



The Return Series

Part 5

September 28, 2022

One major mistake that is made by many who study about the Book of Revelation is they centralize it all to be focused on what is happening in the Earth but there is quite a bit happening in the Heavens as well. With that said, tonight we will focus on the Rapturing of the Church and the Resurrection of the Dead which deals with Christ meeting His Church, the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

As an outline pointer, the span of Chapters from Revelation 4 to Revelation 19 are the chapters that cover the 7 years of Tribulation. In Revelation 4, John records about The Throne in Heaven. In this chapter, John is caught up in the Third Heaven which is a type and shadow of the Rapture of the Saints leading up to the Tribulation Period.

According to the text, there is a Heavenly Door that is opened up so that John could see the Church standing around the throne of God with the 24 Elders who are before the Sea of Glass. This is very important because the Saints and the Elders are already there; indicating of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Their crowns are tied to the Judgment Seat of Christ!

So let's look with the Rapture of the Church and the Resurrection of the Righteous Dead. The Resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the Imminent and Blessed Hope of the Church. Jesus is going to return for His Church!

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, 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, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

- Romans 8:23-25, “²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”
- Titus 2:11-13, “¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...”

In Eschatology, especially in regards to the Rapture of the Church, there are three schools of thought on the matter: Pre-Tribulation Rapture, Mid-Tribulation Rapture, and Post-Tribulation Rapture.

As a Pastor, as a Student of the Word, as well as being an Assembly of God Ordained Minister, I firmly hold to the Pre-Tribulation Rapture view of End Time Bible Prophecy.

With that Said, I want to provide 16 irrefutable proofs of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture from a Biblical perspective. People may argue and say that the Rapture is false doctrine because the term Rapture is not found in the text of the Bible.

However, neither are the words Theology, Eschatology, Pneumatology, and Demonology but these four terms are clearly important to specific studies of Biblical Text and Doctrine.

Proof #1: Revelation 19:11-21 doesn't mention a Resurrection.

The Rapture is the Resurrection of those "in Christ" according to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; text of which we have already read. Isn't it a little bit odd that in Rev. 19:11-21, which is the clearest picture of the second coming of Christ, there is no mention of a Resurrection? The Rapture will be the biggest event since the Resurrection of Jesus where hundreds of millions of Christians, if not Billions, who will be resurrected and translated, yet there isn't any mention here. Don't you think it deserves at least one verse?

The Rapture isn't mentioned because it doesn't happen at the second coming; the Rapture has already happened before Christ's Second Coming in Revelation 19. Also the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is noted in Revelation 19 as already have happened before Christ returns to the Earth in Revelation 19; so to stay in the succinctness of Scripture, how could Christ have a marriage supper with a Church that had not been raptured yet?

The armies that follow Christ to the earth to wage war against the Antichrist in Revelation 19 **IS THE CHURCH!!!** How will He lead an army from heaven into the Earth if said army was not already in Heaven? Again, Revelation 19:11-21 doesn't mention a Resurrection or a catching away because it had already happened and the Church is already in Heaven at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Proof #2: Zechariah 14:1-15 doesn't mention a Resurrection.

Zechariah 14:1-15 records, **"¹Behold, a day is coming for the Lord, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. ²For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.**

³ Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. ⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

⁵ And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. ⁶ On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. ⁷ And there shall be a unique ^l day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.

⁸ On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea ^l and half of them to the western sea. ^l It shall continue in summer as in winter. ⁹ And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one. ¹⁰ The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. ¹¹ And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. ^l Jerusalem shall dwell in security. ¹² And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike

all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³ And on that day a great panic from the Lord shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. ¹⁴ Even Judah will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. ¹⁵ And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.” This is an Old Testament picture of Jesus returning to earth at the second coming. Again, no mention of a Resurrection; Remember that the teaching of the Rapture isn’t just about the catching away of those who are alive when Jesus comes for His Church before the 7 years of Tribulation but also for those who had already died leading up to that Day! Read more in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Proof #3: Two different pictures are painted.

In the Old Testament, there were two different pictures painted of the Messiah—one suffering (Isa. 53:2-10, Ps. 22:6-8, 11-18) and one reigning as King (Ps. 2:6-12, Zech. 14:9,16).

As we look back on these scriptures, we see they predicted two separate comings of the Messiah—the first coming as a suffering Messiah and the second coming (which is in the future) as a reigning King. Note that Ps. 2:6-12, Zech. 14:9,16, Isaiah 53:2-10, and Psalm 22 are all Old Testament texts.

But in the New Testament, we have another picture added. Again, we have two pictures painted which don't look the same. These two different descriptions of Jesus' coming point to two separate events we call "the Rapture" and "the second coming". Two separate events with two different purposes.

Proof #4: The Known Day and the Unknown Day

Concerning the return of Jesus, the Bible presents a day we can't know and a day we can know. Matthew 25:13 says Jesus will return at an unknown time, while Revelation 12:6 says the Jews will have to wait 1,260 days for the Lord to return.

The 1,260 days begins when the Antichrist stands in the Temple and declares himself to be God (Matt. 24:15-21, 2 Thess. 2:4) This event will take place at the mid-point of the seven-year Tribulation (Dan 9:27).

The Antichrist has authority to rule for 42 months, which is 1,260 days (Rev. 13:4) and will be destroyed by Jesus at His second coming (Rev. 19:20, 2 Thess. 2:8). The known and unknown days must happen at different times, meaning they are two separate events.

Proof #5: A door open in Heaven (Revelation 4:1)

The door in Heaven is opened to let John into Heaven. I believe John's call into Heaven is prophetic of the church being caught up at the Rapture (see proof #6).

In Revelation 19:11, Heaven is opened again, this time to let the armies which are already in Heaven out. This is the Church, which has been raptured at a previous time, following Jesus out of Heaven at the second coming to wage war with the antichrist and ultimately establish the millennial reign of the Messiah!

Proof #6: "Come up here." (Revelation 4:1)

A voice called for the apostle John to "Come up here," and immediately he was in Heaven. This could be a prophetic reference to the Rapture of the Church. The words "Come up here" are spoken to the two witnesses who are killed in the middle of the Tribulation, who are resurrected and ascend into Heaven (Rev. 11:12). Interesting Parallels!

We even see this with Christ at His ascension being raised with a glorified body and ascending into the Heavens as our Great High priest. Thus, the phrase "Come up here" could mean the church is raptured in Rev. 4:1. The word "church" is mentioned 22 times in Rev. 1-3, but is not mentioned again until Rev. 22:17. If the Church, the Bride were in the earth during the tribulation period then why is it not mentioned once?

Proof #7: The 24 elders have their crowns.

After John is called up into Heaven, he sees the 24 elders with their crowns (Rev. 4:4-10). We know that Christians will receive their rewards (crowns) at the Rapture (2 Tim. 4:8, 1 Pet. 5:4). We will be repaid at the Resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14). The elders couldn't receive their crowns unless the Resurrection (Rapture) has taken place.

Proof #8 Holy ones are already with Jesus in Heaven

(Zech. 14:5, Rev. 19:14)

The armies in Heaven, clothed in fine linen, follow Jesus out of Heaven at His second coming (Rev. 19:14, Zech. 14:5, Col. 3:4). These are not angels because Revelation 19:8 tells us the fine linen is the righteousness of the Saints. In order to come out of Heaven we first have to go in, indicating a previous Rapture.

Proof #9: Kept from the hour of testing (Rev. 3:10)

Revelation 3:10 says we will be kept out of the hour of testing which will come upon the whole earth (the Tribulation Period). Some have wrongly believed "keep" means to keep through, or protect through the Tribulation. Suppose you approach a high voltage area with a sign that says, "Keep Out."

Does that mean you can enter and be protected? No, it means you are forbidden from entering the area. But this verse also says He will keep us from the hour of testing. It is not just the testing, but the time period.

If a student is excused from a test, he still may have to sit in the class while others take the test. But if he is excused from the hour of testing, he can go home. The Church will be called home before the hour of testing.

Proof #10: Angels don't resurrect people

when they gather them for judgment.

When the angels are sent forth to gather the elect at the second coming (Matt. 24:29-31), some have wrongly interpreted this as the Rapture. There is one huge problem with this interpretation. If we are resurrected at this time, why would we need angels to gather us?

In the Resurrection, we will be like the angels (Matt. 22:30), able to travel in the air at will. Obviously, these people who are gathered are not resurrected, therefore it can't be the Rapture. No one would claim the wicked are raptured at this time, yet Matthew 13:39-41, 49 says the angels will not only gather the elect, but also the wicked. This gathering is not a Resurrection.

Proof #11: Both the wicked and the righteous can't be taken first.

First Thessalonians 4:13-17 says the righteous are taken and the wicked are left behind. Matthew 13:30, 49 says the wicked are taken first and righteous are left behind. This points to two separate events, the Rapture and the second coming.

Proof #12: Jesus returns from the wedding.

When Jesus returns to earth at the second coming, He will return from a wedding (Luke 12:36). At the Rapture, Jesus is married to His bride, the Church. After the wedding, He will return to earth.

Proof #13: Jesus will receive us to Himself, not us to receive Him

The Gospel of Saint John 14:1-3, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In 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? ³And 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."

Jesus said He would prepare a place for the Church in Heaven, then He would come again to receive us to Himself. Why would Jesus prepare a place for us in Heaven and then not take us there? At the Rapture, He will come to receive us to Himself, "that where I am (Heaven), there you may be also."

If the Rapture occurred at the same time as the second coming, we would go up to the clouds and then immediately come back to earth. That would contradict John 14:2-3.

Proof #14: The one who restrains is taken out of the way.

In 2 Thess. 2:6-7, Paul says "the one who restrains will be taken out of the way" before the Antichrist can be revealed. We believe this refers to the Rapture because the Church is clearly the biggest obstacle to the Antichrist becoming a world ruler.

Proof #15: The separation of the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31-46)

If the Rapture occurred at the second coming, why would the sheep and the goats need to be separated immediately after the second coming? A Rapture at the second coming would have already separated the sheep and the goats.

With a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, the people saved after the Rapture will need to be separated after the second coming.

Proof #16: Who will populate the Millennium?

If the Rapture occurs at the second coming and the wicked are cast into hell at that time, who will be left to populate the millennial reign? Only people in their natural (non-resurrected) bodies will be able to have children (Matt. 22:30).

With a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, the people saved after the Rapture who are alive at the second coming will populate the earth during the Millennial Reign of Christ.

Contrary to popular belief, the entire world doesn't die during the Tribulation period. People survive who do not have their glorified bodies who will go on to procreate and repopulate the world during Christ's millennial reign upon the Earth.

After the Rapture of the Church, there are two other major events that take place in the Heavens that deal with the Church directly: The Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. In Jewish Culture, as it is in our culture, we have a feast or wedding banquet after the marriage vows have been completed and the two persons become one.

If the Marriage Feast is in Revelation 19 and Christ's Second Coming is in Revelation 19 then how do you have a marriage supper for a marriage that hasn't yet happened and with whom do you feast with? The Rapture takes place between Revelation chapters 3 and 4 and the Church has been in Heaven during the Tribulation Period leading up to the time that Christ ends the marriage feast and mounts up to go into the Earth to wage war against the Antichrist.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

Romans 14:10-12, “¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother?

Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand

before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written, “As I live, says the

Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to

God.” ¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 - ¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me,

like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is

building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no

one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus

Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver,

precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become

manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire,

and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work

that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a

reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he

himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”

The Marriage Feast (Marriage Supper of the Lamb)

Revelation 19:7-9, “⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself

ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

So what can we look forward to leading up to the Tribulation Period? The Rapture of the Church, the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! Jesus is returning for the Church!

In the Gospel of St. John 14:1-7, ¹ Jesus said, “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. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”