1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.
Corrie ten Boom - The world is deathly ill. It is dying. The Great Physician has already signed the death certificate. Yet there is still a great work for Christians to do. They are to be streams of living water, channels of mercy to those who are still in the world. It is possible for them to do this because they are overcomers. Christians are ambassadors for Christ. They are representatives from Heaven to this dying world. And because of our presence here, things will change.

My sister, Betsy, and I were in the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck because we committed the crime of loving Jews. Seven hundred of us from Holland, France, Russia, Poland and Belgium were herded into a room built for two hundred. As far as I knew, Betsy and I were the
only two representatives of Heaven in that room. We may have been the Lord’s only representatives in that place of hatred; yet because of our presence there, things changed. Jesus said, “In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” We too, are to be overcomers — bringing the light of Jesus into a world filled with darkness and hate.

Sometimes I get frightened as I read the Bible, and as I look in this world and see all of the tribulation and persecution promised by the Bible coming true. Now I can tell you, though, if you too are afraid, that I have just read the last pages. I can now come to shouting “Hallelujah! Hallelujah!” for I have found where it is written that Jesus said, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be His God, and he shall be My son.” This is the future and hope of this world. Not that the world will survive — but that we shall be overcomers in the midst of a dying world.

Betsy and I, in the concentration camp, prayed that God would heal Betsy who was so weak and sick. “Yes, the Lord will heal me,” Betsy said with confidence. She died the next day and I could not understand it. They laid her thin body on the concrete floor along with all the other corpses of the women who died that day.

It was hard for me to understand, to believe that God had a purpose for all that. Yet because of Betsy's death, today I am traveling all over the world telling people about Jesus.

There are some among us teaching there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this. These are some of the false teachers that Jesus was warning us to expect in the latter days. Most of them have
little knowledge of what is already going on across the world. I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution.

In China, the Christians were told, "Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated — raptured." Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, sadly,

We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first. Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes — to stand and not faint.

I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation, but more than sixty percent of the Body of Christ across the world has already entered into the tribulation. There is no way to escape it. We are next.

Since I have already gone through prison for Jesus' sake, and since I met the Bishop in China, now every time I read a good Bible text I think, "Hey, I can use that in the time of tribulation." Then I write it down and learn it by heart. When I was in the concentration camp, a camp where only twenty percent of the women came out alive, we tried to cheer each other up by saying, "Nothing could be any worse than today." But we would find the next day was even worse. During this time a Bible verse that I had committed to memory gave me great hope and joy:

1 Peter 4:14 (AMP)
14 If you are censured and suffer abuse [because you bear] the name of Christ, blessed [are you—happy, fortunate, to be envied, with life-joy, and satisfaction in God’s favor and salvation, regardless of your outward
condition], because the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God, is resting upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

I found myself saying, “Hallelujah! Because I am suffering, Jesus is glorified!”

In America, the churches sing, “Let the congregation escape tribulation,” but in China and Africa the tribulation has already arrived. This last year alone, more than two hundred thousand Christians were martyred in Africa. Now things like that never get into the newspapers because they cause bad political relations. But I know. I have been there. We need to think about that when we sit down in our nice houses with our nice clothes to eat our steak dinners. Many, many members of the Body of Christ are being tortured to death at this very moment, yet we continue right on as though we are all going to escape the tribulation.

Several years ago I was in Africa in a nation where a new government had come into power. The first night I was there some of the Christians were commanded to come to the police station to register. When they arrived they were arrested and that same night they were executed. The next day the same thing happened with other Christians. The third day it was the same. All the Christians in the district were being systematically murdered.

The fourth day I was to speak in a little church. The people came, but they were filled with fear and tension. All during the service they were looking at each other, their eyes asking, “Will this one I am sitting beside be the next one killed? Will I be the next one?” The room was hot and stuffy with insects that came through the screenless windows and swirled around the naked bulbs over the bare wooden benches. I told them a
story out of my childhood.

“When I was a little girl,” I said, “I went to my father and said, ‘Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ.’”

“Tell me,” said Father, “When you take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?”

“No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train.”

“That is right,” my father said, “and so it is with God’s strength. Our Father in Heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. He will supply all you need — just in time....”

My African friends were nodding and smiling. Suddenly a spirit of joy descended upon that church and the people began singing,
In the sweet, by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore.

Later that week, half the congregation of that church was executed. I heard later that the other half was killed some months ago.

But I must tell you something. I was so happy that the Lord used me to encourage these people, for unlike many of their leaders, I had the word of God. I had been to the Bible and discovered that Jesus said He had not only overcome the world, but to all those who remained faithful to the end, He would give a crown of life.

How can we get ready for the persecution? First we need to feed on the word of God, digest it, make it a part of our being. This will mean disciplined Bible study each day as we not only memorize long passages of scripture, but put the principles to work in our lives.

Next we need to develop a personal relationship with
Jesus Christ. Not just the Jesus of yesterday, the Jesus of history, but the life-changing Jesus of today who is still alive and sitting at the right hand of God.

We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is no optional command of the Bible, it is absolutely necessary. Those earthly disciples could never have stood up under the persecution of the Jews and Romans had they not waited for Pentecost. Each of us needs our own personal Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We will never be able to stand in the tribulation without it.

In the coming persecution, we must be ready to help each other and encourage each other. But we must not wait until the tribulation comes before starting. The fruit of the Spirit should be the dominant force of every Christian’s life.

Many are fearful of the coming tribulation; they want to run. I, too, am a little bit afraid when I think that after all my eighty years, including the horrible Nazi concentration camp, that I might have to go through the tribulation also. But then I read the Bible and I am glad.

“When I am weak, then I shall be strong,” the Bible says. Betsy and I were prisoners for the Lord; we were so weak, but we got power because the Holy Spirit was on us. That mighty inner strengthening of the Holy Spirit helped us through. No, you will not be strong in yourself when the tribulation comes. Rather, you will be strong in the power of Him who will not forsake you. For seventy-six years I have known the Lord Jesus and not once has He ever left me, or let me down.

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him,” for I know that to all who overcome, He shall give the crown of life. Hallelujah!
Corrie ten Boom—1974
History of Rapture Doctrine

From the beginning of the Christian era until the Protestant Reformation, only one person, Ephraem of Nisibis, in 373 AD preached in one known sermon that,

"For all the saints and Elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins."

Then 1400 years after Ephraem, there appeared an allusion to the Rapture in a book written in 1788 by a Catholic priest named Emmanuel Lacunza and published in Spain in 1812.
John Darby, a Brethren preacher, (1800 – 1882) was an Anglo-Irish evangelist, and an influential figure among the original Plymouth Brethren. As there was no Christian teaching of a “rapture” before Darby began preaching about it in the 1830s he is sometimes credited with originating the "secret rapture" theory wherein Christ will suddenly remove His bride, the Church, from this world before the judgments of the tribulation.

George Muller evangelist (1805-1898)
"I am a constant reader of the Bible, and I soon found that what I was taught to believe did not always agree with what my Bible said. I came to see that I must either part company with John Darby, or my precious Bible, and I chose to cling to my Bible and part from Mr Darby.” (Scriptural Truth About the Lord’s Return, pages 146-147)

CI Scofield 1843-1921 was an American theologian, minister, The creator of the "Scofield Reference Bible" (1917)
2 Thessalonians 2:1–4 (NKJV)
1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.
3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,
4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–10 (NKJV)
1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.
2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.
3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.
4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.
5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.
9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Revelation 4:1
1 After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

John 14:1–3
1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.
2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

1 Corinthians 15:51–52
51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Revelation 3:10
10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.
Revelation 3:10 (KJV 1900)
10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Strong's Concordance
téreó: to watch over, to guard
Original Word: τηρέω
Part of Speech: Verb
Transliteration: téreó
Phonetic Spelling: (tay-reh'-o)
Short Definition: I keep, guard, observe
Definition: I keep, guard, observe, watch over.

Luke 2:1
1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

There was, however, a trial that came upon the whole Roman Empire, concerning the Christians.

This trial was under the Roman Emperor Trajan. He was persecuting Christians It was pretty bad at first, but Trajan eventually toned it down. He did this after he received a letter from Pliny the Younger, who was the governor of Pontus and Bithynia. In his letter to Trajan concerning the Christians, Pliny said that Christians were law abiding citizens who worshiped Christ, loved each other and did no wrong.

Revelation 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.