

Letters to the Churches

Letter to Sardis: The Dead Church

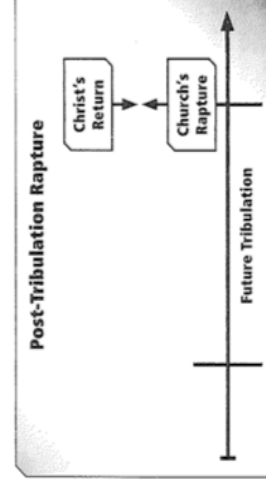
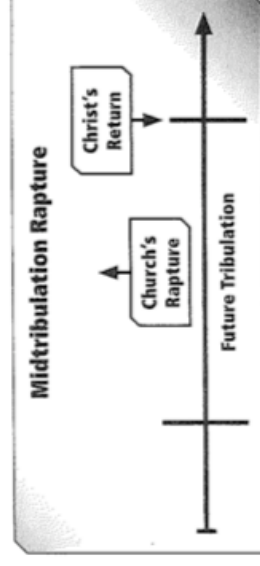
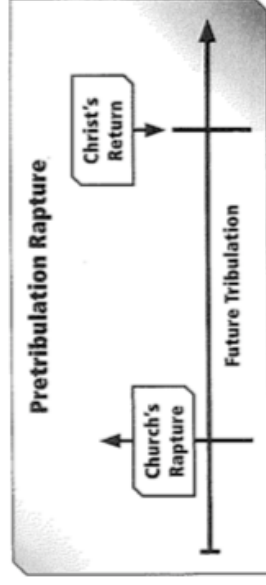
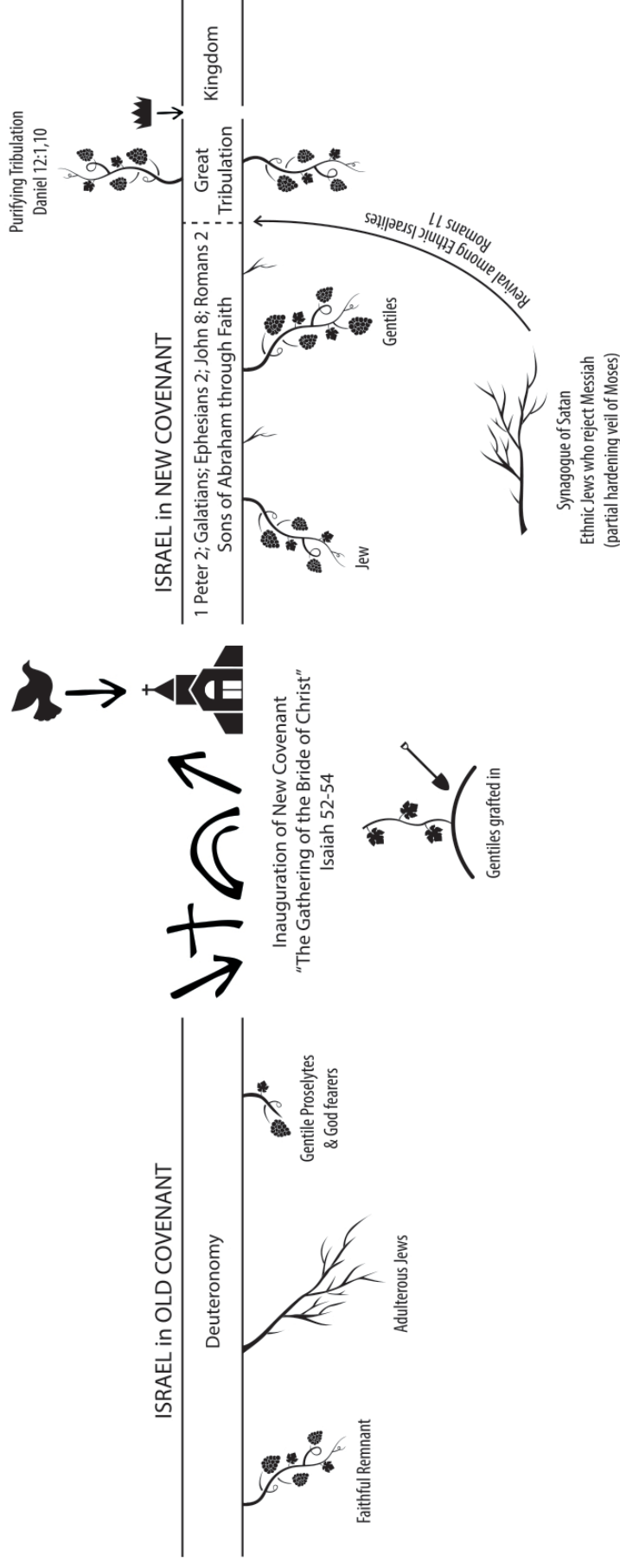
<i>Revelation</i>	Christ possesses the Holy Spirit and is sovereign over the leaders of the church.
<i>The Situation</i>	They are a dead church whose works are not complete and will be judged. A few are faithful.
<i>Warning</i>	Jesus will come like a thief to judge the “church”. cf. Rev. 16:1-15; Matt. 24:36-25:13
<i>Hope</i>	The one who conquers’ name is secure in the book of life and will be clothed in white garments, vindicated by Christ himself before the Father. cf. Rev. 6:11, 7:14, 19:8, 20:11-15
<i>Takeaway</i>	<i>Be warned: the good news of the gospel is not an “easy believism” message and participation in church merits no part of your eternal salvation.</i>

Letter to Philadelphia: The Faithful Church

<i>Revelation</i>	Christ the King of the Kingdom of God. cf. Isa. 22:20-22
<i>The Situation</i>	Small, faithful church with unique evangelistic opportunity even though they are being persecuted by the local Jewish population.
<i>Warning</i>	No warning; Christ gives hope of future restoration of ethnic Israel and protection from the wrath of God, sustaining them through the wrath of Satan. cf. Rom. 11:25-27; Rev. 8:13-9:21, Ch. 12-14.
<i>Hope</i>	The one who conquers will be fixed in the eternal dwelling place of God. cf. Rev. 21:1-22:6
<i>Takeaway</i>	<i>Be grounded in your position in the Kingdom, steadfast in trials, and zealous in your witness.</i>

Letters to Laodicea: The Useless Church

<i>Revelation</i>	Christ is the trustworthy and faithful witness who created the world. cf. Isa. 65:1-16
<i>The Situation</i>	Their lukewarm works were deadly. Cold and hot works would have brought refreshment and healing to others. They were committing injustice with a foolish attitude that stemmed from their love of money. cf. Rev. 17-18; Eze. 16
<i>Warning</i>	Jesus is disgusted with their works and will spew them from his mouth, yet he gives them opportunity to repent and believe in him, trading their worthlessness for his worthiness that he might dine with them. cf. Isa. 1, Rev. 19:1-10
<i>Hope</i>	The one who conquers will execute Christ’s justice in his Kingdom, partially today and fully in the Millennial Kingdom. cf. Isa. 2:1-5, 1 Cor. 6:3, Rev. 20:1-6
<i>Takeaway</i>	<i>You cannot serve both God and money. Serve the Lord by doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with your God. Use your wealth to store up treasures for yourself in heaven.</i>



But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. (Titus 3:9 ESV)

¹⁶ *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.* ¹⁸ *Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, ESV)*

Whether Christ takes us before, during, or after, we are to encourage one another with the promise of the rapture and patiently endure any suffering that comes our way, trusting in his faithfulness, and looking forward to his return. The point is not to be shielded from suffering or the wrath of Satan, but the wrath of God.