

“THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH”

(Second in an 8 week series on “The Future Unfolded”)

WHY WILL THE CHURCH BE RAPTURED?

1) The Nature of the Tribulation –

“They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from **the wrath of the Lamb!**” ¹⁷ For the **great day of their wrath** has come, and who can stand?” - Revelation 6:16-17

“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—**to every nation, tribe, language and people.**” ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because **the hour of his judgment has come.**” - Revelation 14:6-7a

“They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—**Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.**” - 1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:9

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, **I will also keep you from the hour of trial** that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.” - Revelation 3:10

2) The Nature of Israel vs. the Church –

➤ Israel -

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for **your people** and **your holy city** ...” - Daniel 9:24a

“How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a **time of trouble for Jacob** ...” - Jeremiah 30:7a

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ **to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.**” ... he began by saying to them, **“Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”** - Luke 4:18-19; 21 / Isaiah 61:1-2a

“... **and the day of vengeance of our God,**” - Isaiah 61:2b

➤ The Church -

“... by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to **create in himself one new man out of the two**, thus making peace,” - Ephesians 2:15

“This mystery is that through the gospel the **Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.**” - Ephesians 3:6

“To them God has chosen to make known **among the Gentiles** the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**” - Colossians 1:27

3) The Nature of the Holy Spirit -

“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, **I will send him to you.** ⁸ When he comes, **he will convict the world** of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.” - John 16:7-11

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ **who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession**--to the praise of his glory.” - Ephesians 1:13-14

“For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so **till he is taken out of the way.**” - 2 Thessalonians 2:7

WHEN WILL THE CHURCH BE RAPTURED?

1) When All Is Ready

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. **I am going there to prepare a place for you.** ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.** ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.” - John 14:1-4

2) At the Trumpet Call

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with **the trumpet call of God**, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” - 1 Thessalonians 4:16

“... at the **last trumpet**. For **the trumpet will sound**, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” - 1 Corinthians 15:52b

3) Like A Thief in the Night

“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night**. ³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But **you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief**. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but **let us be alert** and self-controlled. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ **For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ**. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

HOW WILL THE CHURCH BE RAPTURED?

1) In the Clouds

“After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and **a cloud hid him from their sight**. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, **will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven**.” - Acts 1:9-11

“After that, **we who are still alive** and are left will be **caught up together** with them **in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**. And so we will be with the Lord forever.” - 1 Thessalonians 4:17

2) All Together

*“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with **the trumpet call of God,** and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** ¹⁷ After that, **we who are still alive** and are left will be **caught up together** with them **in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.”*

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

3) Fully Changed

*“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, **the dead will be raised imperishable,** and **we will be changed.** ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ **When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality,** then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”*

- 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

Martin Luther said he only had two days on his calendar
— today and “that day.”