

32. The Book of Galatians 5:5 (Topical)

Liberty For Life-Part 3

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(9-15-24)

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This morning in our study through the Book of Galatians we find ourselves in Chapter 5 where I'd like to focus our attention on verse 5:

Galatians 5:5 (NKJV)

⁵ For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

The phrase, "**The hope of righteousness**" is a prophetic reference—or what theologians refer to as an *eschatological* phrase (eschatology is the study of '*last-things*' or the end times).

I believe that when Paul spoke of the "**hope of righteousness**" for the believer in Jesus he had in mind the—Rapture of the Church.

In his commentary on Galatians, author, pastor and commentator, William McDonald makes several key observations concerning this verse—

*"The apostle shows that the hope of the true believer is far different from that of the legalist. The Christian waits **for the hope of righteousness**. He hopes for the time when the Lord will come, when he will receive a glorified body, and when he will sin no more.*

Notice that it does not say that the Christian hopes for righteousness; he already has a right standing before God through the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). But he waits for the moment when he will be completely righteous in himself."

In Titus Chapter 2, Paul talked about the Rapture and the believer's hope of Jesus coming for His Church this way—

Titus 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

You may not realize it, but there are many professing Christians who don't believe in the literal Rapture of the Church. They either believe it is *allegorical*, or they believe that the verses that seem to point to it are actually referring to the—the Second Coming.

What is the Rapture?

The "**Rapture**" is a sudden '*snatching away*' or '*catching up*' of Christians off of the earth to meet the Lord Jesus in the air—

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

In verse 17 the verb translated “**caught up**” is the Greek word *harpazō*.

In Acts 8:39 that Greek word is used to speak of Philip being ‘*snatched away*’ from the Ethiopian eunuch; and in 2 Corinthians 12 verses 2 and 4 it describes Paul being ‘*caught up*’ into heaven. Because the word ‘*rapture*’ can’t be found in the Bible many refuse to believe that the Rapture is a biblical doctrine. And while it’s true the word can’t be found in the *English Bible*—it does however appear in the *Latin Vulgate* version of the Bible.

The Latin verb *rapio* (‘to seize or snatch away rapidly’) was used to translate the Greek verb *harpazō* in the Latin Vulgate which is where we get the English word ‘*rapture*’ from.

There are 3 places in the N.T. where the doctrine of the Rapture is *clearly* mentioned (many others where it is alluded to)—first of all 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (which we’ve already looked at), secondly (and the one that most Christians overlook) is John’s Gospel, Chapter 14—

John 14:1-3 (NKJV)

¹“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

In these verses, Jesus introduces the concept of the Rapture by promising His disciples that, even though He was leaving them for a while—He was going to come back to get them (and all true believers in Christ).

He will do this so that His Bride the Church will be with Him from that moment on—never to be separated from Him ever again!

And thirdly (besides John 14:1-3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)—the other classic New Testament passage on the Rapture is found in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52:

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NKJV)

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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Who does the Rapture affect?

The Rapture is the bodily resurrection of all true believers who came to Christ during the period of time from Pentecost (Acts 2) to the Rapture—the period of time that we call the *Church Age*.

But the Rapture will also affect those Christians who are *still alive* on the earth when the Rapture takes place—

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...

Please don't confuse the Rapture of the Church with the Second Coming of Christ—they are two entirely different events.

At the time of the *Rapture* Jesus comes **for** His Church in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17) to take us to heaven for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb—whereas the *Second* Coming of Christ is where Jesus comes **with** His Church to the earth after the Tribulation Period to establish His Kingdom. (Colossians 3:4; Revelation 19:11, 14)

Why is God going to Rapture His Church?

1. Our physical bodies must be glorified to live in heaven

1 Corinthians 15:50-53 (NLT2)

⁵⁰ What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. ⁵¹ But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

2. God will not punish the righteous with the wicked

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, 9, 11 (NKJV)

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... ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ... ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

2 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ ...the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations [tribulation] and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment...

So very simply—the Rapture is Jesus *evacuating* His Church off the earth before pouring His judgment (wrath) out upon it during the Tribulation Period (Revelation 6-19).

This judgment will cleanse the earth of the "earth-dwellers" (defiant rebels against God) in preparation for Jesus' return (Second Coming) to establish His Kingdom.

When will the Rapture Occur?

The Rapture is *imminent* which means it could happen at any time—in other words, nothing needs to happen before the Rapture of the Church takes place (hold on to that thought, we'll come back to it).

Even though evangelical Christians will never try to predict the exact day and hour the Rapture will take place (even Jesus said He didn't know the exact day and hour of the Rapture)—that hasn't stopped Christians over the centuries from debating (often vigorously) the *general time* or *about when* the Rapture will occur.

This has given rise to 4 main views concerning the general timing of the Rapture:

- 1) *Pre-Tribulation Rapture View.*
- 2) *Mid-Tribulation Rapture View.*
- 3) *Post Tribulation Rapture View.*
- 4) *Pre-Wrath Rapture View.*

We at Calvary Chapel firmly believe in and are committed to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture eschatology. In other words, we believe that Jesus will come for His Church *before* the Antichrist rises to power and signs a peace treaty with the nation of Israel as prophesied in Daniel 9:27.

The signing of this peace treaty will officially begin the final 7 years of human history on planet earth as we know it. This final 7-year period is referred to in the Old Testament as “*the time of Jacob’s trouble*” (Jeremiah 30:7)—but from the New Testament it is most commonly known as—the “*Tribulation Period*” (chronicled in Revelation 6-19).

At the end of this 7-year period Jesus will return *with* His Church to the earth at His Second Coming to establish His Kingdom.

Again, I am a firm believer that the Church will not go thru the Tribulation Period—that the Rapture will take us off of the earth before God’s wrath (judgment) is poured out—which is why it’s called the “*blessed hope*” in Titus 2:13.

One reason I believe this is because of the promise Jesus gave His true Church in Revelation 3:

Revelation 3:8, 10 (NKJV)

⁸ I know your works [spoken to the Church at Philadelphia]. See, I have set before you an **open door**, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name...
¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will **keep you from the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Jesus promised His true Last Days Church (represented by the church of Philadelphia—the evangelical church) that He would keep her from (the Greek is “deliver her out of”) the judgment (the Great Tribulation) that is coming upon the whole world to test (‘try’) those who dwell on the earth (militant unbelievers).

Then we read in Revelation 4:1—

Revelation 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

- First of all, John sees “**a door standing open in heaven**”—which I believe is a ‘*door of deliverance*’ to evacuate His Church off of the earth (as He promised in Revelation 3:8, 10) before His divine judgments are poured out on the world.
- Secondly John says—“**And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here...’**”

That sounds like Rapture language to me—as 2 out of the 3 classic passages of Scripture on the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-53) talk about a *trumpet* sounding at the very instant the Rapture takes place.

Something else very interesting to me about the Book of Revelation is that—the Church has been mentioned 19 times in the first 3 chapters of the book. But starting with Chapter 4 she suddenly *'disappears'* from narrative because I believe she has—disappeared from the earth!

She disappears and we will not see her again in the book until we see her as the Bride of Christ in Chapter 19 returning with the Lord Jesus (her Bridegroom) to the earth to establish His Kingdom!

J. Vernon McGee—

“From here on you will not find the word church mentioned...But now the church goes off the air—there is no mention of it. It has gone off the air because it went up in the air; it was caught up in the air to meet the Lord in the air. The church has gone to heaven—that is what has happened to it.”

So, after the Church is removed from the earth at the Rapture—the scene now shifts to heaven in Revelation, Chapter 4.

At this point, the Church, once seated with Christ in heavenly places *spiritually* (Ephesians 2:6), is now seen safely seated with Christ in heaven *literally* before the judgment of God is poured out upon this Christ rejecting world starting in Chapter 6.

Also, in the Book of Revelation there are recorded numerous judgments of God which He unleashes on the inhabitants of earth during the Tribulation Period—they are, the **7-Seal Judgments**; the **7-Trumpet Judgments**; and the final **7-Bowl Judgments**.

All of these judgments are called **'the wrath of God'** which He pours out on the *'earth-dwellers'* (militant Christ rejectors)—and yet with regard to the Body of Christ, we are told:

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This 'salvation' thru Jesus isn't salvation from hell—this is talking about how He will save His Church from the *'wrath to come'* by snatching us off of the earth (rapturing us) before the wrath of God (Tribulation Period) begins.

The key word is **'obtain'**—as in something that is not theirs yet.

This is not referring to obtaining salvation from hell (they were already saved from hell)—it is talking about God someday taking them off of the earth before His judgment is poured out upon unbelievers, saving or delivering them from His wrath during the Tribulation Period.

Furthermore, the First Seal (wrath or judgment of God) brings the Antichrist to power (Revelation 6:1-2). Therefore, if the Antichrist is the first judgment of God during the Tribulation Period, and God has not appointed His Church to judgment (wrath)—then the Church won't see the Antichrist come to power.

Please understand—I believe he is alive on the earth right now—but true Christians belonging to the Body of Christ won't see him rise to power as the leader of the one-world government—

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way [the Holy Spirit in the Church]. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

Again, I believe the Scriptures are teaching that the Antichrist won't be revealed and rise to power until the Church is removed from the earth at the Rapture—which I believe Revelation 4:1 is teaching.

How close are we to the Rapture?

The Rapture of the Church could happen at any time—there are no prophetic events that need to be fulfilled before the Rapture can take place. I believe that is because the Lord wanted us to always be looking for the Rapture (His coming for His Bride, the Church) and living as if He could come back at any moment.

Remember Jesus said that *“an evil servant says, ‘my master delays his coming.’”* (Matthew 24:48; Luke 12:45)—which promotes sinful living—whereas living as if the Lord could come back for His Church at any moment promotes holy living:

1 John 3:2-3 (NKJV)

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Every other Rapture view (Mid, Post, and Pre-Wrath) all teach that the Church will go through part or all of the Tribulation Period.

**Which means instead of people looking for the coming of Jesus Christ—
they are looking for the coming of the Antichrist!**

Only the Pre-Tribulation view of the Rapture has God's people looking for the return of Jesus Christ, not the Antichrist!

Mark 13:32–37 (NKJV)

³² “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

We are commanded to keep our eyes on the coming of Jesus Christ—not the coming of the Antichrist!

Now even though there are no prophecies that must be fulfilled before the *Rapture*—the Bible tells us many things that have to happen before the *Second Coming* of Christ.

I believe that the Rapture will take place at least 7 years before Jesus returns to the earth to set up His Kingdom—which means if we see the signs of His Second Coming all around us—the Rapture is getting very close indeed!

→ Use 'signs of Christmas' appearing before Thanksgiving telling us Christmas is getting close—the same is true with the signs of the Second Coming telling us the Rapture is getting close!

I am told that there is an inscription on a gravestone in an old British cemetery not far from Windsor Castle. It reads:

*“Pause, my friend, as you walk by;
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, so you will be.
Prepare, my friend, to follow me!”*

A visitor who read that epitaph added these lines:

*“To follow you is not my intent,
Until I know which way you went!”*

Which way are you going? Are you ready?—Behold, the Bridegroom is Coming!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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