

HE'S COMING!

So often in this newsletter we point to the signs that tell us that we are on the cusp of the End Times. Israel is back in the Land and the generation that saw that happen is coming to the end of their natural



COMING SOON? - Model of the coming Third Temple

life-cycle. Jesus told His disciples, *“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.”* (Matthew 24:34) Many scholars believe that He was talking about the generation that saw the return of the State of Israel or the return of Jerusalem. Either way, that puts us in the window. Then we see the Magog Alliance forming up as Turkey and Persia (Iran) and Russia cozy up to each other, as Ezekiel 38 predicts. [There is some conflicting opinion on whether Russia is a part of that confederacy.] With the technology accompanying the vaccine and the electronic currency that will soon be put in place, we see the architecture of the Mark of the Beast being built. Preparations are in place for the rebuilding of the Temple. Steps are being taken to unite the religions of the world. All of these are events that will take place during the Tribulation, that 7 year long

time of trial and judgment that will come upon the earth prior to the return of King Jesus. So, if we are on the edge of the Tribulation, we are very near to the rapture of the Church.

PART I – “I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU!”

Here’s the bottom line: JESUS IS COMING BACK! This is one of the central, most essential, sometimes disbelieved and certainly misunderstood tenets of the Faith. It is also an essential to understand this doctrine in order to ‘get’ what is to come. Sometime, probably in the not too distant future, Jesus is coming back for His Church, - all the true believers, - to gather them to Himself. This is what is referred to as the ‘Rapture’. Following that He is coming in judgment. Many Christians, - sometimes whole denominations, - have missed the essential nature of this doctrine. Others have glossed over it. In this series we’ll look at that promise of Christ’s return; - its certainty, its timing and its relation to the day in which we live.

“In 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. And 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.” (John 14:2-3) These are the words of Jesus himself, speaking to the apostles on the occasion of the Last Supper. Christ had just told them that *“Where I am going, you cannot come.”* Now He was explaining why. It is here that Jesus gave his disciples that promise of His future return to *“...receive you to Myself.”* It is a promise to come and take believers out of the world to a heavenly dwelling place where they will live in the age to come. This is clearly not His return in judgment, but as we will see, a coming for His bride.



In fact, the event that Jesus is alluding to is something the Church has come to call, The Rapture, after the Latin word raptus found in 1Thessalonians 4:17. Raptus is translated ‘caught up’ coming from the Latin verb rapere, ‘to transport from one place to another’. Of course, the New Testament was not written in Latin but Greek; - and the Greek word used in the original manuscripts was harpazo, which means ‘to seize’, or ‘a violent snatching away’.¹ Let’s look at Paul’s description of the event found in 1Thessalonians 4:15-17. *“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until*

the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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. 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.”

Here is the event, given in so much more detail. And there is that word caught up, from the Greek *harpazo*, which echoes and expands upon the promise of Jesus’ words of John 14:3 recorded above. He’s coming, and He will bring us to Himself! Paul wrote these words to the Church in Thessalonica, which had begun to question what they had been taught and believed about Christ’s coming. Read the two verses that precede the description of the rapture above. *“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.”* (1Thessalonians 4:13-14) The persecuted Christians in Thessalonica believed that they would be delivered from the trial by Jesus return. They believed that this ‘rapture’ could happen imminently, at any time. Yet many of their brothers were dying and they began to question just what happens to those Christians who had “*fallen asleep*.” Would they miss the Lord’s return?² So Paul gave them a detailed view of the rapture. Let’s examine some of its elements.

First of all, let’s remember that Paul is speaking to believers, Christ’s Church, comforting them about their already dead loved ones. Broken down, here is what he tells them, (and by extension, believers of every age).

- 1) The dead will rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:15 puts it thus, *“we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.”*
- 2) The Lord Jesus Himself, is coming for us. It will be an unmistakable event. Verse 16, tells us *“the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.”* According to Dr. David Jeremiah, the Greek there is not suggesting that there will be three separate auditory events. Rather it is describing a sound that will be so unmistakably memorable as to be perceived as a shout from heaven, like the voice of an archangel or the very trump of God. [It is interesting to note here that the New Agers also expect some sort of signaling sound that will usher in a chaotic event that will ‘convert’ the world to their cause. Could this “*shout*,” this “*voice of the archangel*,” be misinterpreted by Satan’s followers to their own ends?]
- 3) First the dead are raptured and then the living. *“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.”* The original Greek *harpazo* has several senses: To be carried off by force, to eagerly claim for oneself, to snatch away speedily, and to reserve from destruction. When Christ comes for His Church, it will be an occasion that reflects all of those meanings.
- 4) There will be a great reunion with all New Testament saints, living and dead. The believers in Jesus from every age will come together with the Lord.
- 5) We will be instantly transformed. 1Corinthians 15:51-52 describes it like this: *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—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.”* The whole transaction will be over in a moment as we receive our eternal, glorified bodies. 1Corinthians 15:42-44 reads, *“The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”* It will all happen in the “*twinkling of an eye*.”³

¹ Material taken from an article entitled: - A Pretribulation Rapture of the Church..., Rapture Ready

² From the notes on 1Thessalonians 4:13-18, John MacArthur Study Bible

³ Much of the material from this section adapted from,