The problem of course is that the plain reading in both the Greek and English of **this phrase [in Rev. 6:10], “How long before you judge and avenge our blood?” means that no judgment of any kind has begun at that point.** This is reiterated in the next verse when God tells them to wait a little while longer until the full number of **Christian martyrs** are killed. Both grammatically and contextually, **God has not begun his judgment on the wicked at this point**, which is probably why we found so few Pretrib commentators willing to try to explain this passage at all.

“**This causes another problem for Pretribbers, because if God’s wrath has begun by this point as they say, it would mean that these Christian martyrs in the 5th seal had been going through God’s Wrath, which contradicts the doctrine that Christians will not go through the Wrath of God** derived from 1st Thessalonians 5:9 and other places, a doctrine that is agreed upon by all sides of this debate.”

“One of the strongest arguments for the Prewrath position” . . . strong words! But if this is one of their own self-proclaimed “strongest” arguments, we have been graciously granted a self-disclosure of how feeble their forced scheme really is (yet again).

Notice, by the way, that these Pre-Wrath men call the martyrs under the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal “*Christian*” martyrs, and thus simply read into the passage what they wish, what they desire, to see in the passage. Neither here nor anywhere else in the Book of the Revelation does God’s Word state that “Christians,” those “in Christ,” “the Church,” members of His “Body” and “Bride” (or believers under any other distinctively Christian designation), are still on earth after chapter 3 (rather, precisely the contrary! . . . more on this shortly), including those pictured as coming out of the Great Tribulation in Revelation 7.

Now to their argument put forth as one of their “strongest” . . .

It is unabashedly claimed that the words of the martyrs in heaven in Rev. 6:10 (“How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou *not judge and avenge our blood* on them that dwell upon the earth?”) imply that “***no judgment of any kind has begun at that point*** [of the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal].”

To take those words as implying any such notion is to pit Scripture against Scripture (which we demonstrated at length that such is precisely what the Pre-Wrath system does)—far be such a thought as to His God-breathed word! Moreover, since the next seal, the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal, is thought to be *the commencement* of the outpouring of *God’s wrath* according to their system, then with the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal we have *the completion of the Great Tribulation through which the Church is said to pass*, that unique time which Scripture depicts as follows:

“When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which is spoken of through Daniel the prophet [***in connection with the 70<sup>th</sup> Week at its midpoint, Dan. 9:27***], standing in what is a **holy place**, (he that reads let him understand,) then let **those who are in Judaea** flee to the mountains . . . **But woe** to those that are with child, and those that give suck **in those days**. But pray that your flight may not be in winter time nor **on sabbath: For then [at that time] shall there be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.**” (Matt. 24:15-16, 19-21)

“**For those days shall be distress such as there has not been the like since the beginning of creation which God created, until now, and never shall be.**” (Mark 13:19)

“And I said to him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they who come out of **the great tribulation** [*lit. ‘the tribulation the great one’*], and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:14)

We are supposed to swallow the camel of the thought that **during said Great Tribulation after the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week** (not to mention the “birth-pangs” of the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, Matt. 24:6-8, or the first 4 Seals of Rev. 6:1-8), “***no judgment of any kind has begun at that point***”? **THAT** is what we are to glean from the outcry of Rev. 6:10? **THAT** is “*one of the strongest arguments for the Prewrath position*”???

***That which proves too much proves nothing at all but its own disproof!***

Perhaps there is a very good reason why Pre-Wrath men have “found so few Pretrib commentators willing to try to explain this passage at all.” Perhaps it is because *it has never occurred to sound interpreters that anyone would ever derive such an absurd thought from that passage!*

I suppose, then, that we should equally glean from Heb. 9:27 (“it is the portion of men once to die, *and after this judgment*”), that there is no judgment of any kind *prior to* death? That not even death itself is a form of judgment on the wicked, natural man?!

There is likewise absolutely no basis to take the terrified cry of the earth-dwellers during the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal of Rev. 6:12-17 as pointing merely to a *yet-to-be* expression of God’s wrath rather than to what *has been and already is underway*: “And they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and have us hidden from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and **from the wrath of the Lamb; because the great day of his wrath is come**, and who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16-17)

“How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou **not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?**” (Rev. 6:10)

Perhaps a somewhat sounder and a tad more spiritually sane understanding of Rev. 6:10, which would commend itself to those thus minded, is that these Jewish Tribulation martyrs (cf. “*underneath the altar*” symbolically, and the *imprecatory* nature of their language) are crying out for **full and complete** judgment of the “earth-dwellers” (“them that dwell upon the earth,” see note below), **clearing them all out, in vindication** of their death and for the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. For which these Jewish Tribulation martyrs are waiting. They were removed from the earth by persecution of death; they now, in the intermediate state, await the utter vanquishment of the “earth dwellers” from it (and then the institution, by the Sovereign Ruler, of His Kingdom of righteousness and peace, and their place in it).

To be clear, the opening of each of the seals of the 7-sealed scroll **by the Lamb** (Christ) denotes the bringing to pass certain events and judgments, which prepare the way for the Lamb to take the inheritance of all creation (the scroll itself representing, not judgments, but the title deed to that inheritance of all creation) in order to reign over it in His kingdom glory. And with regard to the first 4 seals, note that the 4 “living creatures” are involved in each of these, once **the Lamb** opens them. As the 4 “living creatures” are symbolic of the attributes of providential power in the execution of judgment in the earth, then when each living creature is represented as saying “Come” at the opening of each of these seals by the Lamb, the “come” signifies Christ’s providential power to bring these actions and judgments to pass, His providential command to cause these events to take place. (And they are all part of the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, as are, in fact, **all** of the first 6 seals, which are the beginning of the “birth pains” of God’s outpoured wrath; cp. Matt. 24:8 with 1 Thess. 5:1-4, 9 and Isa. 13:6-8.)

“And I saw when **the Lamb opened** one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as a voice of thunder, Come: And I saw: and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon it having a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth **conquering and that he might conquer.**

“And when **it [the Lamb] opened** the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come: And another, a red horse, went forth; and to him that sat upon it, to him it was given to **take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another;** and there was given to him a great sword.

“And when **it [the Lamb] opened** the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come: And I saw: and behold, a black horse, and he that sat upon it having a balance in his hand. And I heard as a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A choenix of wheat for a denarius, and three choenixes of barley for a denarius: and do not injure the oil and the wine.

“And when **it [the Lamb] opened** the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come: And I saw: and behold, a pale horse, and he that sat upon it, his name was **Death, and hades** followed with him; and authority was given to him over **the fourth of the earth to slay with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth.**” (Rev. 6:1-8)

We referred above to the **imprecatory** nature of the outcry of the martyrs in Rev. 6:10. Why is this important? Because that serves as *another* key to the true identification of these Tribulation martyrs, thus preserving us from the gross error of misapplication. It shows that they are distinctively **Jewish** (part of the godly Jewish remnant of that time), not “Christian” or counterparts above with respect to “Christians” still living on earth during the Tribulation Period. To apply this to Christians, to place in the mouths of Christians an imprecatory prayer is to **Judaize**. “The imprecations are appropriate during the future Apocalyptic Week, when the prayers of Ps. 79 and 83 are also in order and suitable for the Remnant, as other Psalms [e.g., Ps. 94:1-3; 109:1-20; 69:23-25; 149:5-9] will also be. To make these things proper Christianity is, therefore, to Judaize.” (R.A. Huebner) Contrast the imprecatory prayer of Rev. 6:10 and those of the Psalms with the posture, attitude, and ministry set forth, e.g., in 2 Cor. 5:18-21 and Rom. 12:14—as well with the prayer of the first *Christian* martyr, Stephen, expressed in Acts 7:59-60—and see if they can be reconciled as both applying to the mindset of heavenly saints (Christians)!

“Who are these saints that appeal to God's vengeance? It is not the church in this case, one can answer with the utmost confidence. It could not be indeed; for the church had been already removed to heaven. But, besides, **is the church ever said, in scripture, to call upon God to judge and avenge the blood of saints shed on the earth? It would falsify the very design of God in the church, and in the individual Christian too.** We are the epistle of Christ, called expressly to show out His glory in Christ, and His grace towards the world ever since the cross. And as God has allowed men to put to death His own Son,

and, so far from judging the guilt, has only made it an occasion for showing more grace still, so the church is called to suffer, and if need be even to death, for His name's sake, **without such a thought or wish as calling for vengeance.**

Take a plain and signal example of this in Stephen. He was most grievously trodden down. they cast him out of the city and stoned him. But he kneels down and cries, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' It was with a loud voice too, for it was not a thing that his heart did not feel earnestly; and the Holy Ghost desired that those who were round him should know his heart's desire about them, guilty as they were of his blood. Was this calling upon God to avenge his blood? The very contrary; and so all through. Look at the apostles Peter and John, who when they were beaten depart from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Look again at the first Epistle of Peter; and what do you find there? **This is the principle: 'If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called.'**

On the other hand, the world could not go on for a day on such a around as this; it must go to pieces, if evil were not to be punished, and those who did well and suffered wrongfully were merely to give thanks. ***But such exhortations were not intended for the world. And there is the mistake so often made. Men forget that the church was called to be a witness of heaven — was meant to express the mind and grace of Christ, while walking upon the earth.***" (W. Kelly)

#### **Note on "those that dwell upon the earth"**

"[T]hose that dwell on earth (Phil 3:19; Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8 & cp. 14:6). They are like those of Noah's day which was characterized by two things: a. Violence and corruption. b. Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage -- without God, and as if they would dwell on earth forever." "Those that dwell on the earth stand in moral contrast to *those who dwell in heaven*, whom the beast blasphemes (Rev. 13:6). The Philadelphians will be among the dwellers in heaven [via the Rapture] . . . The hour of trial, then, will come upon those under the sway of the beast." (R.A. Huebner)

**As to Revelation 7**, there is absolutely no reference to the Church or its Rapture therein. In fact, there is nothing akin to being taken up in the air or to heaven, no gathering together unto Him from the earth to heaven of any group at all! Nor is there even the slightest hint of glorification of bodies taking place, let alone a catching up of the believing dead. That is, NO RAPTURE.

"And one of the elders ***[one of the "24 Elders," who as a fixed group represent the glorified Church in heaven (see comments in the section that follows below)]*** answered, saying to me, These who are clothed with white robes, who are they, and whence came they? And I said to him, My lord, thou knowest. And he ***[one of the 24 Elders]*** said to me, These are they who come out of the great tribulation ***[alive, not through death and resurrection!]***, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of

the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God *[in acceptance and righteous standing, not in physical location! . . . contrast this with the "24 Elders" who are actually located "round the throne" in heaven (Rev. 4), in closest association therewith, and clearly distinguished from this group "who come out of the Great Tribulation"]*, and serve him day and night in *[in connection with]* his temple *[His Millennial Temple on this present earth]*, and he that sits upon the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. *[In Millennial Kingdom glory of righteousness and peace:]* They shall not hunger any more, neither shall they thirst any more, nor shall the sun at all fall on them, nor any burning heat; because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Rev. 7:13-17)

Moreover, we have seen that the Great Tribulation is indeed part of the time of God's wrath, from which time the Church is uniquely and entirely exempted. Thus neither the martyrs of Rev. 6:9-11 nor the redeemed of Rev. 7 could possibly be Christians, the heavenly people of God. Incredibly, we are told the following by one of Dr. Kurschner's colleagues:

"This causes another problem for Pretribbers, because if God's wrath has begun by this point as they say, it would mean that these Christian martyrs in the 5th seal *[and the 'Christians' coming out of the Great Tribulation in Rev. 7]* had been **going through God's Wrath, which contradicts the doctrine that Christians will not go through the Wrath of God** derived from 1st Thessalonians 5:9 and other places, a doctrine that is agreed upon by all sides of this debate."

First, the promise of 1 Thess. 5:9 *et al.* is for Christians, the heavenly people of God, the Body & Bride of Christ, ALONE. They are the only group of saints promised this special and entire exemption from any exposure to God's outpoured wrath. Such is not so of subsequent earthly Jew and Gentile believers reared during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. But if 1 Thess. 5:9 and other passages are applied indiscriminately, the question arises: Does this mean that the Pre-Wrath system has no believers living or brought about during their self-designated time of God's wrath?

**1) Will there be no one else saved during the remainder of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, so that they are not exposed to God's wrath? For those who are "left" (after all believers are "taken" in the rapture), are there none who get saved before the Lord returns to establish His kingdom?**

**2) If ALL are "left" for divine judgment, what becomes of the Two Witnesses of Rev. 11, who are left behind after the supposed Pre-Wrath rapture?!**

**3) How will there be anyone left to enter and populate the Millennial Kingdom, *in their natural (unglorified) bodies*, upon its initial establishment, if no group of believers live and survive during the time of God's wrath?**

[Note: ONLY the saved will enter the Kingdom at its establishment on this earth (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:11-12, 30, 31-46; 24:13; 13:39-42, 49-50; 7:21-23; 18:3; Isa. 13:9; Ezek. 20:38; Zech. 13:8-9; Rom. 11:26-27); who will reproduce/have children during that 1,000 Year Reign.]

4) What becomes of the Judgment of the living Gentile Sheep and Goats (i.e., in their natural bodies—*no death and resurrection* involved in their appearance there), *when* the Son of Man sits down upon His earthly kingdom throne of glory (Matt. 25:31ff), if no group of believers live and survive during the time of God’s wrath?

5) Who are those who have “endured to the end” (Matt. 24:13, 14), if no group of believers live and survive during the time of God’s wrath and through to “the end”?

6) If their system allows for the existence of a group of Jewish and Gentile saints after the “Pre-Wrath” rapture after all, then how does that mesh with the implication of those who are all said by them to be “left” for divine judgment in Matt. 24 and Luke 17?

7) If their system allows for the existence of a group of Jewish and Gentile saints after the “Pre-Wrath” rapture, *then so much for their application of such passages as 1 Thess. 5:9 to those in Rev. 6:6-11 and Rev. 7!*

***In light of ALL the forgoing, it is clear that there is not the slightest “Revelation Problem”—not, at least, for Pre-Tribulation Truth!***

Now the following represents a set of *real insurmountable problems* involved in all anti-Pretribulation Rapture errors, including Pre-Wrath notions. These are not even remotely touched on in Dr. Kurschner’s 2+ hour video, of course.

### **The Structure of Revelation**

After the Church “*things that are*” now in Revelation Chapters 2 & 3 (cf. **Rev. 1:19 and its divinely given outline of the Book of Revelation**), the Church is seen in Heaven beginning with Rev. 4 and “*the things that must take place after these things*” (after these Church things that are now; cp. Rev. 1:19c with 4:1c)—the Rapture thus implicitly taking place between the end of Rev. 3 and the start of Rev. 4 (the *occurrence* of the Rapture of the Church being nowhere explicitly recorded in the Book of Revelation, though **Rev. 3:10-11** of course speaks of the certainty of that heavenly hope which keeps us entirely out of the *time* of the world-wide trial of the Tribulation Period). As such, the glorified Church is seen in Heaven as a result of the Rapture and prior to the onset of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week, and during the course thereof:

- *As the 24 Elders*
- *As the Tabernacle in Heaven*
- *As the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife*

The structure of the Book of Revelation *requires* the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. **The divinely given outline of the Book is given in Rev. 1:19 which is key**, with the “*things that are*” now comprising the present Church period pictured in Rev. 2-3, and the “*things that are to be after these things*” comprising the heavenly events of Rev. 4-5 and the earthly Tribulation Period/Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week and beyond starting with Rev. 6—*where the Church is never again seen on earth* (until after the visions close in Rev. 22, and we have the yearning cry of the Spirit and the Bride for the coming of the Lord Jesus in Rev.22:17). Rather, the glorified Church is specifically seen under the symbolic representation of *the 24 Elders in Heaven* (Rev. 4:1-4, 10-11; 5:5-11, 14; 7:11-14; 11:16-17; 14:3; 19:4); and of *the Tabernacle in Heaven* (Rev. 13:6, “His tabernacle, even those who [now] have their tabernacle in the heaven” [cp. Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:5]); with the former representation continuing until the glorified Church is seen in Rev. 19 as *the Wife of the Lamb in Heaven, complete and ready*, at the Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb which take place in Heaven (Rev. 19:7-9) *prior to* the Manifestation of His coming at the end of the Tribulation as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11ff), when He comes victoriously and we with Him in glory as *His armies out of Heaven* (Rev. 17:14 and 19:14 & 19, “the armies which are in the heaven [who] followed Him upon white horses, clad in white, pure, fine linen,” even “they that are with Him called, and chosen, and faithful”). And observe, too, the conspicuous absence of the oft repeated phrase “he that has an ear, let him hear ***what the Spirit says to the churches***” after Rev. 2-3 (cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; and contrast with the expression in 13:9 relating to the Great Tribulation period).

### **Supplemental Note on the Judgment-Seat (Bema) of Christ for Members of the Body & Bride of Christ**

The Rapture facilitates the immediately following presence of *each and every* member of the Body & Bride of Christ, individually, in their glorified state, before the Bema or Judgment-Seat of Christ *in heaven* (which in turn prepares and makes “ready” the Bride for the heavenly Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb, see below)

**At or pursuant to the Bema**, every glorified saint in Christ will receive some praise and rewards: cf. 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 4-5 (*the 24 Elders all crowned, see below*); Rev. 19:7-8 (the Wife of the Lamb dressed in her wedding gown of fine linen, which is the ‘righteousnesses’—righteous acts, as an outflow of the divine nature, wrought in the power of the Spirit— *of all heavenly saints, see below*)

**Note also** that our session before the Bema is entirely completed in heaven before the start of the Tribulation with its divine judgments, before the opening of a single seal in Rev. 6, as the glorified Church is seen already crowned with her victor’s reward crowns under the symbolic representation of the 24 Elders in Rev. 4-5 (see below). See **Rev.** 22:12; **1 Cor.** 4:5; 3:10-15; **2 Cor.** 5:10; **Rom.** 14:10-12; **1 John** 2:28; 4:17-18; **John** 5:24.



## **Supplemental Note on the Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb**

The Rapture and the immediately following Judgment-Seat of Christ facilitate the presence of the complete and “ready” Bride (Rev. 19:7) at the Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb *in heaven*, BEFORE the Manifestation of His coming with us in glory at the end of the Tribulation as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The heavenly Bride is, indisputably, all who compose the Church which is His Body (cf. Eph. 5:22-33; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7: 1-4; Rev. 21:9ff; 22:17). As the Bride is *in heaven, complete and “ready”* (Rev. 19:7)—nothing lacking—while the Tribulation Period/Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> Week is transpiring on the earth, a Post-Tribulational Rapture of the Church is an impossible scenario. His coming to Rapture His heavenly people and the Manifestation of His coming to establish the Kingdom must be distinguished and separated in time. The former must precede, so as to facilitate, the latter.

**Further note that the *heavenly Marriage and Wedding Supper of the Lamb take place immediately after the destruction on earth, under God’s judgment, of Mystery Babylon, the Great Harlot (Rev. 17-18; cf. also Rev. 2:22 and 3:16, the culmination of the church of Thyatira and of Laodicea)—the False Church, the False Bride—at the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (Rev. 19:1-3) [which makes way for the worship of the Beast during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (Rev. 13)]. Thus this rules out a Pre-Wrath Rapture occurring sometime later during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.***

### **The 24 Elders**

The 24 Elders are seen in heaven in Rev. 4-5 for the first time, after the Church “*things that are*” now in Rev. 2-3, who collectively represent the glorified Church after the Rapture as king-priests, as a royal priesthood (cp. Rev. 5:8, 10 with Rev. 1:6 and 1 Pet. 2:9), seated and enthroned around and in closest connection to the throne of God, acting in their *priestly* capacity (cf. Rev. 5:8, “having each a harp and golden bowls full of incenses, which are the prayers of the [Jewish and Gentile] saints” on earth). They are all crowned with *victor’s* crowns (Gr. *stephanos*, Rev. 4:4, 10—not *royal* crowns, Gr. *diadema*, and thus they are not yet reigning), awarded as a result of appearing before the Judgment-Seat (*Bema*) of Christ (the number of victor’s crowns awarded to each is left unstated).

And note that the 24 Elders are no longer seen as such once the glorified Church is shown forth as the armies out of Heaven and as the Wife of the Lamb appearing in glory with Christ in His Manifestation to the earth.

The 24 Elders in heaven (Rev. 4:1-4, 10-11; 5:5-11, 14; 7:11-14; 11:16-17; 14:3; 19:4) derive their symbolic significance from the 24 courses (shifts or divisions) into which David the king divided the representative heads of the Levitical priesthood in the OT (1 Chron. 24:1-19), which *represented the whole* priesthood. The term “*elder*” itself, moreover, conveys the thought of: spiritual maturity (1 Tim. 3:6); intelligence in divine things (Tit. 1:9); government (1 Tim. 3; Tit.

1); and representation rather than solely individual capacity. And observe that the 24 Elders *are not and cannot be any form of angelic creatures*, from whom they are consistently and carefully distinguished in the Book of Revelation (cf. Rev. 5:11 and 7:11). *Consider:*

- Angels always stand, and are never seated or enthroned, *before or in the presence of God* (cf., e.g., 1 Kings 22:19; Dan. 7:9-10; Zech. 6:5; Luke 1:19; Rev. 7:11; 8:2; and contrast with John 20:12, where two angels are seen seated in the *empty* tomb of our risen Saviour!), whereas the 24 Elders are indeed thus seated and enthroned (being perfectly at home in perfect rest and peace in God’s presence, as a result of their so-great heavenly salvation in Christ—in accordance with their position in Him in the heavenlies now, Eph. 2:6)
- Angels always speak or shout (even in praise), and never sing (cf., e.g., Luke 2:13-14 and the Book of Revelation throughout; Job 38:7 being no exception and better translated as the morning stars ‘cried out’ in praise), whereas the 24 Elders do thus sing (as a result of and in connection with their redemption in Christ) [cf. Rev. 5:8-10, and note that in the Greek it is the 24 Elders alone who are said to be ‘having each a harp’ and to thus ‘sing a new song’]
  - The fact that the song which the 24 Elders sing in Rev. 5:9-10 speaks of “them” and “they” (in the third person) rather than “us” and “we” (v. 10), in no way implies that they sing not of their *own* blood-redemption (for they sing *as representing the entire* glorified Church, not merely of themselves as individuals)—no more than, e.g., the Israelites sang not of their own redemption in the first recorded song of Scripture in Ex. 15:1-18, when they were redeemed out of Egypt and sang of themselves in the third person (cf. “the people” and “them,” Ex. 15:13, “your people” and “the people,” Ex. 15:16, and “them” (twice), Ex. 15:17)
  - Accordingly, the song of the 24 Elders indeed speaks of themselves *as redeemed by blood* (that of Jehovah-Jesus), of their being made *kings and priests* (partaking of the offices of Christ Himself, the King-Priest), and of their forthcoming *reign over the earth* (with the Lord Jesus, beginning with the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, Rev. 5:10; and cp. Rev. 1:6; 3:21; 2:26-27; 20:4, 6; 22:5; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1:10-14, 21-23 (and cp. 1:21 with 2:6); 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:9)—*none of which*, clearly, is true of angelic creatures (see also Heb. 2:5, “for He has *not* subjected to angels the habitable world [Millennial world] which is to come”)
- Angels are known for excelling in strength (2 Pet. 2:11; Ps. 103:20), *not* wisdom, and never age or grow to maturity and thus are never referred to as “elders,” a term used only of men and particularly in connection with leaders in the local assembly (which itself is a *representative* office) who were appointed by the apostles or their delegates; whereas the 24 Elders are seen demonstrating their spiritual wisdom, intelligence and intimate familiarity with the mind of Christ and the counsels of God (cf. Rev. 5:5, 9-10; 7:13-14; and cp. John 15:15; 1 Cor. 2:16)

- Angels are never crowned; whereas members of the Body & Bride of the Son alone are promised victor's crowns (Gr. *stephanos*) as rewards (cf. Rev. 4:4, 10; and cp. 1 Cor. 9:25; James 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10)—thus showing that the Judgment-Seat (Bema) of Christ has already taken place in the heavens before the opening of the Tribulation Period on earth

### **Rev. 3:10-11**

***“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial [and not only out of the hour of God’s “wrath”!], which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. [How will we be kept out of that time of world-wide Tribulation? By His coming and our gathering together unto Him! For:] I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown.”***

We are told in **Rev. 3:11** how we will be kept out of ***the time*** of the coming world-wide Tribulation judgment of **Rev. 3:10 (and not solely kept out of God’s “wrath,” as important as that is)**, i.e., by way of His imminent coming for us (“*I come quickly*”)! Now let us consider more precisely ***how*** the believers who comprised the Philadelphian church (and the other six churches, “for he that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to *the churches*”) will actually ***be ‘kept out of’ the time of this world-wide judgment to come***: Will they be *preserved through it*? If such is the case (which is a complete misunderstanding of the text), then these believers, who have been absent from the body and present with the Lord for the last 2,000 years, *will have to be brought back to this earth to undergo the Tribulation Period so as to be “preserved through it”!* Contra such an absurdity, the true saints of the Philadelphian church (and the other six churches) ***have clearly been and will continue to be*** kept entirely out of the 7-year ‘hour of trial to come upon the whole habitable earth.’ Now this promise is not for the Philadelphian saints alone (or the saints of the other six churches). **This promise of exclusion and exemption from the time of the Tribulation is for all heavenly saints comprising the Body of Christ from Pentecost to the Rapture—just as all salvation promises and blessings in every NT Epistle apply to all believers, and not merely to the original recipients of those Epistles.**

Thus we have established that: 1) Rev. 3:10 could not possibly mean ‘preservation through’ the Tribulation Period for the Philadelphian saints; rather, it conveys exclusion and exemption from the time of the Tribulation Period altogether; and 2) the promise of Rev. 3:10 applies to us today in the same exact sense (i.e., it cannot mean exclusion and exemption from the time of the Tribulation for the Philadelphian saints but ‘preservation through’ it for us). ***How***, then, will those of us who are ***alive*** when the Tribulation is set to start be kept out of (excluded and exempted from) that Period? How, I ask, other than by a Rapture-Translation removing us from this world before the world-wide Tribulation Period commences? No other explanation is possible or given to us in Scripture. **And Rev. 3:11, in fact, explicitly connects that very exclusion and exemption with His blessed coming for us: “I come quickly!”**

**Note:** for those who misinterpret Rev. 3:10 as '*preservation through*' the Tribulation (and thereby confuse the heavenly Church with earthly Jew and Gentile saints passing through the Tribulation Period), what kind of '*preservation through*' *it* do the myriads of *martyred* Tribulation saints actually experience, being put to death during that Period and *not preserved through it at all?! (cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 11:3-9; 13:10, 15; 14:12-13; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4).*

"This leads us to consider the Lord's promise to the church in Philadelphia, as recorded in Revelation 3:10, 'I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.' Mr. Reese spends pages over this passage commencing with page 199; his argument being that the preposition translated 'from' does not necessarily mean 'out of,' so that it may merely mean preservation *through* the tribulation. Says he, 'The preposition *ek* may possibly mean immunity from, but more probably it means *out of* in the sense of being 'brought safe out of'.

His reasonings as to *ek* are very much open to question, but we shall spend no time on them, since the falsity of his interpretation of the passage is better shown by emphasizing two words that he seems to practically ignore — 'keep,' and 'hour.' How can the promise mean '*bring safe out of*' when it does not say 'Save from,' but '*Keep from.*' And not only keep out of tribulation, but out of '*the hour of temptation;*' that is, out of *the period of time* in which the trial takes place. He quotes Rev. 12:6, 14, to prove that saints may be kept out of tribulation, while being still left on earth. Yes, but the Philadelphian church is to be *kept out of the hour* of world-wide trial. **This cannot be by being placed in some earthly shelter while *passing through the hour.* Being kept out of, or from, the hour must mean being translated into a region outside every hour into which time is divided.**

If any would say to us that this exemption is only promised to the Philadelphian church who had kept the word of Christ's patience, and therefore may only apply to saints of special devotedness, we should have to reply by pointing out that things promised to the seven churches must not be understood as special and exclusive to those to whom the promise is made. Verse 11 of chapter 2 is a very clear example. The saints at Smyrna are not the only ones to be exempted from the second death." (F.B. Hole, *The Approaching Advent of Christ. A review of a book by the Rev. A. Reese, bearing this title*)