

## The Rapture of the Church

Rev. 4:1

7/29/2020

We are at the place, in this revealing of God's plan through His Son, where the attention is sifted. The 1st vision was of Jesus and Him walking in the midst of the candlesticks. We have journeyed in our study thru the history of the church on this earth. We have found the continual invasion of the works of the adversary resulting in the final section in which we discovered the visible church is operating as a whole without the influence of the Spirit. Jesus is seen on the outside knocking on the door.

Christ, who was judging in the midst of the professing church, is now seen on high, opening the book of this world's judgment, of which He is about to precede with the final battle between good and evil. We will be shown the complete control of God upon events that He will have happen upon the Earth.

This 2nd vision will be originating in heaven and the throne of God. The church will not be on the earth but with Jesus. The church will not be back on the earth until we find them in chapter 19 coming back with Jesus to "execute judgment". Jude 14-15.

In Rev. 1:19 we found Jesus telling John to write "the things which thou hast seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter". We have looked at the first two and are now entering the final section. The "things which shall be hereafter" are yet in the future as we study. It could change at any moment. The "rapture" of the true believers is the next prophetic event in God's plan. This is what has taken place as we enter chapter 4. Nineteen times we see the word church previously to where we are at. Now we will discover that the focus will change the name to the "bride" and "twenty and four elders".

The word church means "the called out". Those that are in this group are meant to have their final destination in heaven because that is where they have been called to.

Jn. 17:16: "They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world."

Jn. 14:3: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that were I am ye may be also".

The saints have entered the opened door to heaven. The church is with Christ now, and Christ is in heaven, directing the events of the Great Tribulation Period that we will see beginning in Chapter 6.

The final period of church history clearly teaches an indifference to the true things of Christ. The doors of the “gospel” are being shut in a rapid fashion as we write this study. All over the world men have shut the door to Jesus Christ. Many are the examples of the rejection of Jesus being shown in the media. Believers are being silenced from showing their faith in a public manner. Prayers in school and at sporting events are being banned. At least 60 nations now are punishing believers who attempt to share openly their faith. Hatred of the gospel and a move to repress it completely by labeling its truth as “hate speech” is now a norm even in our own country. We are here at the brink of a new era.

The central theme of prophecy for believers today is the coming of Christ for His own called the Rapture. The one single purpose of the Rapture is to take the Church from earth to heaven. The Rapture is never mentioned in the Old Testament and was first revealed by Christ to His disciples on the last night before His crucifixion (Jn. 14:1-3).

The major passage on the Rapture is I Thess. 4:13-18. Paul describes the scene as the Lord coming bodily from heaven to the air above the earth and issuing a trumpet call that will be the signal for Christians who have died to be resurrected. A moment later, Christians still living will also be raptured with those who have been resurrected to meet the Lord in the air. Once they meet the Lord in the air, they go to heaven in fulfillment of the prophecy of going to the Father’s house (Jn. 14:2-3). First Corinthians 15 reveals more about the Rapture, saying that those who are living will be transformed instantly into bodies suited for heaven. (I Cor. 15:51-52).

The New Testament indicates that the Rapture is different than the Second Coming. First, the Rapture is a movement from earth to heaven that will occur before the Tribulation, while the Second Coming is a movement from heaven to earth that takes place at the end of the Tribulation.

Prophecies regarding the Rapture make no mention of angels or attending hosts, and no mention of a judgment on earth to follow. The Second Coming, however, is a complex event that, as described in Rev. 19:11-16, will take place over many hours as a gigantic procession of millions of saints and angels move from heaven to earth.

I Jn. 2:28-29: “And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him.”

I Jn. 3:2-3: “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that , when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is and every man that hath this hope is him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

We will now look at 15 some differences between the Rapture and the 2nd Coming of Jesus.

The 1st is that during the Rapture Christ comes in the air for His own while in the 2ndComing Christ comes with His own to earth.

The 2nd is that during the Rapture there is no judgment taking place on earth while at the 2ndComing Christ judges the inhabitants of earth.

The 3rd is that during the Rapture the “called out” are taken to heaven while at the 2ndComing of Christ He sets up His kingdom on earth.

The 4th is that the Rapture is imminent (could happen any moment). The picture of marriage during the time Jesus was on this earth was that the groom and bride were the same as together, yet not. She would wait, keeping herself pure, for the sudden appearing of her Groom to take her to the Marriage .

While the 2nd Coming, having over 300 prophecies concerning it, will not take place until after the seven year period known as the Great Tribulation. Many signs are given pertaining to this being near. Some of them are the rise of Israel (1948) found in Ezekiel 37, the power move of Russia found in Ezekiel 38-39, the increase in travel and knowledge found in Dan. 12:4, apostasy found in II Tim. 4:1-4, occultism found in II Tim. 4:3-4, scoffers found in II Tim. 3:1-5, a moral breakdown found in II Pet. 3:1-12, a coming one-world church Rev. 17 (The professing group of the Laodicea age will become part of the “harlot” of Rev. which will be an aid to the workings of the Antichrist.), and a one –world government found in Dan. 2. Remember these signs are not for the Rapture but the 2nd Coming of Christ. If we appear to be rapidly seeing these before us how can we not understand the need to be “watching” for Him to remove us before this takes place?

Again of the exact time we cannot be certain concerning the Rapture of the true church. When Jesus was on this earth He said—“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither (yet) the Son, but the Father.” Mark 13:32. After His resurrection and before the Ascension, He refused to satisfy the curiosity of His disciples, saying to them—“It is not for you to know the ‘times’ or the ‘seasons’ which the Father hath put in His own power.” Acts 1:7. Jesus knew of

Daniel's prophecy of the "Seventy Weeks" (Dan. 9:20-27), but He fixed no dates for their fulfillment. The student of prophecy is not to be a "date-setter", but he is to "watch". "Signs" are for the Jew. There is nothing to prevent Christ coming after His church at any time.

The Rapture, as described in I Thess. 4: 15-17, will be twofold. 1st there will be the resurrection of the "dead in Christ" and 2nd will be the translation of the "living Saints". This twofold character of the Rapture Jesus revealed to Martha when He was about to raise her brother Lazarus. He said to her: "I am the 'resurrection and the life', he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live (1st resurrection Saints) ; and whosoever liveth (is alive when I come back) and believeth in Me shall never die" Jn. 11:25-26.

Paul, in I Cor. 15:51-57 rd., speaks also of this two-fold character of the Rapture. He declares we shall not all sleep (to have faced death and now awaiting the change), but shall all be changed (given a body like unto Jesus' glorified body). He then mentions this corruptible (the dead in Christ) and also this mortal (the living saints).

Mat. 24:42-44 Rd. Again the Rapture will be a surprise.

I Thess. 5:1-11 Rd. We see the Lord will come as a thief. A thief does not announce his coming. He comes for a certain purpose. He does not take everything in the house. He takes only the precious things as the jewels, gold, silver, and fine wearing apparel. He does not come to stay as soon as he secures what he is after he departs. So Jesus at the Rapture will come and take away the saints only. The thief leaves much more that he takes. He will often leave household utensils and furniture behind. The Lord at the Rapture will leave the wicked and the great mass of heathen behind, for those who will be taken away will be comparatively few.

Luke 17:34-37 Rd. The Rapture will be elective in that it will separate believers from unbeliever. The effect will be, in a lot of cases, that it will separate husbands from wives, brothers from sisters, and friends from friends. The words "men and "women" in this passage are in italics. That means they are not in the original, and so the passage should read there will be "two in one bed", husband and wife, or two brothers, or two sisters, or two friends. Two in "bed" indicates night; tow grinding at the mill, morning or evening, and two in the field mid-noon. This shows the Rapture will happen all over the earth at the same time or as the Apostle describes it in a "moment" or the "twinkling of an eye". "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" Mat. 24:27.

The Rapture will be the most startling event of this dispensation. How will those left behind deal with this? As far as when it happens it will be sudden and world-wide. Those still here may not have the

understanding of what has happened. The dead professors will attend and worship just as they always have.

From Scripture we understand these truths. We know that one day the Father spoke to Christ in a voice that He understood, but the people who stood by mistook it for thunder. Jn. 12:28-29. When the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and spoke to him, the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, "hearing a voice", but seeing no man, and not understanding what was said. Acts 9:3-7.

The confusion about this event and the 2nd Coming will be removed when whomever is studying the events of our Lord distinguish between Christ's coming "for" His Saints and His coming "with" His Saints.

The "typical" teaching of the Scriptures demands that the Church be caught out "before" the Tribulation. Joseph was a type of Christ and he was espoused to, and married Asenath, a Gentile bride, during the time of his "rejection of his brethren" and "before the famine", which typified the Tribulation, because it was the time of "Judgment of his Brethren". This is the time of Christ's rejection by "His Brethren"—the Jews, and to complete the type He must get His Bride—the church, "before" the Tribulation.

Moses, who is a type of Christ, got his bride, and she a Gentile, "after" his rejection by his brethren, and "before" they passed through the Tribulation under Pharaoh.

As proof that the Church is "caught out" at this time and place, we have in the description of the Throne, the statement that the Holy Spirit in the seven-fold symbol of His power (v. 5) is back in heaven. Remember that Jesus taught that another Comforter would come and abide forever with the believers. Jn. 14:16.

In II Thess. 2 Paul addresses the concerns of the believers who had been troubled that they had missed the Rapture. In verse 6-8 Paul describes the Antichrist that is to come after the Rapture. He states that the only reason he has not taken control is the restraining power of the Holy Spirit which is now on this earth. This power will continue that work until He is "taken out of the way" which will occur when the Bride is removed. He will again have another ministry in the next dispensation as He did in the earlier ones.