

Messages From the Gates of Jerusalem

Lesson #29 -Events Between the Horse Gate & the East Gate - Part II - Rapture

Lesson Goals:

1. Distinguish differences between the Rapture and the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ
2. Who is designated to participate in the Rapture event?

Examine the numerous Old Testament predictions of the appearance of the Messiah of Israel. You will find 2 ostensibly contradictory presentations.

1. Many passages portray a suffering servant.
2. Other passages portray a ruling king. These 2 portrayals of the Messiah resulted in a view of anticipating 2 Messiahs > 1 would be a suffering servant; 1 would be the ruling King.

When Jesus made His earthly appearance, the overriding expectation of the reigning King who was to deliver Israel from the world's evil rulers was so prevalent they did not recognize Him. Scholars now recognize there is ONE Messiah in two distinct "comings."

Just as the Jews were misled by confusing the 2 accounts, there appears to be a parallel among Christians regarding the 2nd Coming of Christ.

Questions: Is the Church destined for the 7 year Tribulation Period or Heaven?
Is the term "rapture" in the Bible?

The N.T. was written in Greek. The earliest Greek texts used the Greek word "harpazo." The Greek was translated into Latin. The only Bible used by Western civilization for 1200 years was the Latin Vulgate. The term Rapture, is derived from the Latin word, *rapere*, which appears in this Bible. The word "rapere" was translated into several English phrases.

1. Take it by force > Matt. 11:12
2. Catcheth away > Matt. 13:19
3. Pluck them out > John 10:28
4. Caught Up > I Thess. 4:17 > NAS; King James; NIV
5. Gather Together > Eph. 1:10

Consider: The concept of the Rapture was NOT revealed to the OT prophets because it is a promise to the New Testament CHURCH and not to the saints of God who lived before the establishment of the Church.

The Old Testament Saints will be resurrected at the end of the 7 year Tribulation period - NOT at the Rapture of the Church. Daniel revealed this fact in Daniel 12:1-2 when he states that the saints of that age will be resurrected at the end of the "time of distress."

Many modern theologians say the "rapture teaching" began with John Darby in 1826; some say > Margaret Macdonald in 1830.

Early Church Fathers' Writings:

1. The Shepherd of Hermas - 96 - 150 AD - 1900 years ago, he wrote, "go, therefore, and tell the elect of the Lord His mighty deeds, and say to them that this beast (Roman Emperor) is a type of the great tribulation that is coming. If then ye prepare yourselves, repent and turn to the Lord, it will be possible for you to escape it."

2. Irenaeus - 130-202 AD - Studied under Polycarp who studied under the Disciple John. 1800 years ago, he said, "When in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this is it said there shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning neither shall be."

2. Ephraem the Syrian - 306-373 AD - 1600 years ago, he said, "For all the saints and elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins."

Earliest indication of a Pre-Trib Rapture in the New Testament:

In Luke 21:7-33 Jesus described the terrible events of the Tribulation

Luke 21:34-36 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Then He stated that it will come upon all them who dwell on the face of the earth. No earth-dweller can escape the judgments of the Tribulation period. If you are on the earth, you cannot escape the cataclysms of this period. Yet there is a way of escaping all these things that shall come to pass. Verse 36 - But not by remaining on the earth. The means of escaping is to "stand before the Son of Man," a standing that must take place off the earth, for there is NO escape on the earth.

The Rapture > Believers are raptured off the earth and stand before the Son of Man.

1st Clear Mention of the Rapture:

John 14:1-4 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² 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. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; (promise to believers) that where I am, there you may be also. (purpose of His coming >take believers to Heaven) ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Note: There is NO mention of Jesus coming to earth as He will do at the 2nd Coming.

The New Testament records 2 detailed descriptions of the Lord's return.

Paul > I Thess. 4:13-18

John > Revelation 19:11-16

<p>13. I <u>do not want you to be ignorant</u>, brethren concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.</p>	<p>11. Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him <i>was</i> called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.</p>
<p>14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus</p>	<p>12. His eyes <i>were</i> like a flame of fire, and on His head <i>were</i> many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.</p>
<p>15. For this we say to you by the <u>word of the Lord</u>, that we who are alive <i>and remain</i> until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.</p>	<p>13. He <i>was</i> clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.</p>
<p>16. 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 <u>dead in Christ will rise first</u>.</p>	<p>14. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.</p>
<p>17. Then we who are alive <i>and remain</i> 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.</p>	<p>15. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.</p>
<p>18. Therefore <u>comfort one another</u> with these words.</p>	<p>16. And He has on <i>His</i> robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.</p>

Although both passages focus on Jesus, the similarity ends there.

4 things Paul said in I Thess. 4:13-18

1. God doesn't want ignorance on the part of the Church > on the subject of the rapture.
2. Paul was giving us the WORD of the LORD.
3. Jesus said the dead believers will be raised and the living believers will be caught up with them.
4. Jesus said comfort one another about this.

Characteristics Unique to I Thess. 4:13-18

1. Jesus appears in the heavens. He brings with Him the spirit and soul of those who have died in Him during the Church Age. (Birth of Church at Pentecost > Rapture)

2. Blowing of a trumpet and Jesus descends with a shout, with the voice of an archangel.
3. The dead in Christ (baptized by the Holy Spirit >began in Acts 2) are resurrected. Their supernaturally reconstructed bodies ascend to meet the Lord in the air. Their spirit will be reunited with their body which will be glorified. (I Cor. 15:42-44; 51-58)

So also *is* the resurrection of the dead.

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.

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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

4. The living in Christ will follow and will be translated from mortal to immortal.

The generation of believers alive when Jesus appears in the heavens will never die.

5. Meet the Lord in the air; permanently remain with Him.

Characteristics Unique to Rev. 19:11-16

1. The 7 year tribulation period is coming to an end.
2. All the angels and saints in Heaven are shouting "Hallelujah" because the kingdom of the Antichrist has been destroyed. It is time for Jesus to come to earth. (Rev. 19:1-6)
3. Jesus & His Bride return to earth in glory, riding white horses.
4. Christ returns as a warrior to "judge and wage war" against the enemies of God.
5. He returns as an avenger to pour out the wrath of God on those who have rejected God's love and grace.
6. He returns as king to "strike down the nations" and "rule them with a rod of iron."

Summary > I Thess. 4:13-18

Rev. 19:11-16

1. Jesus appears in the heavens.	1.Jesus returns to earth. Zech. 14
2. Jesus comes for His Church.	2.Jesus returns WITH His Bride.
3. Jesus is a Deliverer.	3.Jesus is a Warrior.
4. Jesus appears in grace.	4.Jesus returns in wrath.
5. Jesus appears as a bridegroom.	5.Jesus returns as King of the world.

Scripture portrays Jesus as our Deliverer to Save Us From the Coming Wrath

In I Thess. 1:10, Paul portrays Jesus as coming FOR His Church, to DELIVER believers from the "wrath that is to come." He is coming to claim the righteous.

Rom. 5:9 says "we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him (Jesus)."

I Thess. 5:1-9 - But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. (to children of darkness) ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: The children of the day will know the season and won't be caught by surprise.

Our Admonition as we wait for Jesus to Appear as our Deliverer

Luke 21:36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Doctrine of Imminency: The primary thought expressed by *imminency* is that something important is likely to happen, and could do so without delay. While it may not be immediate nor necessarily soon, it is next on the program and may take place at any time.

The term *imminency* normally implies three important truths concerning our Lord's coming:

(1) While no one knows the time of Christ's return, He may come at any moment and it is possible that He might come today. In the midst of all the trials and sorrows of life, it is the hope of Christ's imminent return which never fails to encourage the troubled heart.

(2) The Rapture is signless, and will be unannounced and largely unexpected.

(3) No clearly prophesied event must transpire prior to the Rapture, for this might date the time of His coming. If the return of Christ for His Church is imminent, then obviously it will be before the coming period of Tribulation with its clearly predicted signs and judgments.

In theological language, the Rapture of the Church must be *Pretribulation!* We do not first look for an invasion of the Holy Land by Russia or some other northern confederation, nor the revelation of Antichrist and his godless ambitions, nor the predicted Battle of Armageddon with its vast devastation. We look next for the coming of Christ from heaven to take His own to the Father's house (John 14:1-3), and the Bible calls this our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).

Scripture teaches believers to expect the Savior from heaven at any moment.

Therefore, we are to always be READY for His return.

Phil. 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Heb. 9:28 To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

I Thess. 1:10 to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

I Thess. 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

I Peter 1:13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

The Doctrine of Imminence should have a definite bearing on your Christian walk.

Rom. 13:11-12 And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Consider: The salvation here is eschatological rather than soteriological > This salvation is viewed as FUTURE. As each day ends, it brings the believer 1 day closer to the time when the Rapture may occur. Due to imminency, it is time for believers to awaken out of sleep and to live a life consistent with the position of being *sons of light*.

I John 3:2-3 > Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. Because we have this HOPE in Him, we keep our lives pure so we will not be ashamed at His coming.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

I Tim. 6:14 > Paul admonished us to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Luke 19:13 > Occupy until I come.

As we grow in the Lord, we not only LOOK for His appearing, but we LOVE His appearing.

II Tim. 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

In I Thess. 4:15; 17:2 II Thess. 2:1 > Paul included himself among those who were looking for Christ's return.

Consider > IF there were only 1 future coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the 7 year Tribulation period, these warnings would be pointless. There would be no issue of imminence because there are many prophecies and signals that are yet to be fulfilled before Jesus can return.

Scripture: Prophecies that must be fulfilled before return of Jesus Christ

1. Daniel 9:27 - A peace treaty must be signed that will guarantee Israel's peace with all of its Arab neighbors.
2. Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 11:1-2 - The Jewish temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem.
3. Rev. 6-18 - The Tribulation must begin and run its 7 year course, resulting in the death of over $\frac{1}{2}$ the world's population.
4. Rev. 12:13-17; Zech. 13:7-9 - The Antichrist must reveal himself and begin an unprecedented persecution of the Jews - one that will result in the death of 2/3 of all the Jews.
5. Matt. 24:14; Rev. 14:6-7 - The Gospel must be preached to every person on the earth.
6. Rev. 13:16-18 - An unprecedented system of economic control must be established that will prevent persons from buying or selling anything unless they can display on their right hands or foreheads the mark or name of the Antichrist.
7. Rev. 17 & 18 - The worldwide kingdom of the Antichrist must be destroyed in "one hour of one day."

Consider: These and other events are clearly prophesied in Scripture as occurring BEFORE Jesus returns to earth. NONE of them have yet been fulfilled in history. If these must occur before Jesus comes, why would I be looking for Jesus now?

I should be looking for the Antichrist instead.

Consider: ONLY Matthew speaks of watching for the Antichrist in:

Matt. 24:15 Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place"

To whom is Matthew speaking? The Jews living in Israel in the middle of the Tribulation when the Antichrist desecrates the rebuilt temple

Remember: The Rapture DOES NOT kick-off the 7 year Tribulation period. That event is the signing of a peace treaty that will guarantee the peace of Israel with its Arab neighbors and will authorize the Jews to rebuild their temple. (Dan. 9:27)

1. The Rapture is a "signless" event. The signs in Scripture are related to the 2nd coming at the end of the 7 year Tribulation period.
2. When you see these signs begin to converge and accumulate, you can be assured that the Rapture is definitely going to occur at any moment.

The imminence of His appearing becomes increasingly apparent as the signs of the time point to the events that will culminate with His Second Coming. Some of these events include: the re-establishment of the state of Israel, the Jewish reoccupation of the city of Jerusalem, the reunification of Europe, the rise of the Arab militancy in the Middle East and the whole world coming against Israel over the control of Jerusalem.

Paul's Experience with the Believers at Thessalonica

II Thess. 2:1-2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

Background: This church was coming under intense persecution so they assumed they were in the "Great Tribulation." This church was in turmoil because someone had written them a letter under Paul's name stating they had missed the "gathering to the Lord" (Rapture) and were living in "the day of the Lord."

Important Points to Consider:

1. If Paul had taught them the Rapture would FOLLOW the Tribulation, why would they be so upset? They would be rejoicing at the prospect that their redemption was drawing near.
2. They are troubled because they had been taught they would be rapture BEFORE the Tribulation.
3. They thought the Tribulation had started. Therefore, they had MISSED the Rapture.

Paul tries to calm them down by reminding them of his teaching: Events that must precede:

II Thess. 2:3-5 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first (a general apostasy in the church), and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

1. Satan and his forces will unfold their program once the church is out of the world.
2. The DAY of the Lord will not come until after the Antichrist > Man of sin > Son of Perdition > is revealed.
3. Jesus, Paul & John all make reference to the Tribulation Temple.
4. Something else must happen first!

II Thess. 2:6-8 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

1. The Antichrist would not be revealed until a restraining force "is taken out of the way." (I believe the restrainer is the Holy Spirit as He embodies the Church.)

Sequence:

1. The Apostasy	2. Rapture (Restrainer Removed)
3. Man of Sin Revealed	4. The "Day of the Lord"

Prophetic Types that Picture Deliverance from Tribulation > Judgment

The Hebrew MIDRASH emphasizes that "prophecy is pattern, not just prediction." Examine past judgments of God in Scripture. God's actions reveal His character. Scripture bears out God's desire to deliver the righteous from the judgments upon the world.

1. Three groups of people who faced the judgment of God at the Flood of Noah >
 - a. Enoch > Gen. 5:24 "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." He was raptured out of the world before God's judgment and wrath were poured out on the unbelieving world. He appears to be a type of the Church that will be taken out of the world before God pours out His wrath > Tribulation Period. Also, see Heb. 11:5
 - b. Noah & his family are a type of the Jewish remnant that will be protected through the Tribulation Period. They were preserved through the Flood in the Ark.
 - c. Those who perished in the Flood or judgment.
2. Lot & family were delivered out of Sodom & Gomorrah before it was destroyed. Consider: II Peter 2:2-9 Peter states that if God spared Noah & Lot, then He surely "knows how to rescue the godly from trial & to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."
3. Daniel & 3 friends - Daniel is possibly a type of the church who was removed from the trial of the fiery furnace. His 3 friends are a type of the Jewish remnant who will be protected through the "fiery furnace."
4. Jewish Wedding Tradition of Jesus' Time - After the betrothal, the groom would return to his father's house to prepare a wedding chamber for his bride.
 - He would return for his bride at an unexpected moment so the bride had to be ready constantly.
 - When he returned, he would take his bride back to his father's house to the chamber he had prepared.
 - He & his bride would be sealed in the chamber for 7 days.
 - When they emerged, a great wedding feast would be celebrated.
 - Parallel: Jesus has returned to Heaven to prepare a place for His bride, the Church.
 - When He returns for His bride, He will take her to His Father's heavenly home.
 - There He will remain with His bride for 7 years during the Tribulation Period.
 - This period ends with the marriage supper of the Lamb described in Rev. 19.

Structure of Revelation implies a Pre-Trib Rapture in a symbolic sense. See Lesson #28.

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture is the only one which clearly maintains the distinction between Israel and the Church and God's separate plans for each. The seventy "sevens" of Daniel 9:24 are decreed upon Daniel's people (the Jews) and Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem).

This prophecy makes it plain that the seventieth week (the Tribulation) is a time of purging and restoration for Israel and Jerusalem, not for the church.

Rev. 3:10 Because you did keep the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. The trial that is about to fall upon the whole earth is the Tribulation found in Rev. 6-19.

Note: IF this meant the Church will be kept safe during the Tribulation, then something goes terribly wrong. Saints are being killed on a massive scale. If these saints are Church saints, they are NOT being kept safe and Rev. 3:10 is meaningless.

Keep Church saints in a separate category from Tribulation saints.

James 5:7-9 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned.

Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

Consider: Coming of the Lord is at hand. The Judge is standing before the doors. Imminent!

Compare Rapture with 2nd Coming

RAPTURE

2ND COMING

NO signs precede rapture	Signs precede 2 nd Coming
Translation of Believers	NO translation involved
Removal of Believers	Manifestation of Jesus Christ
Translated Saints Go To Heaven	Translated Saints Return to Earth with Him
Earth is Not Judged	Earth is Judged
Imminent > Happen at any moment	Occurs after 7 year period - Detailed events
Not in the Old Testament	Predicted in the Old Testament
Act of Deliverance from the Wrath	Act of Judgment - Experience the Wrath
Involves Believers Only	Involves ALL men & women on earth
Occurs Before the Day of Wrath	Concludes the Day of Wrath
No Reference to Satan	Satan is Bound for 1,000 years
He comes FOR His Own	He comes WITH His Own
He Comes In The Air	He comes To The Earth
He Claims His Bride	He Comes WITH His Bride
Only His Own SEE Him	Every Eye Shall See Him
Great Tribulation Begins	Millennial Kingdom Begins
Church Age Believers ONLY	Old Testament Saints & Tribulation Saints
Focus is Lord & His Church	Focus is Israel & Kingdom
World is Deceived	Satan will be bound - he cannot deceive
Believers depart the earth	Unbelievers are taken away from the earth
Unbelievers remain on the earth	Believers remain on the earth