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what persecution the Lord may have for us. Anybody who would say, "Well, the rapture is before the tribulation, therefore let's not fear anything. Everything is easy for the Church," would be simply ignorant of the Scripture, because Christ said, "In the world you will have tribulation," and the Church has had tribulation through the ages to greater or less extent, but is there a tribulation which can be recognized as the last tribulation, which must come before the Church can be raptured, or can we even say that the rapture of the Church is to take place in a period of tribulation or that it is not in a period of tribulation? Does He want us just not to know? Be ready always so that in the day the rapture comes we are ready. If terrific persecution comes, an additional motive to be faithful through the persecution, that we don't know at what point the persecution may be cut short by His rapturing the Church, or we don't whether it might come right at the end of that particular tribulation.

It isn't a thing--we know it is before the tribulation or we know it is after, but is there any sign that we know must be true, or is it something that for all we know must come now? Student: Do you call that the true premillennial position, to take that view? Dr. MacRae: I think that a premillennial position could be combined with any attitude toward the rapture, any attitude whatever; in fact, a person could deny that there is such a thing as the rapture and be a premillennialist just as much as he could be a postmillennialist or an amillennialist, but anybody who has read 1 Thessalonians 4, regardless of his attitude on the millennium, must believe that there is a rapture. The question is, when is that? Is it a ^{vital} motive for Christian service now, that it might come right soon, or do we know there is at least three and a half years of tribulation first before it comes? / Do we know there is something definite? That is our problem, isn't it? That is the thing before us. Now, of course, if the Scripture says, "There will ^{be} great tribulation and at the end of this tribulation the Church is raptured," then we can say, "the rapture won't be today because we are not in tribulation." Then we can say, His words that in such an hour as we think not the Son of man comes don't apply to this