



**Doctrine: The Rapture
Babylon Then and Now
Daniel 9:24-27
Revelation 18
1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11**

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We are discussing the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture of the church, an event that I expect to see take place sooner than many of us would even consider to be possible. It is the removal of the church in the rapture that provides for the clock to restart as it pertains to the nation of Israel.



Daniel talked about the time that has been decreed for the nation and that at present, there is yet remaining in that decree, 7 years, a week of years per the prophecy of Daniel. The total time decreed was 490 years.

Daniel 9:24–27

“**Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the wrongdoing, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place.** So you are to know and understand that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with streets and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will confirm a covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come the one who makes desolate, until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate.” (NASB 2020)

This period of 490 years had been “decreed” for the Jewish people and for the holy city of Jerusalem. The Hebrew word translated “decreed” literally means “to cut off” or “to determine.” (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 95)

A period of time has been decreed for the nation of Israel. There is a specific starting point for this period of time and there is a specific pause point as well.

The starting point took place at a point in time after the exile under Babylon. The Persian Empire defeated Babylon and took over. After that was when the decree was issued. But we find four decrees in the scriptures, which one is it?

“Seventy years was the appointed duration of the servitude to Babylon. But another judgment of seventy years’ “desolations” was decreed in Zedekiah’s reign, because of continued disobedience and rebellion. As an interval of seventeen years elapsed between the date of the servitude and the epoch of the “desolations,” so by seventeen years the second period overlapped the first. The servitude ended with the decree of Cyrus. The desolations continued till the second year of Darius Hystaspes. And it was the era of the desolations, and not of the servitude which Daniel had in view. (Anderson 2004, 54-55)

The edict must be one to rebuild Jerusalem, not the Temple, but the city. For that, we need to go to the book of Nehemiah, who was the cupbearer of Artaxerxes Longimanus. He was charged to do that.

Nehemiah 2:5–8

“And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, **to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.**” Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. Furthermore I said to the king, **“If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of the region beyond the River,** that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which pertains to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy.” And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.” (NKJV)

The edict in question was the decree issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus in the twentieth year of his reign, authorising Nehemiah to rebuild the fortifications of Jerusalem. (Anderson 2004, 121)



Sir Robert Anderson later determined that date to be March 14, 445 BC. It is at that point, the clock started.

The clock for Israel stopped when Jesus Christ presented Himself, on the exact day expected, as Messiah. We call that day Palm Sunday. That stopped the clock as He was cut off, killed.

Daniel stated the city of Jerusalem, and the Temple would be destroyed, it was in 70 AD. The clock has stopped at 69 weeks of years with Messiah cut off and with one week left to go.

Then it was all about the church, but once the church age ends and we are called up to Him as He fulfills His promise from John 14, then the stage is set for the final week to begin.

With the church age ended, the focus then shifts back to the nation of Israel, and we clearly see that with the church disappearing from view in Revelation post, "come up here" in Revelation 4:1. "The great purpose of Daniel's Seventieth week is to bring Israel to the point that they will repent and to embrace the salvation that is provided by their Messiah, Jesus." (Benware 2018, Kindle Locations 3764-3765)

John 14:1-3

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be." (NASB 2020)

What Jesus has just told His disciples in John 14 is world changing. It is the very first time anyone will ever hear that God has a plan to remove His people, the church, off this planet to be with Jesus. Israel was promised the land, the Kingdom of God was all about, well, here and involved the land. But Jesus tells His disciples new truth. He will be returning to the Father and while there, He will be personally preparing a place totally individualized for each of His followers.

This is new truth, it is something His disciples must have been blown away by, and it is a promise that we are still waiting to be fulfilled today. We call it the harpazo of the church.

Jesus is telling His disciples that "If I go and prepare," "I am coming again." The verb form He uses is in the future. This is a promise made to His "little children," in other words, those of us who are now part of the family because of believing in the work that He did on the cross and in His resurrection. He is using an example that His disciples would be familiar with. He is beginning to develop the idea of the church being the bride of Christ as He is now talking in terms of being the bridegroom. God is the Father and now Jesus talks in terms of going to prepare a place, just like a bridegroom would do before coming to take his bride to be with him in a typical Jewish wedding.

Marriages in Israel were arranged marriages. It was not unusual to have families, who have known each other for a long time, become more connected by arranging marriage between their kids.

I wonder about that practice and what it would look like today if we still did that in the church. Parents would get together after church with another set of parents and work out an agreement for this son and daughter to get married and then continue to grow the church by having children. You know, that was not unusual, even in this country in the 1890's, especially in groups newly arrived from Europe.

God the Father, the Father of the Groom, made the arrangement and then paid the bride price. The bride price was the blood of His Son. (Fruchtenbaum, The Messianic Bible Study Collection 1983, 3)



Currently, we are still waiting on the bridegroom to finish His preparations in the house of the Father for us. Also, during that time, we are being perfected for the presentation to the Bridegroom. We are being sanctified by the “washing of the water with the word (Ephesians 5:26).”

When all the preparations are completed at the Father’s house, the Father then tells the bridegroom it is time to go get His bride. “The fetching of the Bride of the Messiah will be accomplished by the Rapture of the Church.” (Fruchtenbaum, The Messianic Bible Study Collection 1983, 5)

Jesus uses the word *paralambano* which we have translated for us as take. “Literally, “And I shall take you along (*παρα- [para-]*) to my own home” (cf. 13:36).” (Robertson 1933, Jn 14:3)

The Greek word *para* gets us the idea of along side or beside. But Jesus has created a compound word by adding it to *lambano*. Totally acceptable in the Greek. “The original etymological meaning is “to grasp,” “to seize.” It develops in two directions. The first is active, “to take,” “to bring under one’s control on one’s own initiative.”...The second direction gives us already in classical Greek the sense “to receive,” “to acquire” (passively), both literally.” (Delling 1964-, 5)

By the time of Jesus, some additional meaning had been added to *lambano*. It added the meaning “to take away,” “to take to oneself” (with force, or to unburden).” (Delling 1964-, 6)

The disciples may not have realized all of this at first, but this seriously new promise is astounding. Jesus is telling His disciples that He is going to prepare a place and then come back to get them. And when He comes back to bring them alongside, He will be seizing or taking away by force. Shades of harpazo.

This is startling news when Jesus gives this to the disciples the first time. It is the first time this has ever been stated by the Lord, and He is already looking forward to it. So much so that just minutes later, He will pray specifically about it to the Father.

John 17:24

“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” (ESV)

Jesus is preparing a place for us. Just as a bridegroom would return to the house of His father to prepare a place for his bride, Jesus is doing the same for us. This is a clear picture being given to us taken from Jewish wedding customs of the time.

The disciples would have been familiar with what takes place next in the entire marriage process, after the place is prepared, the father of the bridegroom tells his son, go get your bride. This fetching of the bride is what happens at the rapture.

The bride and her bridal party would therefore be anxiously watching and waiting for the exact moment. Even in the late evening, the bridal party was to keep their oil lamps burning just in case the wedding was to begin. How would they know when the time had arrived? One custom was for a member of the groom’s party to lead the way from the groom’s house to the home of the bride, and to shout “Behold, the bridegroom comes!” This would be followed by the sound of the shofar (ram’s horn), which was used to proclaim Jewish holy days and special events.

At the sound of the shofar, the groom would lead a wedding procession through the streets of the village to the house of the bride. The groomsmen would then carry (*nissuin*) the bride back to the groom’s house where a *huppah* (“canopy”) was once again set up. (Kasdan 1996, 51-52)



The groomsmen would fly the bride to the bridegroom.

Jesus was looking forward to this day as He first described it to the disciples. So much so He prayed for it as well. But He also said “But as for that day and hour no one knows it—not even the angels in heaven—except the Father alone.” (Matthew 24:36, NET 2nd ed.)

This event is imminent. When Christ says, “I am coming again,” He is using a present tense verb to discuss a future event. This “indicates the event’s present immediacy.

“First, use of the present tense for a future event: “I will come back” (“I am coming back”) indicates the event’s present immediacy.

Second, that He will personally come back implies a separate event. At the end of the Tribulation, at the Second Coming, when Christ returns to earth, it is not He but His angels who will gather the elect (Matt. 24:31).

Third, Christ will take them to heaven to His Father’s house, not keep them on earth to go into the kingdom as at the end of the Tribulation (the Second Coming—25:34).” (Geisler 2005, 623)

Once we are gone, an event will take place that restarts the Daniel 9 clock, the clock that stopped on Palm Sunday.

Daniel 9:27

“And he will confirm a covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come the one who makes desolate, until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate.”” (NASB 2020)

The final 7 is marked by a covenant, a treaty of protection that will be made with Israel and Jerusalem

Israel must be a nation, ck. Jerusalem inhabited by Jews, ck. There is another city though referenced in the scriptures as the city of sin, Daniel was familiar with it and lived there, it comes up again as a reference in Revelation, Babylon. And for centuries folks have conjectured the references to Babylon in Revelation were referring to a city that will show up later in time like Babylon. But, what if it is actually, Babylon.

William Newell wrote the following in 1935. “The final form of Babylon is the literal city on the Euphrates, rebuilt as Antichrist’s capital of the last days, opposing Israel as God’s earthly people who will have gathered back to their land (the Church of course, having been raptured), and opposing Jehovah’s worship with the most powerful and enslaving form of idolatry that the world has ever known—the worship of the Beast and his image!” (Newell 1935, 272)

Oh, yeah, Saddam Hussien started but did not finish the reconstruction of Babylon. Old news. Not actually. To give you a hint of where we are on the rapture calendar. Are we now watching Zechariah 5 fulfillment?

Zechariah 5:10–11

“So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “Where are they taking the ephah?” Then he said to me, “To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal.”” (NASB 2020)



Per Iraqi News, the local government in Babylon (Babil) Governorate has initiated work on several major projects aimed at revolutionizing its tourism sector and strengthening its economy. The strategic drive seeks to leverage the region's unparalleled historical heritage while embracing new industrial growth.

To fully capitalize on its heritage and the new economic dynamism, Babil has launched four critical tourism and infrastructure projects: the 5-star "Jana'en Babil" Hotel, the Hilla Corniche development, the Babil Towers residential project, and the reconstruction of the older Babil Tourist Hotel. These simultaneous projects represent a comprehensive strategy to merge Babylon's ancient legacy with modern economic prosperity. The goal is to secure its place as both an essential cultural destination and a center for sustainable economic prosperity. (Al-Samarrale 2025)

But Babylon is inland from the Gulf, that would require there to be a port and a road network. Yep, it would indeed. Enter the Al Faw Port.

Al Faw Grand Port is a massive project that represents a significant shift for the Iraqi economy. It is a logistical hub and an economic engine aiming to transform Iraq into a major global trade center. Located on the shores of the Arabian Gulf, the port seeks to connect Asia and Europe through Iraq, making it a crucial link in global trade. (Al Faw Grand Port 2026)

Prime Minister Mohammed Shiaa Al-Sudani has officially declared Babylon as the "Industrial Capital of Iraq," marking a significant milestone in the country's industrial development.

During a ceremony at Al-Mutahida Packaging in Babylon, Al-Sudani inaugurated a plastic ampoules and caps factory with a capacity of 120,000 tonnes annually, a flexographic printing plant with 35,000 tonnes capacity, and launched construction of a plastic granules plant with 300,000 tonnes annual capacity. All three projects are private-sector led. (Lee 2025)

In co-operation with the Chinese state-owned construction corporation PowerChina, Koop International has signed a contract for the construction of 14 school buildings near Najaf and Babylon. This contract being a part one of two agreements between PowerChina and Koop to build a total of 44 schools in Iraq. (Koop International 2026)

There are 811 Housing developments in Babylon Governorate, Iraq as of July, 2026. (PoiData 2026)

As we speak today, Babylon is being rebuilt into an economic and political powerhouse. Could this be where the Beast sets up shop? Possible. My intent though is for us to realize just how close we are to Jesus returning for His church.

Let's pray.



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