



DOES THE BIBLE TEACH A SECRET RAPTURE - (WEEK 9)

*What Happens During the
Second Coming?*

- Vally of Vision

In 1988, Edgar Whisenant wrote a booklet entitled *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will be in 1988*, saying, 'I would stake my life' on it.' As we now know, the rapture did not occur in 1988 — we hope. If anything, Whisenant should be thankful the Lord did not hold him to his bet.

88 Reasons sold 4.5 million copies.

One of the rules of biblical interpretation is that we use clearer verses to interpret verses that are more difficult to understand. Today we'll be looking at some verses on the Second Coming of Christ that are neither symbolic nor confusing, but are simply straight forward. We will be examining them for the clear facts.

All I'm asking you to do (and this is what I've tried to do in preparing this) is to set aside your presuppositions for a moment. Set aside your assumptions about the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ and ask yourself as we go through this, "What is the text alone saying?"

We're going to begin in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. This chapter is the quintessential chapter regarding the rapture of the church.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

The believers in Thessalonica were concerned about what was going to happen

to their Christian loved ones who died before the Second Coming of Christ. That's why Paul is writing them.

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

So, there is fact number one about the Second Coming of Christ — He's going to bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. In other words, dead Christians. So, he's comforting them with what? The Second Coming.

15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord,

So, here are Jesus's teachings on the end times.

that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

So, the dead loved ones are going to be raised first to return with Christ.

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,

Revelation 1:7

7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him

Up to this point, I think it's clear that the dead will be raised, they will return with Christ and those who are living at the return of Christ will be caught up (that's where we get the word rapture) with the saints who are returning with Christ.

The word Paul uses here refers to "the action of going out to meet an arrival, especially as a mark of honour." When a dignitary came to visit a city in those days, the inhabitants would pay him tribute by going out of the city to meet him. They would then *accompany him back* to the city which he was planning to enter. This is what happens in John 12:13, where the crowd on Palm Sunday comes out of Jerusalem to meet Jesus (*upantesis*) and to accompany him back in to the city.

and so we will always be with the Lord.

Now, notice it just says we will be with the Lord forever. It doesn't say they go back to heaven. We know from other NT teaching that resurrected believers are going to live in

the new heavens and the new earth. It will be a physical place beyond all that we can imagine or think.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

I don't see separate events here. From my perspective, you have to read into the text here to make these different events that are separated by any amount of years.

If dead Christians receive resurrected bodies, what about those who are alive when Jesus returns?

1 Corinthians 15:50-54

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 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. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

Once you receive your resurrected body you will never die again, that's why death is swallowed up in the victory of Christ's resurrection, the first one to be raised from the dead.

Now let's reaffirm when the resurrection takes place.

John 6:40

40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

John 6:44

44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:54

54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

I would take the last day to mean the end. So, the resurrection takes place at the end of history or the end of the world.

The last day sounds pretty final to me. It appears to be the end. It's over. This makes it

clear that the resurrection occurs on the last day — at the end — when it's all over.

Now, let's look at the conditions those Christians that Paul was teaching this to were undergoing.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,

So, they are undergoing affliction. These believers in Thessalonica are being persecuted. They are in tribulation, so to speak. Now what future hope does the Apostle Paul hold out to them?

7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Let's break this down. The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven (epiphaneia) — in the New Testament there are three Greek words that are used interchangeably to refer to the Second Coming of Christ and they are parousia (presence as in the presence of His

coming), revelation (epiphaneia) and apocalypse (apokalupsis).

Paul is referring here to the revelation or appearing or coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, this is the hope that he is holding out to the Christians undergoing persecution in Thessalonica, the Second Coming of Christ.

And what is Christ going to do at His Second Coming according to the Apostle Paul? He's going to dole out judgment.

9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

I think what is clear in this passage is that Jesus is going to return. When He returns there will be a judgment of unbelievers and He will be glorified in His church — by those who have believed.

Now, let's look at Matthew 25, which talks of the Second Coming of Christ and the final judgment.

Matthew 25:31-46

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,

So, this says He will come a second time and His angels will be with Him. Now, does this mean His saints aren't with Him when He returns? Well, if we make that assumption then that is what is called an argument from silence, which in logic is also called a logical fallacy. We don't make arguments based on what's not there because it leads to faulty logic.

So, He's going to return and then what?

then he will sit on his glorious throne.

So, we have the return and the judgment.

32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

What does that tell us? The judgment of believers and the judgment of nonbelievers happens at the same time here.

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you

from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

The believers are judged and what they believed is apparent by how they lived their lives. The gospel teaches us that we are not saved by our works but by faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, but that when we believe we will indeed undergo transformation in our thinking and in our doing.

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ 45 Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it

to me.’ 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The point is — one final judgment, both parties.

Revelation 20:11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

Now, if Jesus returns to earth for the final judgment, which the verses we’ve just gone over state affirmatively, then when He gets to earth is the earth going to flee? Or is this cosmic imagery to describe a great reversal of power? The great awe that people will feel at His coming? The great fear that people will feel at the judgment seat of Christ.

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life.

So, if the dead are there what does that tell us? They’ve been brought back. What’s another way of saying brought back from the dead? Resurrection!

And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

We just went over that in Matthew 25. Scripture interprets Scripture and we find support for the events and what's happening here.

13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

If this is the second death, what is the first death? How about "the wages of sin is death?" Spiritual death is the first death, meaning you are alive physically, but you are dead spiritually. You have no spiritual life until you believe and are born again by the Spirit of God. He who has the Son has the life and He who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Now, these verses focused on the judgment of unbelievers, but does that mean believers aren't present? Remember, if we make that argument it is an argument from silence, number one, and number two, we'd be

ignoring the clear biblical teaching of Matthew 25.

Now, let's look at when the judgment takes place.

John 12:48

48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

When the judgment take place? At the last day.

Revelation 6:15-17

15 Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

This emphasizes that without Christ as your Lord and Savior you will not be able to stand the last judgment.

2 Peter 3:10-15

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,

The day of the Lord — the Second Coming of Christ.

and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

What does judgment do? It exposes things. God says there is nothing hidden that will remain secret, but everything will be exposed concerning every human heart and every human action.

11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God,

What did Peter encourage the church to look forward to? The Second Coming.

Now, here's a point I want to make gently, but over and over again in the New Testament, when the Apostles want to encourage the church in times of trouble and persecution, they point to the Second Coming of Christ. They never use the language of the rapture to encourage the church. They never say, "Hold on until you're removed or caught up." But over and over

again — "hasten His coming, look for His coming."

because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Again, let's look here at what God's word says they were waiting for — "the coming of the day of God" (or the return of Christ) and "waiting for new heavens and a new earth."

14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

Now, Paul's writing to the Thessalonians because someone had told them that the second coming had already occurred.

2 Thessalonians 2:1; 8

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him,

I think we can safely say this much, when the Lord returns we will be gathered together with Him whether we are living or dead.

we ask you, brothers, **2** not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

But in this instance, he ends with the day the Lord has come — the Second Coming. This would make it plain to me that they weren't concerned they had missed the rapture. They were concerned they had missed the Second Coming.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

United in essentials — everyone who has believed these essential thing has been born again by the Spirit of God and since they have tasted the sweetness of His presence they long for His return.

Matthew 16:27

27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Again we see the pattern of Return — judgment.

1 Corinthians 15:22-24

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits,

Christ is resurrected first.

then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

This would include both the dead and the living getting their new bodies.

24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

When Jesus returns, it will be the end and all things will be made new. When He returns He will judge the living and the dead and reign forever. Once Jesus returns to earth, Heaven begins.

- Charts