

II. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE CHURCH

The Bible Teaches...

A. THAT THE CHURCH IS GOING TO COMPRISE A BODY OF BELIEVERS FOR A SPECIFIC PERIOD OF TIME.

1. This body began after the exaltation of Christ on the Day of Pentecost and will be completed with the Rapture (Eph. 1:19-23; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 11:15,16).
2. This body of believers will be a people called out for Christ during the dispensation of grace (Acts 15:14). They were purchased by Christ's own blood (Acts 20:28), and make up His Bride (Eph. 5:27-29).
3. This body is the means through which Christ is conducting His work of saving and using others for His glory (Acts 1:9; 13:2-5; Eph. 4:12).
4. This body is involved in a seed-sowing program through out this world which will be opposed by the devil with a counterfeit program (Matt. 28:19,20; Matt. 13:24-30; 38-43). The devil will use certain ones to deceive others (II Cor. 11:3,4; 13-15) with a counterfeit message (Gal. 1:6-9; I I Tim. 1:3-7; Titus 1:10,11).

B. THAT THE CHURCH AGE WILL INVOLVE A SPECIFIC DISPENSATION.

1. During the seed-sowing program those in Christ have a responsibility to make Christ known to the world (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; 4:32, 42).
2. During this dispensation the Holy Spirit has a ministry of convicting men of their unbelief in Christ (Jn. 16:7-11).
3. During this time men are called upon to believe in the Lord Jesus, receive Him as Saviour and to be led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:42,43; 16:30,31; 17:30,31).
4. During this time those who reject Christ will die in their sins and perish for eternity without second chances (Jn. 3:36; 8:24; Lk. 16:19-31).
5. During this time those who are unsaved and alive at the rapture will have to undergo the tribulation period or die a martyr's death. At the end of the Tribulation Period the unsaved will be cast into hell. This will include the unsaved Jews (Matt. 25:30) and the unsaved Gentiles (Matt. 25:41,46).
6. This dispensation will end with the rapture of the church (I Thess 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51; Rev. 4:1). and God's judgment poured out during the Tribulation Period (Rev. 3:10).

C. THAT THE CHURCH IS GOING TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY TRUE AND FALSE PROFESSIONS

1. The good seed will be the children of the Kingdom which the gospel will produce and they will be sown in the world as a testimony and witness (Matt. 13:38). Note I Pet. 1:23.
2. The tares will be the children of the wicked one (Matt. 13:38). These will not be just unbelievers but religious counterfeits who belong to the devil (II Cor. 11:13-15).
3. This means many who will profess to know the Lord will be unsaved and used of the devil to carry out his will.

D. THAT THE CHURCH SAINTS ARE GOING TO BE RAPTURED OUT OF THIS WORLD

1. This event will involve only those in Christ - those who have died in Christ (I Thess 4:16) and also living believers (I Cor. 15:51). It will not include O.T. saints. They will be resurrected after the Tribulation Period (Dan. 12:1,2; Hos. 13:14).
2. This event will be the fulfillment of Christ's promise to believers which is the "blessed hope" of all those in Christ (Jn. 14:1-6; Titus 2:13).
3. This event will deliver the Lord's people from the wrath of the Tribulation Period which will come upon an unbelieving world (Rom. 5:9; I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10).
4. This event will not include the whole realm of Christendom but only born again believers (Matt. 7:21-23; Lk. 13:23-25; I Cor. 6:9-11).
5. The rapture will bring about a wonderful change in the believer. The dead will be resurrected and given incorruptible bodies along with living believers (I Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:20,21; Rev. 4:1).

E. THAT THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE WILL BECOME APOSTATE AND TAKEN OVER BY THE ANTICHRIST

1. This apostasy will precede the rapture and overtake those who are apostate and not genuine believers (I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3:1-5; II Thess. 5:2-5).
2. The church as a whole will be growing enormously in size but become corrupted from within (Matt. 13:24-43; Rev. 17).