

Rapture and Return

Revelation 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:16-18, 1 Cor. 15:50-53; Matt. 24

Sunday, July 5, 2020

1. **Slide** - As we reach **chapter 4**, we begin the **third and final section** of this book of Revelation.
 - a. **Slide** - **After these things...** - **Revelation 4:1**
 - i. **(Click)** The Greek word here is ‘Meta tauta’. It’s the same phrase used in the **Divine Outline (Rev 1:19)**, where John was instructed to write of the things which he had seen *after* the Church Era.
 - ii. **(Click)** So, the Greek word “meta tauta” reveals to us we are now entering into the third and final section of the book of Revelation.
 - b. **Slide** - The first thing John sees is a **door standing open in heaven...**
 - i. The last time we read about a door, **Jesus was knocking** at it in **Rev. 3:20**.
 1. **(Click)** Anyone who opens the door of us heart to the Lord Jesus will have the door of heaven opened to him.
 - a. John 10:1-10 –
 2. **(Click)** The **door of heaven** is open due to Jesus dying on the cross for the *forgiven* of our *sins* and rising from the grave three days later. By **conquering sin and death**, He is alive up in heaven and if anyone humbles themselves and calls on the name of the Lord will be **saved** from sin and death as well.
 - a. **Have you opened the door of your heart to Jesus yet?**
 - b. If you do, heaven will be open to you.
 - c. **Slide** - **The hearing of a Trumpet – Verse 1b**
 - i. First John the Revelator **sees** the door of heaven open and then he **hears** a voice like a trumpet saying, **“Come up here.”**
 - ii. **Does the sound of a trumpet and people taken to heaven as a result ring any bells?**
 1. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**
 - iii. **(Click)** At the trumpet sound of God, the *Church* will be **caught up** to be with the Lord.
 - iv. **(Click)** This is speaking of the **Rapture** of the Church.
 1. Now it was **John Darby in 1830** that coined this phrase “**The Rapture**.”
 2. **(Click)** John got the word Rapture from the Latin Vulgate Bible where the word is “rapturos.”
 3. In the Greek text it is “Harpozō.”
 4. In the English it’s “**Caught up**” – **Verse 17**.
 - a. It means to be **snatched by force, seized or pull up**.
 - v. **Slide** - Notice the progression 1 Thess. 4:16-18
 1. **(Click)** The Lord will descend from heaven – **vs. 16**
 2. **(Click)** Voice of an archangel will shout – **vs. 16**
 3. **(Click)** The trumpet is blown by God – **vs. 16**
 4. **(Click)** *Dead in Christ* are caught up first - **vs. 16**
 - a. The seed of their bodies will be used to create a new glorified body

5. **(Click)** Then believers who are *alive* will be caught up second – vs. 17
 - a. Their bodies will be transformed into a **new glorified body**.
 6. **(Click)** Will meet the Lord in the air (caught up to the air) – vs. 17
 - vi. **Side Note:** Significantly, the word “*church*” is never used again in the rest of the **Book of Revelation**.
 1. **What ends the Church Era?** The Church being **taken up into heaven** and **exchanging** their earthly bodies with their new heavenly bodies.
 - vii. One of the things you will notice about the book of Revelation is, it’s **chronological**.
- d. 1c: After this... ‘Meta tauta’
- i. Jesus is *reemphasizing* the fact that we are now going through the **third and final section of this book**.
 - ii. But before we venture too far, I want to stop and take a closer look at why we believe in the **Rapture of the Church** and the Church **Returning with Christ** to rule and reign with Him for a *thousand years*.
2. **Slide - Defining the Rapture: Titus 2:13 – ...while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,**
- a. **(Click)** The **Rapture** refers to that time when Jesus is going to come, without warning, and take away *His church* from this earth.
 - i. **(Click)** 1 Corinthians 15:52 –*in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet*.
 - ii. After the Rapture, the Lord will pour out His wrath upon this *sinful world*.
 - b. Some *churches* and *pastors* claim ignorance of the **Rapture** or say that they are not certain whether it will precede the Tribulation or *if* it is possible to understand.
 - i. There is no excuse for this from a *denomination* or a *pastor* if they study the scriptures.
 - ii. **(Click)** *Believing* and *understanding* the Rapture of the Church is important for **spiritual hope**.
 1. The **Rapture is our blessed hope** it’s the doorway to eternal life.
 2. Romans 8:22-24 -- 22 We know that the whole creation has been *groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time*. 23 *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies*. 24 *For in this hope we were saved*.
 - c. **Slide -** I believe that our view of the Rapture will have a **significant impact** of our spiritual lives.
 - i. **(Click)** It helps have the right Priority concerning the things of the world, which so *easily grasp* onto us and *hold us back*.
 1. There is an urgency of living for Jesus Christ fully and completely.
 - ii. **(Click)** It helps us live lives of Purity. Knowing that the Lord can come at any moment should cause us to be found walking in righteousness and not sin.
 - iii. **(Click)** It helps us to **Persevere** in this *wicked* and *depraved generation* in which we live. It causes us to hold on and not give up for the Lord’s return is soon.
 - iv. **(Click)** It gives us a *since of urgency* to **Preach the Gospel** knowing the Lord might come at any moment.

3. **Slide - Jesus promised to come back for His bride** and when He does something awesome happens to our **bodies**.
- a. John 14:1-3 -- "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.
 - b. **(Click)** The Bible teaches us that *at* the Rapture of the Church our bodies **will be changed** – that is our bodies are transform into a new glorified body that lives forever.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 – 51 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.
 - ii. When the Bible declares that we will “*all be changed*,” it means there will be a **metamorphosis**.
 1. **allasoo: to change: to cause one thing to cease and another to take its place** (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon,
 - iii. **(Click)** It's taking what is **corrupt** (our flesh) and making it immortal.
 1. 1 Corinthians 15:53 -- For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.
 - iv. *All believers* will go through a glorious change and receive our **glorified bodies** at the coming of Jesus Christ for His church.
4. **Slide - Differing Views of Eschatology**
- a. Now there are three main differing views of Eschatology that we need to grasp.
 - i. **(Click) Amillennialism** – In the Latin an “A” means a negative, thus ‘no millennial reign of Christ’.
 1. It teaches that the thousand-year reign of Christ mentioned in **Revelation 20:1-6** is **symbolic** of the current church age, rather than a literal future 1000-year reign.
 2. It holds that while **Christ's reign** during the millennium is **spiritual** in nature, at the end of the *church age* Christ will return in *final judgment* and establish a *permanent physical reign*.
 - ii. **Post-Millennial** – They don't believe the millennial is a thousand years but just an era (*period of time*). Christians will gradually Christianization the world, then Christ will return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked.
 - iii. **Pre-Millennial** - teaches that the Second coming will occur before a literal thousand-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem upon the earth.
 - iv. **(Click) Preterism** – A preterist believes that all biblical prophecy has been fulfilled: the coming of Christ in judgment was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Satan and Antichrist have been thrown into the lake of fire, the kingdom of God has arrived, the resurrection is understood in spiritual terms, the Great Commission has been fulfilled, all things have been made new (the old heaven and earth have passed away; the new heaven and earth have come), the promised restoration has arrived.

- v. **(Click) Reconstructionism** – a reformed theonomic movement that is a hypothetical Christian form of government in which society is ruled by the divine law of the Old Testament.
- vi. **(Click) Post-Tribulation** – the belief that Jesus will Rapture the Church after the Tribulation period at the Second Coming of Christ. The Church goes through the tribulation, then at the end is raptured and then immediately after the Second Coming.
- vii. **Mid-Tribulation** – The Rapture occurs at the middle of the tribulation period in Revelation 14.
- viii. **Pre-Tribulation** – The Rapture occurs before the tribulation period in Revelation 4. **(Click)**

b. How do we now which eschatological view is correct?

5. **Slide - Six Layers of Eschatology**

- a. In the study of the end times one needs to understand these **six areas** to get the most accurate view.
- b. **(Click)** The **skeleton of eschatology** consists of understanding two major pieces:
 - i. **(Click) Seven Dispensations of Time**
 - 1. A study of how God interacts and manages His creation over the ages.
 - ii. **(Click) Seventy Weeks Prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27**
 - 1. This is the greatest and most important prophecy in *understanding* the **Last Days** which we live and the role of the Jews.
- c. **Slide - The Flesh of eschatology** consists of four major areas of study. We studied the first two already.
 - i. **(Click) Rapture of the Church** – **1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, Revelation 4:1**
 - 1. This is where Jesus will **remove His bride** from the earth, give us our **new glorified bodies** and enjoy the **Marriage Supper of the Lamb** for 7 years up in heaven.
 - 2. Meanwhile Satan will be given control over the earth to *deceive* many, the *Jews* will finish the 70th Week of Daniel and in the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation *God* will pour out His wrath on a Christ rejecting world.
 - ii. **(Click) Olivet Discourse** – **Matthew 24-25, Mark 13 and Luke 21**
 - 1. This discourse is where Jesus *answers* his disciples' question on what the last days or the Tribulation will look like.
 - iii. **(Click) The Book of Revelation**
 - 1. When you put the book of Revelation on top of all these then and only then does it begin to *truly make sense*.
 - iv. **(Click)** There are **other prophecies** from *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zachariah, Joel* and some of the other *minor prophets* as well from the teachings of the *Apostle Paul, the Apostle Peter the Apostle John* and *Jude* that add texture and definition to certain aspects of Eschatology.

d. **Slide - Seven Dispensations of Time Chart**

- i. Give the highlights of the chart.
6. Another area of confusion people have regarding *Eschatology* is, knowing the difference between the **Rapture of the Church** and the **Second Coming of Christ**
- a. **Slide** - As we look at this, you will realize that there is a big difference between these two events.

Rapture	Second Coming
Translation of Believers – 1 Thess. 4:16-17	No Translation Involved
Translation Saints go to heaven – Col. 3:4	Translation Saints return to earth – Rev. 19:14
Earth Not Judged	Earth Judged – Rev. 20:11`
Imminent, Any moment, Sign less – 1 Thess. 5:2; Matt. 25:36-44	Follows definite predicted signs – Dan. 9:27; Dan. 12:11-12
Not in the Old Testament	Predicted in the Old Testament – Zech. 12:10, 14:4
Believers Only – Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21	Affects All people on the earth – Rev 6
No Reference to Satan	Satan is bound – Rev. 20: 1-3
Jesus comes for His own – Phil. 3:20-21	Jesus comes with His own – Rev. 19:14
Jesus comes in the air – 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:17	Jesus comes to the earth – Rev. 19:11-21
Jesus claims His bride – Matt. 25:10	Jesus comes with His bride – Rev. 19:14
Only His own see Him – 1 Thess. 4:16-17	Every eye shall see Him – Rev. 1:7
Tribulation Period begins – Rev. 6	Millennium begins – Rev. 20:4-6
Before the Day of Wrath – 1 Thess. 1:19, 5:9	Concludes the Day of Wrath – Rev. 19:17-21
Time of Joy – 1 Thess. 5:2	Time of Mourning – Zech. 12:10-14; Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7

7. **Slide - Order of Last Day Events - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**
- a. **Verses 1-2:** Paul didn't want the Thessalonians to be **shaken** in mind or troubled
- i. Now to be shaken means rocked, agitated, disturbed or destroyed.
1. Don't let this *false teaching* do this to your mind and terrify you.
- ii. The Lord Jesus **hasn't come** for His bride yet – you haven't missed it!
1. They were troubled by several things.
- b. **Verse 2b:** It looks like the enemy brought this *confusion* from three different sources.
- i. **By Spirit** (*false prophecies*) – “I have a revelation from the Spirit ...” Or “The Spirit is upon me and telling me the following...”
1. People are getting these “*new revelations*” from God or these “*Fresh*” revelations – they are **nothing but the flesh!**
- ii. **By Word** (*false teaching*) – “Hey the word on the street is...” Or “this is the latest thing going through the churches. Buy this book or do this program, our listen to this person.”
1. Be careful to compare everything and everybody with the Bible. If it doesn't match up then throw it out.

- iii. **By letter** (*forgery*) – people were writing letters to the *Thessalonians* and then saying it was from Paul.
 - 1. Paul is saying, if it doesn't line up with what we have taught you, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, then *don't believe* it. It is false and from the devil, to *draw believers away from the truth*.
 - 2. That is why Paul says in **2 Thessalonians 3:17** that he **always signed** his letters even if someone else dictated it for him.
- c. **Verse 3a**: “**That day**” will not come unless the **falling away comes first**
 - i. “**That day**,” meaning the Rapture referring back to **verse 1**.
 - ii. “**That day**” will not come unless the “**falling away**” comes. The Greek word is apostasia (ap-os-tas-ee'-ah) which means, defection from truth –
 - 1. This is where we get our English word apostasy – defection of one's faith or from the Truth of God's word.
 - iii. Now **verse 3** is a bit confusing because it appears that the *Rapture* won't occur until the *falling away* and the man of sin is revealed.
 - 1. For clarity one must read **verses 6-8** to get a better chronology of events.
- d. **Verses 3-12**: The events listed in **verses 3-12** are not totally in order.
 - i. Paul **jumps around** from one thought to another.
 - 1. In **verse 4** he is *speaking* of the tribulation period
 - 2. Then in **verse 6-7** he is *back before* the Rapture
 - 3. **Verse 8a** – the lawless one is revealed
 - 4. **Verse 8b**, Paul *jumps* to the Second Coming of Christ
 - 5. Then in **verses 9-12** is *back during* the Tribulation again.
- e. The order of events in the last days is
 - i. **(Click)** there will be a **falling away** from the truth – called the *apostasy*. It's a sign of the *nearness* of the **Rapture**
 - ii. **(Click)** Then right after the Rapture the **son of perdition** can come on the scene – **Rev. 6:1**.
 - iii. **(Click)** He will **deceive many** with the *powers from Satan*
 - iv. **(Click)** Those that **receive the mark** of allegiance to the anti-Christ will be condemned.
 - v. **(Click)** Then **Jesus will come** on the scene with His *saints* and destroy all the evil.

8. **Slide - Review Prophecy Timeline**