

A World Woefully Unprepared for the Coming Pre-Tribulation Rapture

by Jim Dodge

Part 1 - Introduction and Insight from the Old Testament

As the appearance and convergence of all the end time signs prophesied in Scripture becomes unmistakably clear and the imminent return of Christ the Messiah to claim His bride at the rapture of the church draws near, true believers need to seriously consider what the Bible tells us about these times and how to prepare for this incredible “one time in history” event. Today, the world is oblivious to what is coming, which is precisely what the Bible predicts (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4, 2 Peter 3:1-7). Peter was clear that as the ‘day of the Lord’ draws near, “...*scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires...*” Importantly, no one describes the time of His return better than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: “*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. This is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man*” (Matthew 24:38-39). Not surprisingly, as the Rapture part of Christ’s Second Coming draws near, some well-meaning but optimistic predictions are being made about who and how many “living believers” will be taken when Christ returns to claim His bride.

One speculation about the number to be raptured is in Dr. David Reagan’s excellent **Judgment in Jehoshaphat** article published in the May-June 2019 Lamplighter Magazine. In the section of the article titled, *Unparalleled Violence* it states: “These are mind-blowing statistics that we need to pause to consider: (1) The current population of the world is 7 billion, (2) Let’s assume that 1 billion are taken out in the Rapture leaving a total of 6 billion.” The statement that 1 billion will be taken out at the Rapture is, indeed, a “mind-blowing number”, but is it true? If so, then about one of every seven people alive on earth (14%) would be taken in the Rapture.

Another claim, made in Part 1 of the 2019 DVD, **APOCALYPSES -The Final Warning**, is that “Every single child on the planet has disappeared.” Wow! Is this true? At any given point in history about 10% of the world’s population (about 700 million today) is children under the age of ten. Is there Scriptural evidence to support the **Apocalypses** claim that all children will be raptured?

In a Rev310 article by Pete Garcia titled: “**The Last Days According to Everyone**” <https://rev310.com/2019/08/the-last-days-according-to-everyone-2>, Garcia estimates that in a world of 7 billion people, those with religious beliefs consist of Islam – 1.6 billion, Hinduism – 1 billion, Buddhism – 375 million, Roman Catholic -1.6 billion, Protestant Christianity – 700 million, and Evangelical Christianity – 100-300 million. The remaining 1.1 billion are atheist/agnostic/ or have no religious beliefs.

Garcia separates the 2.5 billion “Christians” into two groups and says “... that Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches (2.2 billion) generally (but not all) advocate the same type of eschatological views. The long term view is Amillennial, and their practical day to day view is Dominionist. Both of these support repeated attempts at creating a theocratic rule by the Church, and, neither of these groups believes in, has any expectation of or preaches about a pre-tribulation Rapture.” He then states that “Evangelical Christianity (100-300 million) is a subset within the broader scope of

what we would call, Christendom. It presents the most exclusive views on salvation as being solely based on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of the exclusivity and nature of our salvation, Evangelicalism is also the least likely to embrace religious ecumenicalism as well as having the most cataclysmic view (in terms of consequential eschatological views) out of all the world’s belief systems.”

Later in the same article, after making the distinction between Evangelicals and the rest of Christendom, Garcia makes the following statement: *“The Rapture of the Church would immediately remove an estimated 10-20% of the world-wide population.”* Ten to twenty percent of the global population equates to between 700 million and 1.4 billion people. This means that of an estimated global population of 2.5 billion “Christians”, (90+% of whom either don’t know about, believe in or outright reject a pre-tribulation rapture), one to two out of every three living “Christians” or between 30-56% of the world’s Christian population is projected to be raptured. This is a surprisingly large number because in Garcia’s recent Rev310 **“Come and See”** article, he says this about the non-Evangelical part of the church regarding the Rapture: “Some of the most visceral comments (about the Rapture) you will find, come not from the atheist or the Christian skeptic crowd, but come from other Christian’s. Most unbelievers equate God to the 'Flying Spaghetti Monster' and reserve sarcasm for all eschatological views fairly equally. But it's the 'Christian', particularly those of the Reformed/Covenantal/Hebrew/Roots/Amillennial/Preterist/Pre-Wrath/Post-Trib crowd who really, really hate the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Even more hated still, is the Dispensationalist...Gasp!”

If Garcia’s statements regarding the distinction between Evangelicals and the rest of the Christendom are true, and I believe they are, and Evangelicals make up less than 10% of the world’s population of 2.5 billion Christians, then it is unclear how the pre-trib rapture experts cited above can conclude that one or more of every seven people alive on the planet will be raptured. Below is what their estimates mean:

Event	Source	Number Raptured	Portion of Population Raptured
Rapture	Dr. Reagan estimate:	1 billion total	1 out of every 7
Rapture	Apocalyses estimate:	1+ billion children & adults	1 out of every 4-6
Rapture	Pete Garcia estimate:	700 million to 1.4 billion total	1 out of every 5-10

Combined, these numbers reveal that an estimated: **1 billion people, 1 out of 7 or 14% of the global population will be raptured.**

In this paper, we will compare the above projections with updated demographic data and with what Scripture reveals to see if these estimates for the Rapture are true. My suspicion is, they are not only high, but significantly higher than what Scripture reveals. But first, let’s address the experts’ 14% estimate by taking a more refined look at Pete Garcia’s demographic data and focus on the population of Christians most likely to be raptured when Christ returns for His Church.

Updated Demographics

A 2001 Barna study titled: **Religious Beliefs Vary Widely by Denomination** revealed that only 9% of adult American Christians were considered to be Evangelical. This group was thought to have the

strongest Christian World View, being most likely to believe that Jesus will return to this earth again, although a specific question about Christ’s return was not part of the survey. Even so, 9% is in line with Garcia’s assessment that less than 10% of the world’s Christians are Evangelical. The 2001 study also revealed that the American population of Christians was shrinking, along with the percentage considered to be Evangelical. The table below shows the percentage of Evangelicals by denomination in 2000 when the American Christian population exceeded 170 million:

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>% estimated to be Evangelical</u>
Assemblies of God	33%
Non-denominational Protestant	29
Pentecostal	27
Baptist	14
Church of Christ	12
Lutheran/Methodist	5
Presbyterian	4
Catholic/Episcopal/Mormon	1

The most notable number in the table relates to the largest population of American Christians, Roman Catholics, of whom only 1% are considered to be evangelical. This is because Catholics believe in a “works” based salvation and hold the Amillennial view that Jesus is not coming back, at least anytime soon, as Garcia indicates. But, Catholic beliefs are the same throughout the world, not just in America. Thus, if only one percent of the 1.6 billion worldwide Catholics who make up 65% of the global Christian population is considered to be evangelical (about 16 million), how is it possible for 1 billion to be raptured out of a world population of 7 billion as the prophecy experts predict?

In 2019, the Barna estimate for Evangelical Christians declined from 9% in 2000 to 6% today. For the moment, let’s assume that 100% of the global Evangelical population represents those most likely to be raptured. Let’s also assume the global Protestant Christian population of about 900 million remained constant between 2000 and 2020 (which it hasn’t), and apply Barna’s percentages for Evangelicals to each period to determine roughly how many in the global Christian population might potentially be raptured:

2000 - 9% of 900 million = 81 million + 16 million Catholic Evangelicals = 97 million raptured

2020 - 6% of 900 million = 54 million + 16 million Catholic Evangelicals = **70 million** raptured

This means that if Evangelicals represent the most likely population to be taken, and the Rapture were to happen in 2020, only about **70 million, 1 out of 100, or about 1% of the global population would likely be raptured.**

While this is a rough estimate, the question is: “Which number comes closest to representing the actual population of believers destined to be raptured: 70 million or 1 billion?” It’s a huge difference and an important consideration because, if the 1 billion estimate made by the prophecy experts is in error, it’s not hard to imagine how a significant number of uninformed Christians might take false comfort in the pending Rapture while doing nothing to prepare for this imminent event; when

nothing could be further from the truth. In going forward with the analysis, Table 1 below will be expanded as relevant estimates derived from Scripture and additional demographics refine our estimate for the population most likely to be raptured.

Table 1 –Estimates of the Raptured Population

Source	Number Raptured	Ratio Raptured	Percent Raptured
1. Prophecy Experts	1 billion	1 out of 7	14%
2. Updated Demographics	70 million	1 out of 100	1%

What can we learn about the Rapture from the Old Testament?

The numbers above are based on demographic and census data and expert opinion. Even so, Scripture provides excellent insight concerning numbers that can be quite illuminating when applied in the proper context and by making conservative, Bible-based assumptions. Before turning our attention to what the Bible specifically says about numbers relating to the Rapture, let’s compare those predicted by the prophecy experts with numbers from a major Old Testament event that demonstrates the importance of analyzing numbers from Scripture in their proper context.

In his Study Bible notes on Genesis 6:1, Dr. Henry Morris indicates that “based on longevity, ideal environmental conditions and long periods of parental productivity, by the time of the global Flood (1,656 years after the Creation), the world population could have reached well over 10 trillion people.” For our purpose, especially since Jesus tells us in Matthew 24 that the Second Coming will be like it was in the days of Noah, the global Flood should provide a solid Biblical example of the numbers to expect for the Rapture if properly analyzed. For the sake of comparison with today’s global population of 7 billion, we will assume a global population of 7 billion for the Noahic Flood. Scripture is clear in Genesis 7:23 that all living humans on the earth perished in the Flood except the eight souls saved in the ark. This means that the eight souls who survived the Flood equate to about 1 out of every 850 million people on the planet being saved in the flesh. It should be clear that this number cannot be used in the same context with Rapture numbers because it compares souls saved in the flesh from the Flood with souls who will be saved in both the flesh and the spirit at the Rapture. The Bible does not specifically address a number for those who died in the flesh in the Flood but who were saved in the spirit, except for Noah.

We should keep in mind that God, the Creator, can redeem, transform, translate, transfigure, resurrect, or rapture souls, in the flesh, in the spirit, or both, at His will and for His purposes. He alone knows the hearts of men and it is only by His amazing grace that anyone is saved: *And those God foreknew he also predestined... And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified (Romans 8:30)*. The requirements for salvation in the Old and New Testaments differ on one major point: In the Old Testament, righteousness (salvation) derived from belief in, trust in and obedience to God (the Lord) whereas in the New Testament, belief in and commitment of one’s life to Jesus Christ is the sole and exclusive requirement for Salvation.

Before analyzing four significant Old Testament “escape from God’s wrath” events that may shed light on rapture numbers, we will define the terms “saved in the flesh” and “saved in the spirit” for the analysis that follows:

- Saved in the Flesh - Physical salvation in the flesh from death
- Saved in the Spirit - Spiritual salvation of righteous believers after physical death
- Saved in the Flesh and Spirit – Joint physical & spiritual salvation (the Rapture)
- Saved Innocents – Physical death before the age of accountability but spiritually saved
- Unsaved - Physical and spiritual death – consigned to the torment side of Hades

I want to address the issue of “the innocents” (children under the age of accountability and the mentally handicapped) for a moment because the **Apokalypses** DVD claims that “all the children on the planet will disappear” at the Rapture of the church. Nowhere in Scripture are we told that children will be raptured. It is clear from many passages that only believers in Jesus Christ will be raptured and, most children are not believers in Christ. This will be discussed in more detail in sections to follow. Even so, there are large numbers of innocents who died, both naturally and violently, throughout Bible history, including in the “wrath of God” events about to be considered, that must be accounted for. As Scripture makes clear in 2 Samuel 12:23, Matthew 18:3 and 19:14, every child who dies between conception and the age of accountability is saved spiritually in Jesus Christ and will be resurrected and glorified in the final part of the first resurrection after the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:5).

For the Old Testament events to be considered, estimates of the number of innocents are required. Jewish tradition holds that the age of accountability is 13, at a boy’s Bar Mitzvah. The Bible has two references to a possible age for the innocent. The first is in Numbers 14:29-33: When Israel rebelled against God, they were consigned to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all who were 20 years and older died. In this case, the innocents were those aged 19 and under who God allowed to live and to enter the Promised Land. In Jonah 4:11, God spared Nineveh, in part, because 120,000 innocents in the city did not know their right hand from their left. This implies that the innocents of Nineveh were under the age of ten. Thus, we have three possible ages: 19, 13, and less than 10 to consider. For our population estimates, we will conservatively define the population of innocents to be those younger than 10 years of age. As previously indicated, about 10% of the world population is age 10 or less, so ten percent will be applied to the mass population events that follow to account for innocents.

The other unknown and the one this paper is attempting to determine for the Rapture is, how many people who die in mass population events are actually saved in the spirit? If we use the 1 billion raptured projection estimated by the prophecy experts, then about 14% of a given population could potentially be saved in the spirit. If we use the Barna adjusted number based on the global Evangelical population (70 million), then about 1% or less of a given population are assumed to be saved in the spirit. For the analysis, we will conservatively start by using 1% of the total population to estimate the number who die in the flesh that may be spiritually saved, then adjust the number as evidence dictates.

What does the Bible reveal about mass “Wrath of God” events?

The four Old Testament “Wrath of God” events are the global Flood (Gen 6-9), Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19), Rahab’s faith at Jericho (Josh 2, 6:25) and Jonah at Nineveh (Jonah 3-4).

1. The Noahic Flood (Gen 6-9)

The Noahic flood provides important insight about God’s salvation plan that extends beyond just Noah and his family being saved in the flesh. Scripture reveals why Noah was saved by God. *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God” (Gen 6:8-9)*. Noah’s family: wife, sons, and their wives were saved in the ark solely because of Noah’s righteousness, not because of anything Scripture reveals about them. *“And the Lord said unto Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation’” (Genesis 7:1)*.

Noah was saved both in the flesh and in the spirit from the flood. We know for certain that when Noah died in the flesh (at the age of 950 years), his soul went to the paradise side of the abode of the dead (Hades) where he would remain until Christ would come, after dying on the cross, to translate all the Old Testament saints from the Paradise side of Hades into Heaven.

The Bible reveals nothing about the spiritual salvation of the rest of Noah’s family, even though assumptions can be made, especially about Shem. But for this analysis, we will focus on the irrefutable numbers from Scripture. Thus, of the eight souls saved in the flesh from the Flood, only one soul, Noah, is revealed in Scripture to have been righteous and saved in the Spirit.

What can we know about the rest of the souls who died in the flesh in the Flood? *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5)*. This verse tells us that the wickedness of man was ‘great’ in the earth, but it wasn’t total or complete, even though all living humans except those on the ark died in the Flood (Gen 7:21). We know that not all flesh (100%) was wicked because Noah was clearly righteous as, no doubt, were some in Noah’s family and other unnamed descendants of Adam, Eve, Abel, Seth and Enoch who would have been alive at the time of Flood. *“And to Seth, to him also there was born a son, and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen 4:26)*. This verse implies that there was a population of those who died in the flesh in the Flood, but was saved in the spirit. Using a world population of 7 billion at the time of the Flood, it’s not hard to imagine thousands, hundreds of thousands or, even millions who believed in the Lord and died in the flesh in the Flood, yet were saved in the spirit. We must remember that God’s purpose was to destroy all flesh in the Flood, but He also had to preserve life in order for the earth to be re-populated. To do this He only needed one righteous man, Noah, and his family, along with two of every air-breathing bird and animal, preserved in the ark. Thus, it’s quite likely that a significant number of adults who died in the flesh were saved in the spirit. Even so, because the Bible is silent on who might have been saved in the spirit and, only God knows the hearts of those who perished, we will conservatively assume that less than 1% (<70 million) of the Flood population who died in the flesh were saved in spirit.

We know from Scripture that all the ‘Innocents’ who died in the Flood were saved in the spirit and that, today, their spiritual souls reside in heaven with all the innocents who perished in the flesh throughout history. We will assume that 10% (700 million) of the world population were innocents who perished in the Flood. Based on the above combination of facts and conservative assumptions, the numbers for the Flood might be as follows:

- Total Flood Population est. 7 billion
- Number saved in the Flesh (in the ark) **8***

- Number in the ark saved in the Flesh and Spirit **1**** (Noah)
- Number of adults who perished, but saved in the spirit est. 70 million
- Number of Innocents who perished, but saved in the Spirit est. 700 million
- Number of Unsaved souls who perished in Flesh and Spirit est. 6.2 billion

* Actual numbers from Scripture in Bold

** More than 1 of the eight saved in the flesh were likely saved in the Spirit

2. Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 19)

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is preceded by one of the more remarkable passages in Scripture. Abraham's intercessory prayer in Genesis 18:16-33 makes clear that God alone knows the hearts of men. Abraham's prayer should be a warning for all of us to not presume to know who is righteous and who is not. This model intercessory prayer appeals to God's righteous character and His loving kindness as the basis for Abraham's request. Abraham thought he knew 10 righteous people in Sodom (Lot, his wife, two unmarried sons, two unmarried daughters, two married daughters and their husbands – Gen 19:12-14) and he sought to spare the city for the sake of these ten supposedly righteous souls. God granted his request. But Abraham did not realize that most of Lot's family was tainted by the city's wickedness, so he stopped his intercession request at ten.

As with the Flood population, we must estimate the population of Sodom and Gomorrah, so for the analysis, let's assume a combined population of 5,000 for both cities and that approximately 10% or 500 were children (innocents). Based on Abraham's intercessory prayer we know for certain that the number of righteous souls in the two cities before they were destroyed was less than ten. Thus, at least 4,500 unsaved souls perished and descended to the 'Torment' side of Hades when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. All the children (innocents) perished in the flesh but would have been saved in the spirit and their souls translated to the 'Paradise' side of Hades. Lot, his wife and two youngest daughters were brought forth by the Lord's angels and set outside the city before the destruction. But, after being told by the angels to "look not behind them" as they made their escape to the nearby town of Zoar, Lot's wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:16,26).

Based on what Scripture reveals, Lot was most likely the only righteous soul to be saved in both flesh and spirit from God's wrath at Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:8). Lot's wife was saved in the flesh from God's wrath on the two cities, but by looking back, she disobeyed the Lord's command and she died in the flesh. Some commentaries presume that she looked back "seeking to cling to her luxurious life in Sodom." If true, then her soul was not saved in the spirit. There is the possibility that, as a mother, she might have looked back, yearning for her four lost children, who were dying in Sodom's destruction. Would a mother do likewise today? In this case, it's possible that she died in the flesh for her disobedience but could have been saved in the spirit. Only God knows, so we will assume she was not saved in the spirit. Lot's two daughters were saved in the flesh from Sodom, but later, both committed incest with their father to preserve his "seed". Nowhere in Scripture are we told they repented or became righteous, so we must conclude that Lot's daughters were probably not saved in

the spirit. Based on an estimated population of 5,000 for Sodom and Gomorrah, the numbers of souls saved and unsaved would be as follows: Sodom & Gomorrah

- Total Population of Sodom & Gomorrah est. 5,000
- Souls saved in the flesh **3** (Lot & daughters)
- Souls saved in spirit and flesh **1** (Lot)*
- Innocents who died in the flesh, but saved in the spirit est. 500
- Unsaved Souls who died in flesh and spirit est. 4,500

*Number could be off by one or two

3. Rahab at Jericho (Josh 2, 6) -

Jericho was a pagan city. It was accursed by the Lord and everything in it was to be utterly destroyed: “...both man and woman, young and old and ox, and sheep and ass with the edge of the sword” (Joshua 6:21). This meant that all alive in the city would die in the flesh and none except the innocents in the city would be saved in the spirit. The Bible is silent on the population of Jericho at the time of Joshua although excavations reveal that the area of the city encompassed by the inner wall was about 6 acres and the area encompassed by the outer wall was 9 acres. Estimates are that the population of Jericho for an area this size would have been several thousand and it could have been as many as 5,000, including the people from the surrounding area who sought protection inside the walled city from the invading Hebrews. We will use a population of 5,000 for Jericho in the analysis.

Rahab’s faith and belief in the Lord at Jericho is a remarkable story. Living in a pagan culture, Rahab revealed to the two Hebrew spies what had happened at the Red Sea and to the kings east of the Jordan, confessing that the Lord of Israel had given Jericho into their hands. After proclaiming that “...the Lord your God, he is God of Heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Joshua 2:11), Rahab made the spies swear that they “... will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brothers and sisters and all who belong to them, and deliver us from death” (Joshua 2:13). In exchange for her kindness, the spies agreed to her request. Rahab’s family, who were physically saved in the flesh, may have numbered between 10 and 15. Rahab’s faith and belief in the God of Israel, not only saved her and her family in the flesh, but Rahab was saved in the spirit and, she became the great grandmother of David (Matthew 1:5, Hebrews 11:31). Below are the estimates for those saved and unsaved at Jericho based on a population of 5,000:

- Total Population of Jericho est.5,000
- Souls saved in the flesh **10-15**
- Souls saved in spirit and flesh **1*** (Rahab)
- Innocents who died in the flesh/saved in the spirit est. 500
- Unsaved Souls who died in flesh and spirit est. 4,500

* One or more of Rahab’s family could have been saved in the Spirit before dying in the flesh.

4. Jonah and Nineveh (Jonah 1-4)

This is the only story in the Bible where a city with a large pagan population was saved in the flesh, but where every soul who was saved from God's wrath would eventually perish in both the flesh and spirit. God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against the city "*...for their wickedness is come up before me*" (Jonah 1:2). The story is well known. Jonah eventually arrived at the "*...exceedingly great city of three days journey ... and he cried, and said, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown'*" (Jonah 3:3-4). Incredibly, the people of Nineveh "*...believed God.*" A fast was proclaimed for the whole city and everyone participated, from the greatest to the least. "*And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that He said that He would do unto them, and He did it not*" (Jonah 3:10). Jonah was greatly displeased that God spared the city. But God said, "*And should I not spare that great city, wherein are more than one hundred twenty thousand persons (innocents) who cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand...*" (Jonah 4:11).

If we assume that 10% (120,000) of the population of Nineveh were the innocents, then the total population of Nineveh may have exceeded 1.2 million people. When God spared the city from destruction, all 1.2 million were saved in the flesh. But the Ninevites soon returned to their wickedness and evil ways. Since there was no witnessing, follow-up, revival or turning to God by the people after their repentance, the children of Nineveh who were saved from God's wrath as innocents, grew up to become adults. Eventually, all 1.2 million souls who were saved in the flesh at Nineveh would die in both flesh and spirit. The numbers for Nineveh are a sad testimony of what happens to a people or nation who once knew the one true God, yet completely rejected His saving grace:

○ Total population of Nineveh	est. 1.2 million
○ Total population of Innocents	120,000
○ Total population saved in the flesh (repented/fasted)	est. 1.2 million
○ Population of those saved in flesh and spirit	0
○ Population of those who died in flesh and spirit	est. 1.2 million

There are several important takeaways from these Old Testament examples of God's wrath involving mass populations.

1. God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever, and only He knows and judges the hearts of men.

2. The Bible reveals only three adults to be righteous who survived the four events: Noah, Lot, and Rahab were saved in the flesh and in the spirit after they died in the flesh. Scripture is silent about the spiritual condition of the others in Noah's, Lot's, and Rahab's families. But even if all twenty or so family members were eventually saved spiritually, their number represents a minuscule part of the total population involved in the event.

3. A rapture-related issue of concern is: How many adults would have been saved in the flesh had God chose to save all living righteous from the Flood? Scripture is silent about this number just as it

is about the number who will be saved in the spirit (and flesh) at the Rapture. If Christ's return at the rapture will be like it was in the days of Noah, are the Prophecy experts, who believe that 14% of the world population will be raptured, able to support a similar case for those who died in the Flood but were spiritually saved? For now, we will assume that 1% is closer to the truth than 14% and that 70 million or fewer who died in the Flood were saved spiritually.

4. While the age of accountability is not known (it may not be a fixed age), God spiritually saves all innocents who die before a certain age. Ten percent or more of the Flood population could have been innocents so it is reasonable to assume that 700 million or more innocents died in the Flood but were saved spiritually. This issue is not normally addressed, but three of the four Old Testament events have a significant number of innocents who die in the flesh but are saved in the spirit. This has been true throughout history. Nowhere in the Bible is it suggested or even implied that innocents will be treated differently by God in the Tribulation than in other "wrath of God" events. Jesus said: "...*suffer the little children to come to me... for of such is the kingdom of God*" (Matthew 19:14). Innocents who die in the flesh during the Tribulation will go to heaven in the spirit. Based on the ten percent estimate used in the four events, it should be clear that God has a heart for children because today, innocents must make up a vast percentage of the heavenly population. If we assume 90% of all conceptions throughout history resulted in a human soul who reached the age of accountability and the ten percent who didn't survive are the innocents who populate heaven, it's not hard to imagine how there must be billions upon billions of innocent souls in heaven. In the U.S., more than 60 million innocents have been murdered in the womb since 1973. In China during the same period, the number is likely in the hundreds of millions. Therefore, the number of innocent souls in heaven today must be truly significant. God has taken care of the innocents since the beginning and He will do so during the Tribulation.

Despite these numbers, some children will be raptured. Dr. David Reagan, in his book "**The Rapture: Fact or Fiction?**" concludes: "(1) Children who die before the age of accountability go to heaven. (2) When God pours out His wrath, children are not saved in the flesh (3) God does provide special protection from His wrath for the children of believers." I agree with these conclusions, especially the third point. God will not leave the minor children of raptured believers on this earth to face His wrath in the Tribulation, thus they will be raptured. I would add that there will be a small but identifiable number of children who come to know the Lord before the age of accountability, either through a Sunday school (especially confirmation class) or evangelical Christian school program, teaching by a relative or through ministries like Samaritan Purse's Operation Christmas Child, for example. Even so, the number of children to be raptured does not notably impact the overall Rapture estimate, which is focused on adults.

What can be learned from Rapture-Related Events in Scripture?

Scripture reveals four rapture or rapture-like events: Enoch (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5, Jude 14) and Elijah (2 Kings 2) in the Old Testament and Paul (2 Corinthians 12:2-3) and John (Revelation 4:1-2) in the New Testament. Paul and John both returned to earth in their mortal bodies after their experiences, so their raptures were not like the coming event since no one taken in the coming Rapture will return to earth in a mortal body. Enoch and Elijah were raptured in a similar manner to what happens at the Rapture. In all four cases, these men were the most righteous of the righteous and

completely committed their lives to God when they were raptured.

Two important revelations derive from these individual Rapture experiences. The first, as noted above, is that all four men were true believers, fully committed to God at the time of their Rapture. They are the only four mortal souls out of billions who ever lived to be taken to heaven alive. The rarity of these events and the commitment to God by the four who were raptured implies, at the very least, that the number raptured when Christ returns may be significantly less if the standard established by these examples is maintained. It should be clear that Christians must both believe in the coming rapture and be well prepared when it happens if they don't want to be left behind.

Second, little is revealed about Enoch's rapture in Scripture that helps our understanding regarding the Rapture. But, Elijah's translation into heaven is the only Rapture event in Scripture with an eye-witness account from which we can learn much. The passage is in 2 Kings 2. In verse 9, Elisha asked Elijah to give him a double portion of blessing before Elijah is "taken away". Elijah tells him that *"if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so..."* (2Ki 2:10). As they: *"...walked on and talked, there appeared a chariot of fire... and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven"* (2Ki 2:11). *"And Elisha saw it...and he took his own clothes and rent them into two pieces. He took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back"* (2KI 2:12-13).

Elisha witnessed Elijah's ascent into heaven and as he did so, Elijah's mantle (or clothes) fell from him and were left behind. This is significant. Elijah did not need earthly clothing in heaven. After all, in heaven the saints will be dressed in white clothing (linen, raiment). In Jesus' own words: *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment..."* (Revelation 3:5). And from John's personal witness: *"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in linen, white and clean"* (Revelation 19:4). What occurred with Elijah's clothes when he was raptured also happened with Jesus' grave clothes when He was resurrected from the dead. *"And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying... Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself"* (John 20:5-7). *"When John saw the grave clothes, he believed"* (John 20:8).

In both Elijah's translation and Jesus' resurrection, their clothes were left behind. I believe this is the sign that will distinguish the Rapture from the "great disappearance" for those left behind to consider. Sadly, most "Christians" who are left behind will fail to recognize the "great disappearance" as the Rapture because: *"...God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"* (2 Thessalonians 2:11). Instead, they will turn to the Antichrist and false prophet for their salvation and will worship the "great whore" of the religious "Mystery Babylon" described in Revelation 17. But some of those left behind, who see the clothing left by loved ones who disappeared, may recognize the significance of the clothes and believe, then truly commit their lives to Jesus Christ during the Tribulation, although they will likely be martyred in so doing.

What About the Numbers for God's Chosen People – The Jews?

I made an interesting online discovery while updating the American Christian population numbers from the 2010 census. The census contained a column for the estimated percentage of "born again" Christians by denomination that was separate from those categorized as Evangelicals. The Catholic number of those "born again" was less than 1% which compares with the number of Catholics

thought to be Evangelical in the 2000 census. The two groups with the highest percentage of “born again” believers were Messianic Jews at 88% and Evangelicals at 68%. This means that “born again” Christians are an exclusive subset of Evangelicals that should be considered since it can directly affect the number most likely to be raptured. Jesus told Nicodemus: “...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Because “born again” Messianic Jews have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and believe in His soon return, they will be raptured. Scripture reveals an accurate percentage of Jews who will be saved in the flesh and spirit at the end of the Tribulation and because fairly accurate demographic data for the global Jewish population is available, it is worth considering the numbers for God’s chosen people, ‘*the apple of His eye*’, for what light they may shed on the Rapture.

The Bible is clear that today, despite the Jewish people’s zealotry for God, their self serving righteousness is not focused on Jesus the Messiah and, because they “*believe not in Him, they will perish*” (Romans 10:1-4, 12-13). Only Jewish believers in Christ (Messianic Jews) will be raptured (Romans 10:9, Matthew 3:3). The rest of the Jews will enter the Tribulation and only a remnant (**one third**) will be refined in the fire and saved at the Second Coming of Christ. “*And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, declares the Lord, two thirds shall be cut off and perish; but one third shall be left. And I will bring the one third through the fire and refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say ‘It is my people’ and they shall say, ‘The Lord is my God’*” (Zechariah 13:8-9).

From census data, the global population of about 18+ million Jews is divided fairly equally between Israel (6+ million), America (6 million), and the rest of the world (6 million). The most recent number for the global Messianic Jewish population is about **300,000**, distributed: about 200,000 in the U.S., less than 100,000 in Israel, and less than 50,000 throughout the rest of the world. This combination of Scripture and census demographic data enables a fairly accurate prediction of the numbers of Jews who will be raptured and who will be saved or lost at the end of the Age:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| ○ Global Jewish Population | est. 18+ million |
| ○ Number of Messianic Jews Raptured | est. 300,000 |
| ○ Number of Jews entering the Tribulation | est. 17.7 million |
| ○ Number of Jews saved in the Spirit at 2 nd Coming (1/3) | est. 6 million |
| ○ Number of unsaved Jews at Second Coming (2/3) | est. 12 million |

The 300,000 Messianic Jews represent about **1.6% of the global Jewish population or about one out of every 60 Jews alive to be potentially raptured**. This is important because, while most Jews believe in God and in a coming Messiah, only Messianic Jews believe the coming Messiah is Jesus Christ.

If we assume that “born again” Christians are the population most likely to be raptured, and since “born agains” comprise about 68% of the global evangelical population according to the 2010 census, then about 46.7 million of the “Updated Demographics” population (70 million) in Table 1 may be a more accurate estimate of the potential raptured population. If we add the 300,000 “born again” Messianic

Jews from the analysis above, the total number of “born again” believers most likely to be raptured would be about 47 million, or .67% of the global population.

Table 1 –Estimates of the Raptured Population

<u>Source</u>	<u>Number Raptured</u>	<u>Ratio Raptured</u>	<u>Percent Raptured</u>
1. Prophecy Experts	1 billion	1 out of 7	14%
2. Updated Demographics	70 million	1 out of 100	1.0%
3. “Born Again” Christians	47 million	1 out of 150	.67%

It should be clear from the numbers above that a case for 1 billion or 14% of the global population being taken in the coming rapture is not supported based on contemporary demographic data or from the events and examples analyzed from the Old Testament. It seems clear that the number most likely to be raptured comes closer to 1% than 14% of the global population. Next, we will consider what can be learned about numbers for the rapture from the New Testament.