

The Rapture

Old Testament Types and Shadows

If you have followed along with the Superior Word sermons, then you are fully aware that every single passage of Scripture points to Jesus Christ – His Person and His work. In our journey through Genesis, Ruth, and our continued journey through Exodus, we have seen literally thousands of such types and pictures of Him.

If you haven't been following along with our sermons, then get on the stick and get to it. Proper theological understanding of the New Testament is pretty much impossible without knowing the Old. This doesn't mean that the core doctrines of the faith are unattainable without the Old, but it does mean that those core doctrines are likely to be misunderstood without first knowing the context of what has been seen in the Old.

And so it is a shame that so many people run ahead with their theology by either making stuff up out of their own head concerning doctrinal issues, or they have an unbalanced view of those doctrines because they haven't taken the time to see what God has already shown in type and picture.

This problem results in countless variations of biblical doctrines with proponents of a particular view mis-analyzing verses and coming to faulty conclusions. From their skewed analyses come followers who only further propagate what is clearly wrong.

In reality, then, there is actual harm to what is being relayed in the Bible by evaluating the New Testament verses without considering the pictures from the Old. Solomon tells us this in a unique way with the following words. They are our text verse for this sermon.

Text Verse: *“That which has been is what will be,
That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 1:9*

This isn't some arbitrary statement meant to confuse the reader of the Bible concerning *possible* historical patterns. Instead, it is a note from the mind of God to the readers of His word that He repeats things in order for us to see what will happen again. If it is recorded in His word, we can expect the same type of thing to occur again in the process of redemptive history.

As this is so, and as the doctrine of the rapture is accepted by dispensationalists as a valid doctrine, then there must be types and pictures of it in the Old Testament. The

question is then, “If it is pictured in the Old Testament, can we determine whether a pre/mid/or post tribulation rapture is defined as well?”

The answer is a resounding “Yes!” Today, we will take a very brief look at four different accounts, all of which point to a pre-tribulation rapture. Two are from Genesis, one is from Exodus, and the final one is from Ruth. We will do this without making unfounded deductions and we will analyze these types in proper context.

It may be that you won’t fully understand what I present. The reason for this is that each of these pictures comes from a greater whole which was laid out in a sequence of sermons. What you might want to do is go back and watch the surrounding sermons if you aren’t clueing in to what is presented.

Question: Why is it that some people who accept that there will be a rapture still adamantly refuse to believe that it will be a pre-tribulation rapture? I believe my friend Richard in New Zealand sums it up rather well –

“I suspect that underlying the anti pre trib rapture movement, there is a deficient understanding of the finished work of the Cross. This idea that we have to go through part of or all of the tribulation seems like a form of protestant purgatory to me. That somehow, by enduring the tribulation horror, adds some kind of merit to the broken body and shed blood of the Savior.” Richard MacGregor, Auckland NZ

He is right. Christ’s work is sufficient, and Christ will not allow His bride to be subjected to this time of wrath to come. She is His precious Jewel, not His punching bag. We will see this today.

Before we get into these things though, it should be noted that the rapture is not some impossible doctrine which should be laughed off by anyone of reason. Rather, it happened twice already in history to individuals. The first was Enoch. His translation is described in Genesis 5:21-24 –

“Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. ²² After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.”

His translation is further explained in Hebrews 11 –

“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him’; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Hebrews 11:5

The second translation is that of Elijah. His is recorded in 2 Kings –

“Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” 2 Kings 2:11

Elijah is still alive today and his return is expected before the great and terrible Day of the Lord which is coming. What is most probable is that together, Enoch and Elijah – a Gentile and a Hebrew – will come back as the two witnesses of Revelation. This can be sufficiently determined from several passages of Scripture, but it isn’t relative to the doctrine of the rapture.

However, their translation is. If God can take them up, He can do the same for all of the saints of the church, just as His word says. I hope you enjoy this word from God’s word today, and if you enjoy this sermon but have never watched Superior Word sermons before, then you are only cheating yourself. J

Go back to Genesis 1:1 and start watching. If you watch one a day (like taking your vitamins) you will be caught up in about 1/2 a year. So get started. Great stuff is to be found in His superior word. And so let’s turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Pulled Out of Danger (Genesis 19:9-11)

⁹ And they said, “Stand back!” Then they said, “This one came in to stay *here*, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.” So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. ¹⁰ But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. ¹¹ And they struck the men who *were* at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary *trying* to find the door. Genesis 19:9-11

Lot was in a pickle. He was a fallible man, but he was also a righteous man. This is seen in the words of Peter in the New Testament –

“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷ and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for that righteous man,

dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— ⁹ *then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment...” 2 Peter 2:4-9

So we see that despite his failings, he was a righteous man. It is a biblical axiom, however, that righteousness stems not from man, but from God. Therefore, he is used as a picture of those who are in the Lord’s church. They are deemed righteous by God because of the work of Christ. Not because we are inherently righteous. Just look around at those in the church... and go look in the mirror too, and you will see this it true.

Just as Lot was tormented in his righteous soul because of the depravity of the world around him, so should we be tormented at the horrendous depravity around us. The pattern of the past is seen again in today’s cesspool of wickedness. One week’s prophecy update is enough to show anyone with even a modicum of morals that we are ripe for judgment.

For those whose hope is not in this world, we have the same hope of an open door before us as that which John saw so long ago –

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven.”

-Revelation 4:1

John saw a door, and Lot was pulled through a door. Let’s look again at the verses about him and see not only what literally happened to him, but what they are picturing for us.

⁹ And they said, “Stand back!” Then they said, “This one came in to stay *here*, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.” So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door.

This verse is tied to Genesis 19:1 where Lot was noted as being at the city gate. He acted like a judge here because he was probably a judge at the gate. It’s very probable, although not stated, that he was appointed a judge after Abraham defeated the kings of the east. This was an awarded position based on his relationship with his uncle. Whether this is the case or not, he sat in the gates and was noted as an authority.

But the crowd is no longer interested in set authority and has determined to cast it off. They have become so depraved that they rejected his offer of his own daughters in place of the men that had come under the shelter of his roof. The people

surrounding Lot's house are not only perverts, but they have become unreasonably violent by the conduct of their wicked lives. It sounds like our world once again today, doesn't it.

The translators of the Geneva Bible make this comment about living too close to sin, as Lot is –

“Nothing is more dangerous than to live where sin reigns: for it corrupts all.”

This is a lesson Lot learned the hard way, and it is a lesson that we need to pay attention to in our own lives.

¹⁰ But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.

Lot is brought into complete safety, away from the wickedness of the people, and *into the presence of the Lord*. That the Lord is there isn't evident yet, but the term used for someone he speaks to later indicates that the Lord is there with him behind the door. Once Lot is pulled in, the door that was open is now shut.

¹¹ And they struck the men who *were* at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary *trying* to find the door.

The type of blindness, or as the Hebrew says it “with blindnesses” (it is plural) – is the word *ba'sanveriim*. It is found in only two accounts in the Old Testament. The other time is in 2 Kings 6:18 –

“So when *the Syrians* came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, “Strike this people, I pray, with blindness.” And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.”

The blindness they experience is a peculiar sort that has much less to do with the eyes than it does with the mind. The heads of the people in Sodom, just like those with Elisha in Dothan, were confused, and their thinking was clouded. It's a state of blindness which is more mental and spiritual than physical.

We know this because Elisha led the army of Syria all the way from Dothan to Samaria and they followed him. The people of Sodom groped for the door, even though it's still there... right there... but they can't find it. In other words, the very thing they're intent upon finding is the thing they can't see. It is as if they see a door and they find thorn bush, and when they see a thorn bush, they think it's a door.

Are you seeing how these verses picture the coming rapture? Let's stand back and look at the whole scene as if it were the time before Christ's coming for us and compare what we see with how the Bible describes that glorious day when we are called home.

We saw how Peter describes the wickedness of the world which will receive God's judgment. In those verses, he told about the righteousness of Lot. The similarity between the state of Sodom and the world which our liberal progressive leaders are rushing us towards is completely evident.

The state that Sodom was in is the state of today's world. Later in that same epistle, Peter speaks about the destruction of the people he described and about the hope of the believer. Remember these concepts are made in comparison *to Sodom* before and after its destruction –

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” 2 Peter 3:10-13

In the time of wickedness which preceded destruction, Lot was physically snatched back through the door by the angels and rescued by them from the people's evil intent. This is exactly how Paul describes our coming rescue in 1 Thessalonians 4 –

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

The word Paul uses for “caught up” there is *harpagesometha*, or in its more recognizable form *harpazo*. It means to seize or carry off by force, or to snatch away. This is exactly the picture we were given when the angels in the house seized Lot and pulled him behind the door and into the presence of the Lord.

If you remember, after Lot was pulled to safety, the door was shut and no one could open it. All outside were excluded from safety. Now see how Jesus explains this same concept to the church of Philadelphia and the result of being left out of His safe protection, just as Sodom was –

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, |
‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”’: ⁸ “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹ Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” Revelation 3:7-11

There is an hour of trial coming upon the whole world and the world will be destroyed because of the wickedness of the people. But, we are promised safety from this, just as Lot was. Jesus’ own words promise to keep us out (Greek: *ek*) “out of” this hour of trial. There is deliverance from it because of our position in Him. Here is how Paul describes it in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 –

“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.”

-1 Thessalonians 5:5-10

We are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation through Christ. In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul explains the timing of this and what will occur *after* that moment. Listen carefully and see the amazing parallel to what occurred in Sodom.

“Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now

restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:5-8

Paul notes that the Restrainer will first be taken out of the way. This is the promise, the guarantee of the Holy Spirit. If we have the Holy Spirit as a guarantee, and He is taken and we are not, then that was not a very good guarantee. Rather, God is faithful to keep us safe *from* the coming tribulation period.

The next thing to notice is that it says in verse 8 that “...**then** the lawless one will be revealed.” This is speaking of the antichrist. If the antichrist is only revealed after the One who restrains is taken out of the way, then that means we will not know who the antichrist is.

So why watch a lot of nonsense videos that supposedly pinpoint who he is. They have always failed and they will continue to do so because our focus in the church is to be on Christ, not this person.

Further, if the signing of the peace deal with Israel, which is for seven years, is initiated by the antichrist, and if he is revealed after the rapture, and if the seven year peace deal is the seven years of tribulation mentioned in Revelation, all of which are doctrinally correct statements, then this shows with all certainty that the rapture is not post- or mid-tribulation, but pre-tribulation.

The fact that the antichrist is the one who signs the peace deal is succinctly laid out in Daniel 9 –

“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.” Daniel 9:27

If he “confirms a covenant with many for one week” and only in the middle of the week breaks the treaty, then this is speaking of the entire tribulation period. As we will not know who he is according to 2 Thessalonians 2:8, then this assures us of a pre-tribulation rapture.

And so let’s continue with Lot. He was pulled through the door to safety and only after that were the people given “blindnesses” or *sanveriim*. Remember how I explained it then. This was a mental or spiritual blindness, not a physical one. This is

exactly what Paul says will happen again. Here are the continued words of 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12 –

” And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

The world will be given a “strong delusion” so that they will believe the lie. They will look for the door and they will find a thorn bush. They will see a thorn bush and they will think it is the door... In reality, they will search for God and find the antichrist. They will see the antichrist and think he is God.

Further, both the Genesis type and the prophetic fulfillment from Paul’s hand mention the blindnesses as coming *after* the pulling to safety, not before. It is another indication of a pre-tribulation rapture. They were pulled through the door, and then blindness came.

And what is the door that Lot was pulled through? It was the same Door that we will be pulled through. Do you remember the verse I cited a few minutes ago? Just prior to the tribulation, in Revelation 4, as the church age is ending, John saw a Door opened in heaven.

As he looked a voice called out to him “come up here” into the presence of the Lord – just as Lot was pulled into the presence of the Lord. What door did he see? In John chapter 10, Jesus Himself explains what the Door in Sodom’s time was, and Who the Door in the future is –

“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” John 10:9, 10

The Door is Jesus, but behind the door is the Lord as well. In Genesis 19:18, *after* Lot was pulled to safety behind the door, it says *v’yomer Lot alehem al na Adonai* – “Then he said to them, no my Lord.” The word *adonai* means the Lord God. It indicated that not only were the two angels there, but the Lord was there as well. In type and in fulfillment, we will be snatched through the door and into the presence of the Lord – *prior* to the tribulation period.

II. The Transfer of Authority (Genesis 38:13-26)

¹³ And it was told Tamar, saying, “Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.” ¹⁴ So she took off her widow’s garments, covered *herself* with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which *was* on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she *was* a harlot, because she had covered her face. ¹⁶ Then he turned to her by the way, and said, “Please let me come in to you”; for he did not know that she *was* his daughter-in-law.

So she said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?”

¹⁷ And he said, “I will send a young goat from the flock.”

So she said, “Will you give *me* a pledge till you send *it*?”

¹⁸ Then he said, “What pledge shall I give you?”

So she said, “Your signet and cord, and your staff that *is* in your hand.” Then he gave *them* to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹ So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰ And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman’s hand, but he did not find her. ²¹ Then he asked the men of that place, saying, “Where is the harlot who *was* openly by the roadside?”

And they said, “There was no harlot in this *place*.”

²² So he returned to Judah and said, “I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this *place*.”

²³ Then Judah said, “Let her take *them* for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her.”

²⁴ And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she *is* with child by harlotry.”

So Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!”

²⁵ When she *was* brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “By the man to whom these belong, I *am* with child.” And she said, “Please determine whose these *are*—the signet and cord, and staff.”

²⁶ So Judah acknowledged *them* and said, “She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son.” And he never knew her again.

The next section for you today which clearly shows the dispensational model, and which shows us an implicit picture of a pre-tribulational rapture, is found in Genesis 38. It is the story of Judah and Tamar. It is a simple and remarkable story of the coming Christ, but it also shows us much more.

In this story, Judah is a picture of the Jewish people. Tamar is a picture of the Gentile-led church. Judah possessed the cord, staff, and signet, each which symbolizes the Person and authority of Christ. Judah however bargained this right away for the price of a harlot, something clearly seen in the spiritual harlotry of Israel when they sold off Christ at His first coming.

In agreement to the deal that was made, Tamar asked for a pledge until the payment was rendered. The word for pledge here is *eravon*. It indicates an earnest deposit. When the expected payment from Judah, which was a goat, was received then the earnest was to be returned.

This Hebrew word, *eravon*, which is used only three times in Old Testament, and all in this chapter, was later adopted by the traders of Greece and Rome. It is also used in the New Testament three times, all by Paul, *the apostle to the Gentiles*. Each time he states the *eravon* is our promised redemption, the sealing of the Holy Spirit. In the Bible, identical words between Hebrew and Greek are *most unusual* and yet this word was carried over, certainly so that we wouldn't miss the significance of what it is showing us. Here are all three examples from the NT for you to see the connection –

“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God,²² who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a **guarantee**.” 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22

“Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a **guarantee**.” 2 Corinthians 5:5

“In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13, 14

Each time this word is used, it is referring to the Holy Spirit. He **is** the security, given in hand, for the fulfillment of every promise which relates to our salvation and hope of eternal life. All who hold the pledge, and can so produce it, will be saved from condemnation and will be granted eternal life. This is the surety we have because of our pledge; the Holy Spirit. And this is what Judah's pledge represents.

The pledge consisted of his signet, cord, and staff representing Judah's identity, authority, and tribe. In type, they symbolize the Person and authority of Christ. This is

what Tamar asked for and what was granted to her. And this is what passed from the Jews to the Gentiles during this dispensation known as the Church Age.

By being the bearer of the Messiah, as Tamar was, and as the church now is, we share in His identity and His authority. The carrying of Christ, pictured by these implements went to Tamar. Tamar means “palm tree.” In the Bible, the palm symbolizes uprightness and righteousness, something applied to the redeemed of the church numerous times in Paul’s letters.

It is also what Lot was called as well. Are you seeing the connection? Christ! Our righteousness! So in this story we see at least a dispensational model, but how does it point to a pre-tribulation rapture? Because of where the word *eravon*, or pledge, is noted by Paul. Remember his words of Ephesians 1:13, 14-

“In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

As we saw in the previous section concerning Lot, if the guarantee is given and the Holy Spirit is taken out, and yet those who are sealed with the Spirit are not, then that is not a very good guarantee. Further, in picture, Judah received the signet, cord, and staff *back* all at one time when it was sent to him from Tamar.

There was no contact between them then, and the account says that there was no further contact between them in the future. In other words, the two dispensations do not overlap. The church age ends, and the symbols of Christ’s authority transfer back to the Jews. It is an implicit reference to a pre-tribulation rapture which is built on by other explicit references.

III. The Flock of Jethro (Exodus 3:1)

The next account is of Jethro’s flocks which is recorded in one verse in Exodus 3:1. In order to understand the context and the picture that is being made, we have to go back to an earlier point in Moses’ life and follow the events up to the time he tends to Jethro’s flock.

Moses, whose name means “He who draws out,” is a type of Christ. This is explicitly seen in Acts 7 during Stephen’s speech to the leaders of Israel. Just as the Hebrews challenged Moses’ authority in Exodus 2, the leaders of Israel challenged Jesus’ authority during His ministry among them.

After this occurred, Moses went to Midian and there took a Gentile Bride, Zipporah. Likewise, Jesus departed His people and also has taken a Gentile bride, pictured by Moses' marriage to Zipporah. He stayed there for a full forty years. EW Bullinger defines the meaning of forty in Scripture. Think of God's working through the church as I read it –

It “has long been universally recognized as an important number, both on account of the frequency of its occurrence, and the uniformity of its association with a period of *probation, trial, and chastisement*—(not *judgment*, like the number 9, which stands in connection with the punishment of enemies, but the chastisement of sons, and of a covenant people). It is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of *grace* (5), leading to and ending in *revival and renewal* (8). This is certainly the case where *forty* relates to a period of evident *probation*. But where it relates to *enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule*, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10, and in harmony with their signification.

In other words, the duration of the church age is perfectly summed up in the forty years that Moses spent in Midian. But there was a time for Moses to depart and go back to Egypt which is a picture of the fallen world.

When Moses goes back to Egypt, it will be to face off against a new Pharaoh. This individual is a type of the antichrist. The plagues which will come upon him, and upon Egypt, are only shadows and types of the parallel judgments which will come upon the world during the seven years of tribulation period.

In fact, they are a perfect mirror of what lies ahead, culminating in the swallowing of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and the casting of the antichrist alive into the Lake of Fire. However, before Moses returns to Egypt, there is the issue of the church, the flock of God, which needs to be dealt with. This is seen in just one verse of Exodus 3, and which we will now analyze.

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.” Exodus 3:1

Before this verse, there were beautiful patterns of history revealed in the first two chapters of Exodus. There was the time of Israel's rejection of Christ, just as Moses was rejected by his people. There was the Church Age after that, with the seven churches of that age being seen in the seven daughters of Reuel.

With the Church Age ending, we are seeing the time when God is getting ready to redeem Israel and bring them out of their place of hardship and bondage, leading

them into the kingdom age. Matthew Henry partly clued into this pattern when he said the following –

“The years of Moses’s life are remarkably divided into three forties; the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh’s court, the second a shepherd in Midian, the third a king in Jeshurun.” Matthew Henry

Israel has not been forgotten by Him, and their period of trial and testing after exile will come to an end. It is pictured in Moses’ next portion of life in which the call to that life begins to be seen now.

Christ is at this time in redemptive history our Good Shepherd, leading the flocks of the church from the Place of Judgment, pictured by Moses tending to flocks in Midian, which means exactly that – Place of Judgment. Moses is tending to the flocks, but immediately a new name is introduced – Jethro.

He is identified as Moses’ father-in-law and the priest of Midian. However, scholars debate as to whether this is the same man as Reuel or not. The term for “father-in-law” is also used to describe other marital relations, such as son-in-law, brother-in-law, etc.

Some argue that if Reuel was older when Moses married his daughter 40 years earlier, then this may be his son or nephew who has become the priest in his place. Without getting bogged down in that, what the account asks us to do is determine the meaning of his name, not really how he is now related to Moses.

Reuel means “Friend of God” and he was used to picture the corporate body of people from whom the collective church is derived. As the seven churches are the friends of God, they willingly invited Jesus into their home, just as Reuel willingly called Moses into his.

Now we have this new figure – or at least a new name, Jethro. This comes from the word *yatar* which means “to remain over,” or “to be at rest.” The HAW Theological Wordbook submits, “It refers to one portion of a quantity which has been divided. Generally it is the smaller part and sometimes it is the part of least quality.”

Therefore, Abarim translates the name Jethro as “remnant.” If Reuel was there to picture the time of the church age, then Jethro must be introduced for another reason. If the church age is ending and God is ready to restore Israel to its inherited place in redemptive history after the tribulation period, then this name must be tied to that.

This word *yatar*, from which Jethro is derived, is used in Ruth 2:18 concerning the food which Ruth had kept back for her mother-in-law Naomi. There it said, “So she brought out and gave to her what she **had kept back** after she had been satisfied.” That was a transfer of food from a Gentile to her Jewish mother-in-law. That story, if you know its meaning, showed Naomi as picturing Israel in captivity awaiting their restoration, which came at the end of the story. This word *yatar*, is also used in this set of verses from Ezekiel 39 –

“When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations,²⁸ then they shall know that I *am* the Lord their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, **and left none** of them captive any longer.²⁹ And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,’ says the Lord God.” Ezekiel 39:27-29

A study on this word time and again gives hidden clues of the return of Israel to the land and to its exalted place as chief among the nations in the end times. It is fitting then that the name Jethro is introduced after Reuel.

There is the church age, Reuel, and then there is the restoration of the remnant of God’s people, Israel – pictured by Jethro. Seemingly unimportant names actually bear directly on what is about to transpire and what will continue to occur, even thousands of years later. Every detail fits like a God-manufactured glove, perfectly aligning with His redemptive plan. Let’s now analyze Exodus 3:1 –

¹And he led the flock to the back of the desert,

The words “to the back of the desert” are *akhar ha’midbar*. *Akhar* means “behind” or “the following part.” It is also translated as “west” and this is how some versions translate it. The second word, *ha’midbar*, means “the desert.”

In the Hebrew way of dividing the points of the compass, if the east is before a person, the west then is behind him. The south would then be right and the north would be to the left. The east is a place of exile. When Adam was kicked out of the garden, it was to the east that the cherub was placed to guard against entry.

When the tabernacle was erected, cherubim were woven into the veil which then pointed east, symbolizing restricted entry into the Holy of Holies. When Moses died, he was buried east of Canaan as punishment for his transgression. And when Israel was exiled to Babylon, it was east.

¹ (con't) **and came to Horeb,**

Horeb is the same area as Sinai. The names are used to indicate the same place, but the words are selected to be used for different reasons when they are, in fact, used. Horeb means “Arid” or “Desert” which, interestingly, the same in meaning to Zion, the mountain of God, which in one sense means “Parched Place.”

¹(con't) **the mountain of God.**

In Hebrew, it says *el har ha'elohim* – “to mountain ‘the’ God.” The definite article is before “God” not “mountain.” This is showing us something and it is specific and particular. It is intended to show us that the flock is being taken to a specific location to worship the One true God.

Later, in chapter 4 of Exodus, it will say that Moses returns to Jethro, but the flock isn't mentioned. This is the first and last time it is referred to. What is that picturing? Before I explain it, I want to give the verse in Hebrew with a short commentary and translation from my Israeli friend, Sergio –

Ve-inhag et ha-tson ahar ha-midbar ve-yavo el har-ha'elohim horba – What's interesting is that the word *midbar* means word/mouth – for example *dabar elohim* (God's word). So the sentence could be read like this: And [he] drove the herd [of sheep] according to the words and [he] came to mountain of the God, Horeb. The dual meaning of the verse is showing us a picture of something. Abarim publications states the following concerning the roots of the word *dabar* – “These two root-verbs are really quite adjacent in Hebrew thought. Note that the word מדבר (*midbar*) means wilderness (or desert), and the related verb דבר (*dabar*) means to speak. When Paul augments Isaiah's spiritual armor, he adds the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God ... Words commonly protrude from one's mouth, and the mouth is typically a wet place, not a dry place. But it should be noted that the Meribah incident occurred at Horeb [the same place we are looking at right now – HOREB] (Exodus 17:6), “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.”

This may sound like way too much information, but the Hebrew is exact, and it is important. Let's look it over. The pictures have shown that Israel is in exile and it is now the Church Age. Suddenly, with almost no information in 40 years of Moses' life being noted, which is the church age, we come to the end of the 40 years. And now Moses is heading west with his flocks.

If east is exile and from whence comes destruction, and the flocks are being led west, then it is to a place of safety and from whence comes life. Horeb means “Arid” or “Desert,” just as Zion means “Parched Place.” It seems curious that the mountain of “the” God would be defined this way, but what is it that gives life? Water.

The word proceeds from the wet place, the mouth, and the Word of God is where the water of life issues from. Horeb is where the water from the rock came from. Paul in the New Testament says this about that account –

“...all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”

-1 Corinthians 10:3, 4

In the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Mount Zion (remember Zion means “Parched Place”), where does the water proceed from? From the throne of God and the Lamb! As Moses pictures Jesus, the prophetic explanation of this verse would translate it as, “And Christ drove the herd according to the word and came to the mountain of **the** God, even to Horeb.”

This one verse is *clearly* showing the transition from the Church Age to the time where Israel will be redeemed from Egypt, and it perfectly matches the words of 1 Thessalonians 4 concerning the end of the church age? Here is the passage –

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

This transition verse is given in type and picture to show the end of the Church Age at the rapture; at the word of the Lord. Without abusing the text, the Hebrew, or the concepts which permeate Scripture concerning Israel and the dispensational model, we can paraphrase the words, “And (Christ) drove the flock (the church) according to the word, and (they) came to the mountain of THE God, even the Parched Place, Zion.” Christ is calling us home to the Heavenly Mount Zion at the word of the Lord. We are going home!

Finally, as these events *preceded* the judgment on Egypt, all of which picture the seven-year tribulation period on earth described in Revelation, it is an anticipatory

look from 3500 years ago into a pre-tribulation rapture. The focus on Israel does not begin until *after* the flock of Jethro is first secured away. Once again, a pre-tribulation rapture is seen in these ancient types and pictures./

IV. The Day of the Lord

Our final picture of a pre-tribulation rapture today comes from a pattern which runs throughout Scripture. The 66-books of the Bible actually form a perfect circle of three concentric circles. Each inner circle forms spokes, just as you would have on a wheel. Each spoke is based on a letter of the Hebrew aleph-bet. There are 22 spokes which divide the 66 books of the Bible, and therefore, there are three books on each spoke. These spokes form marvelous patterns between the books on each spoke.

In fact, the number of patterns which runs through them is almost infinite. The 8th spoke, corresponding to the Hebrew letter *khet*, which has the meaning of “outside,” “divide,” etc. contains the book of Ruth, Amos, and 1 Thessalonians. A pre-tribulation rapture becomes evident in this spoke containing these books.

As I noted earlier, in Ruth there was a transfer of food from a Gentile to her Jewish mother-in-law. Naomi pictured Israel in captivity awaiting their restoration. This came at the end of the story. Before that occurred, the hero of the story, Boaz, married Ruth. In both type and picture, he prefigures Christ.

After the marriage of Boaz to Ruth in verse 13, Ruth is not mentioned again in the story. The focus goes back solely to Naomi, picturing Israel who was in captivity and is now receiving back her proper place. The child who is born to the marriage is Obed. The final clause of verse 17 says, “And they called his name Obed.”

The name the women of the city called out for this wonderful child is Obed. It is tied to the fact that he is Naomi’s son and to the fact that he is, in fact, a son. And so they call him Obed, which means “Servant.” What does his being Naomi’s son have to do with him being a servant?

This is what confounds people, but the answer comes from the account itself. Just three verses earlier, as soon as it was said that Ruth was given conception and bore a son, the women said, “Blessed *be* the Lord, who has not left you this day without a close relative, (meaning a redeemer); and may his name be famous in Israel!”

In the very next verse, it says, “...may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age.” The son *is* the close relative, the *goel*, who is Naomi’s redeemer. He *is* the one who will be the restorer of life and the nourisher of her. He will be a servant to her and so they called him Obed.

All of this transpired *after* the marriage of Boaz to Ruth. It pictures Christ's return to Israel as their Redeemer. But how does this show a pre-tribulation rapture? It does it by the position of the book of Ruth in the order of the Bible. As I said earlier, the books of Ruth, Amos, and 2 Thessalonians are all on the 8th spoke of the wheel. Ruth ends with only four chapters. However, in both Amos 5 and 1 Thessalonians 5, the focus is on the Day of the Lord. The taking of the bride is found in both Ruth 4 and in 1 Thessalonians 4. Only after that is the Day of the Lord introduced in 1 Thessalonians 5. The pattern reveals what God has done and what He will do.

Only after the Gentile woman becomes a bride does the Day of the Lord come. And as this Day of the Lord is only after the revealing of the antichrist, and as the antichrist is revealed only after the taking out of the *eravon*, the guarantee, the Holy Spirit... then we can be assured of a pre-tribulation rapture.

The patterns are consistent, and they permeate Scripture. We don't need to be confused by varying interpretations of a few New Testament verses which are twisted to suit the preferences of one choice of doctrine or another. Instead, God has shown us in *Old Testament* types and pictures where our proper theology stands. This is true with every major doctrine of the Bible, including that of eschatology. Within the doctrine of eschatology, the rapture is clearly defined by these ancient types as well. Today we've looked at just four of them. But there are others waiting for you to see. They are put on display as an assurance of our blessed hope... the return of Christ for His church.

You see, everything points to Jesus – Old Testament and New. All people are either moving toward the Door or they are alienated from it. There is a spiritual blindness which covers the eyes of the people of the world, but when we call out to Jesus, the blindness is replaced with sight; darkness is replaced with light; condemnation is replaced with salvation; and death is replaced with life.

If our eyes are opened to Christ, we become a part of His flock and we are set on a wonderful path, heading west once again to the land of delight that was lost so long ago. There is a time of evil coming upon the whole world and when the call is made for the righteous to come home to glory, there will only be suffering and death for those left behind.

It is Jesus who holds the keys to life and death in His hands. We have a choice to make before that great day of wrath comes and I hope and pray you will make the right one before it arrives. If you have never called on Christ and asked Him to save you from this terrible time which lies ahead, let me tell you how you can do it, even today... even right now.

Closing Verse: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” Titus 2:11-14*