

**Does Revelation 4:1 Teach a
Pretribulational Rapture?**

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.’”

(Revelation 4:1)

Pretrib teachers claim that when the Apostle John is called up into heaven in Revelation 4:1 this should be understood as the Church being caught up to heaven.

They say that since the word “Church” does not appear in the following chapters, this proves that the Church has been raptured.

This is a very weak and truly strange argument. Revelation 2-3 contains seven letters to seven churches. So of course it uses the word “church” multiple times throughout those chapters.

- 1. To the angel of the church in Ephesus:**
- 2. To the angel of the church in Smyrna:**
- 3. To the angel of the church in Pergamum:**
- 4. To the angel of the church in Thyatira:**
- 5. To the angel of the church in Sardis:**
- 6. To the angel of the church in Philadelphia:**
- 7. To the angel of the church in Laodicea:**

Second, Revelation 4:1 simply describes John the Apostle being taken into heaven to be shown the Last-Days. It says absolutely nothing about the rapture of the Church.

Third, John wasn't even physically raptured into heaven; only his spirit was taken there:

“Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

(Revelation 4:1–2)

Fourth, although the word “Church” is not used, the Church is clearly present. Numerous other terms for the Church are used. “Saints,” “Witnesses of Jesus,” “our brethren,” “God’s people,” or “God’s servants” are used many times throughout Revelation to describe the Church present on the earth throughout the tribulation.

“...the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

(Revelation 12:10–11)

**“So the dragon was enraged with the woman,
and went off to make war with the rest of her
children, who keep the commandments of
God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”**

(Revelation 12:17)

"When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints."

(Revelation 5:8)

"Another angel, with a golden incense burner, came and stood at the altar. He was given a large amount of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar in front of the throne."

(Revelation 8:3)

The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up in the presence of God from the angel's hand.

(Revelation 8:4)

**The nations were angry,
but your wrath has come.**

**The time has come
for the dead to be judged
and to give the reward
to your servants the prophets,
to the saints, and to those who fear your name,
both small and great...**

(Revelation 11:18)

**“And [the Beast] was permitted to wage war
against the saints and to conquer them.”**

(Revelation 13:7)

**“If anyone is to be taken captive,
into captivity he goes. If anyone is to be
killed with a sword, with a sword he will be
killed. This calls for endurance and
faithfulness from the saints.”**

(Revelation 13:10)

Then I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.
(Revelation 17:6)

“She (the bride) was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure. For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.”

(Revelation 19:8)

Here, the Church, the bride and “the saints” are one and the same.

The reason all of this this matters is because the primary way the Church is consistently described throughout Revelation is as “overcomers,” —laying down their lives as faithful witnesses. The pretrib teaching robs the Church of preparing to be overcomers and faithful witnesses.

The claim that we are removed robs us of the call to prepare to endure patiently, to live as faithful witness martyrs, to lay down our lives for Jesus and the Gospel.