

End Times

The Rapture – Part 2

Will You Fly Away?

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What is the Word of The Lord in This Hour?

The Bible indicates that knowledge puffs up, but love edifies or builds up. Therefore, it is critical that we not only study this sermon series but that we understand what the Lord is saying in this hour. Consider some thoughts with respect to where we are in the times and seasons.

- 1) There will be a great falling away – people are getting cold
- 2) Deception will be rampant
- 3) Immaturity – the body of Christ is weak, selfish, self-focused
- 4) Fear is rampant in the body of Christ
- 5) **MIND** - Conditioning of the mind is taking place – research information because the mind is the gateway to your spirit - the **CONTROL** of the church
- 6) **AWAKE!** – the church is asleep and is sleepwalking through life - **WAKE UP!!** Be cognizant of the times and the seasons
- 7) Share Christ with the lost at every opportunity
- 8) Focus on eternal life and the blessed hope that we have in Christ; everything cannot be about this life or the temporal
- 9) Christians need to become spirit led versus soul driven; we cannot always react according to our emotions
- 10) The Church of Christ/the body of Christ will be glorious, it will be mature and grown up and it will demonstrate and reveal the glory of the Lord
- 11) The church at large seems to be caught up with escapism rather than the blessed hope that we have in Christ.

Sermon Description

Most Christians believe, that at some point, we will be caught up with the Lord in the air. But what does this really mean and more importantly when will this occur? In this message, we discuss four possible scenarios surrounding the return of Christ to the earth.

Main Passage

The Coming of the Lord

1Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ 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.

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 dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

In this text, Paul is trying to give comfort to the Thessalonians because they expected Jesus to come in their day. Consider the following:

- First Christ descends, then we are caught up in the air
- And yet, people were dying one by one. What would happen to these people who died?
- Paul talks about the time when Jesus comes with a shout and with the trumpet of God, that both those who have died and those who are yet living will be taken up to heaven to forever be with the Lord.
- There is no mention of any previous secret rapture—none at all!
- Paul says both those who have died and those who are yet alive are all taken up to heaven together. This includes everyone. All of God's people will be raised together at one time.
- It is at this point that the dead in Christ shall rise first (verse 16), a literal resurrection of the body as described in 1Corinthians 15:42–43
- The whole church will rise in a joyful reunion with the returning Savior and we will be with Him forever
- Verse 17 is the only place in the entire New Testament that the concept of a rapture is derived.

Will There Be A Secret and Quiet Arrival of Christ?

1Thessalonians 4:16

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 dead in Christ will rise first.

Consider the following:

A "shout", a "voice of an Archangel" and a trumpet blast:

- Does this sound like a secret and quiet arrival?
- The context of this passage is NOT about the end times, it is actually about those who have died in Christ.

Now let us compare Matthew 24:29-31:

²⁹ "Immediately **after** the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- The Elect are gathered **after** the tribulation
- The Elect in the New Testament are always the believers in Christ
- Notice Matthew 24:31 - And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
- This ties into 1Thessalonians 4:16. But when? In Matthew 24:29 Jesus says, "**after the tribulation**".

What About That Trumpet?

1Corinthians 15:52

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.

Paul said this occurs at the last trumpet. When is the last trumpet? It takes place at the end of the tribulation not at the beginning.

Notice when Jesus says He is coming as a thief:

- Between the sixth and the seventh trumpet
Revelation 16:15
"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Jesus indicated that He would return again to the earth and for His followers. But where does it teach that He will secretly come for them before He actually returns? This raises a very interesting question. How many times will Jesus return to the earth in the end times?

In John 14:3 Jesus says He is coming again. Why did He not say, "I am returning before I return?" The rapture suggests that Jesus will return before the second coming. Where is this taught in scripture?

In order to make the rapture fit the narrative:

- The church must be gone; therefore, people teach that Matthew 24 is only directed towards the Jews because the church is supposed to be gone at this point. However, there is no indication in Matthew 24 that Jesus is speaking only to Jewish people. This is a far-reaching assumption at best.
- However, this poses a problem because scripture teaches that the days have been shortened for the "Elect's sake". Throughout the entire New Testament the "elect" always refers to the followers of Christ (i.e. the person that has been chosen and elected by God to follow Christ). In fact, there is never a reference to a natural Jewish person when the term "elect" is used—it is always used in reference to the disciples of Christ.

The question that must be answered is this: Will Jesus first come secretly for the spiritual Christians before His second coming?

Paul said, "I would not have you ignorant".

- The rapture theory has done NOTHING to get God's people ready for a Holy state. In fact, you could make a case that the church is in a worse condition than it has ever been. If the rapture theory is true, you would think that people would be awake, alert and ready to depart at any moment.
- The hope of people is to escape - if people really believed in the rapture, the body of Christ would already be in a Holy state.
- The rapture doctrine stems out of a gnostic belief of escapism—escaping the body, the body is evil, and the spirit is pure—this is a pagan belief. The Kingdom of Heaven has come to earth (that is the Gospel) and the King Himself is returning!

The Day of the Lord

1Thessalonians 5:1-11

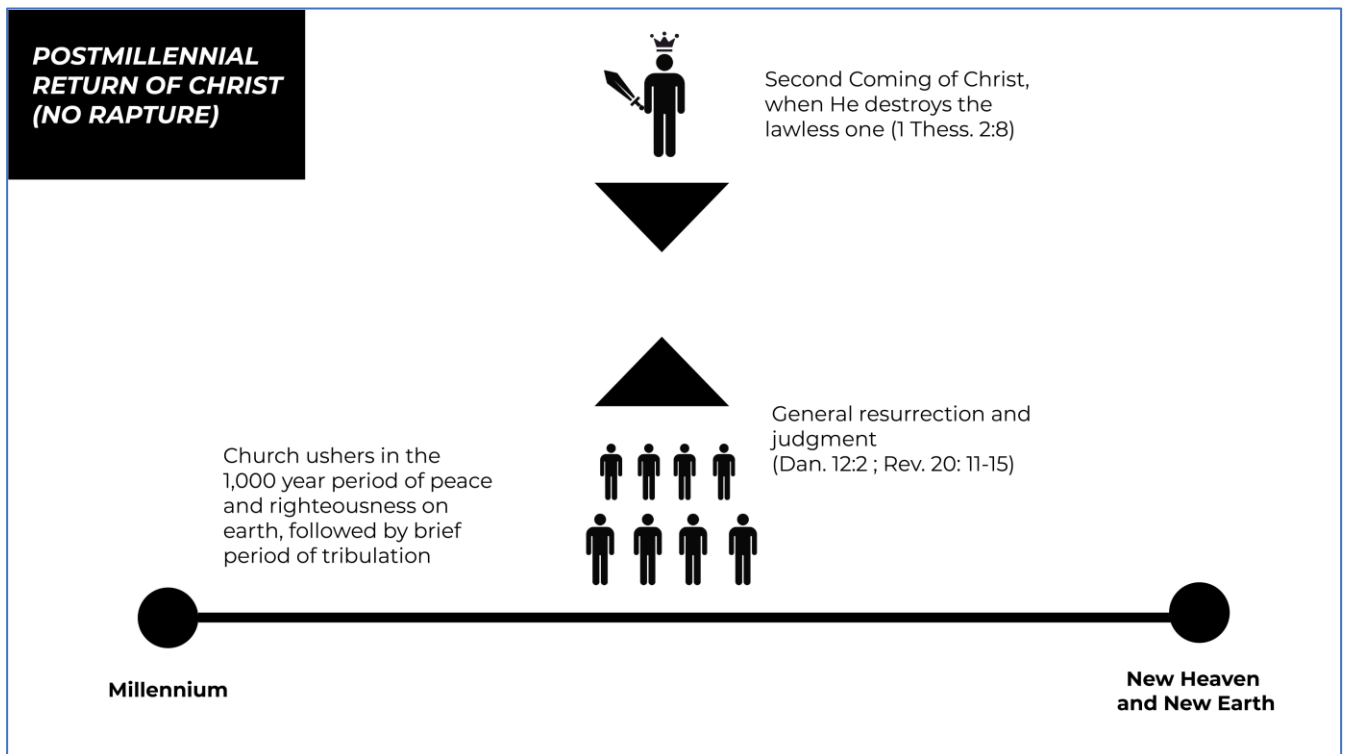
¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant 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. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 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, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Additional Scriptures & Examples That are Used to Explain the Rapture

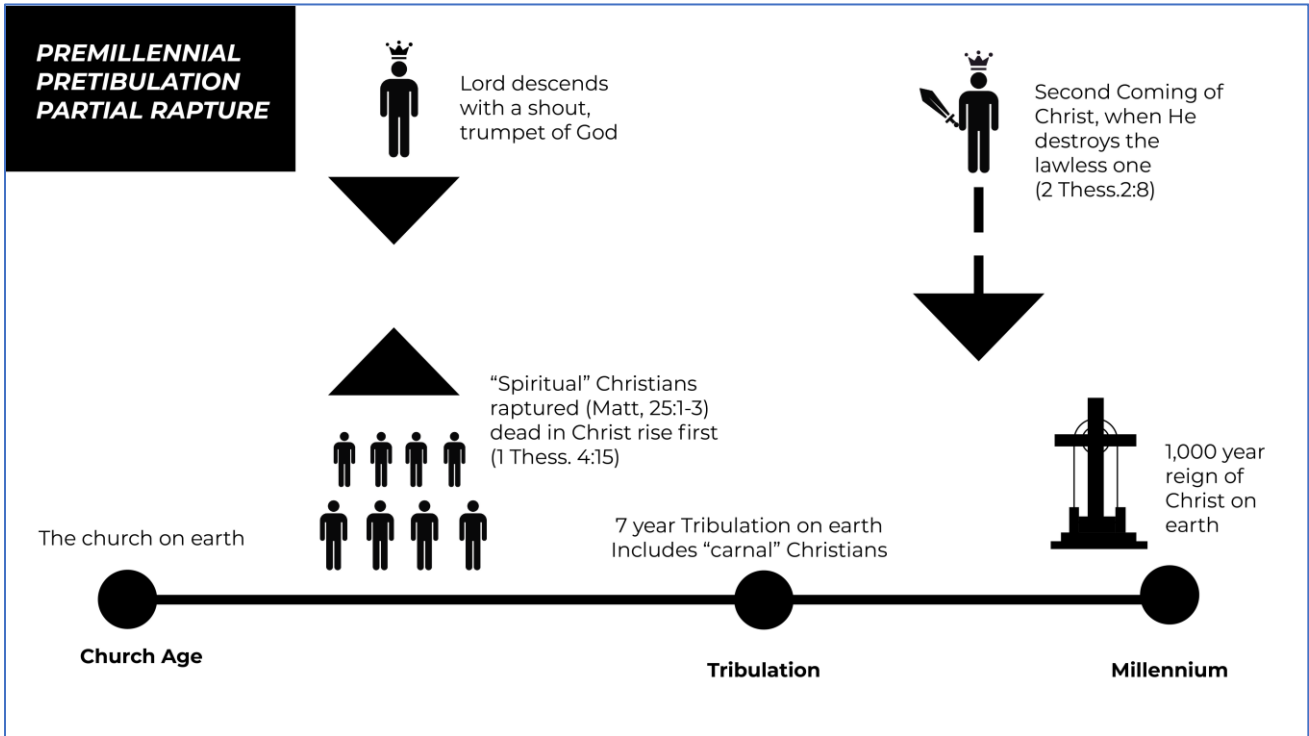
- 1) John being called up to heaven in the book of Revelation
 - John in the Spirit - Revelation 4:1-2:
¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." ² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.
- 2) Philip being "translated" in the Spirit in the book of Acts
 - Philip never left the earth – he went from one location to another.
- 3) Paul – his visit to the third heaven – out of body experience
 - Paul explained that he did not know if he had an out of body or in-body experience
 - Once again, Paul did not leave the earth.
- 4) Noah in the Ark – he was lifted up by the waters
 - Noah did not leave the earth.

Possible Scenarios

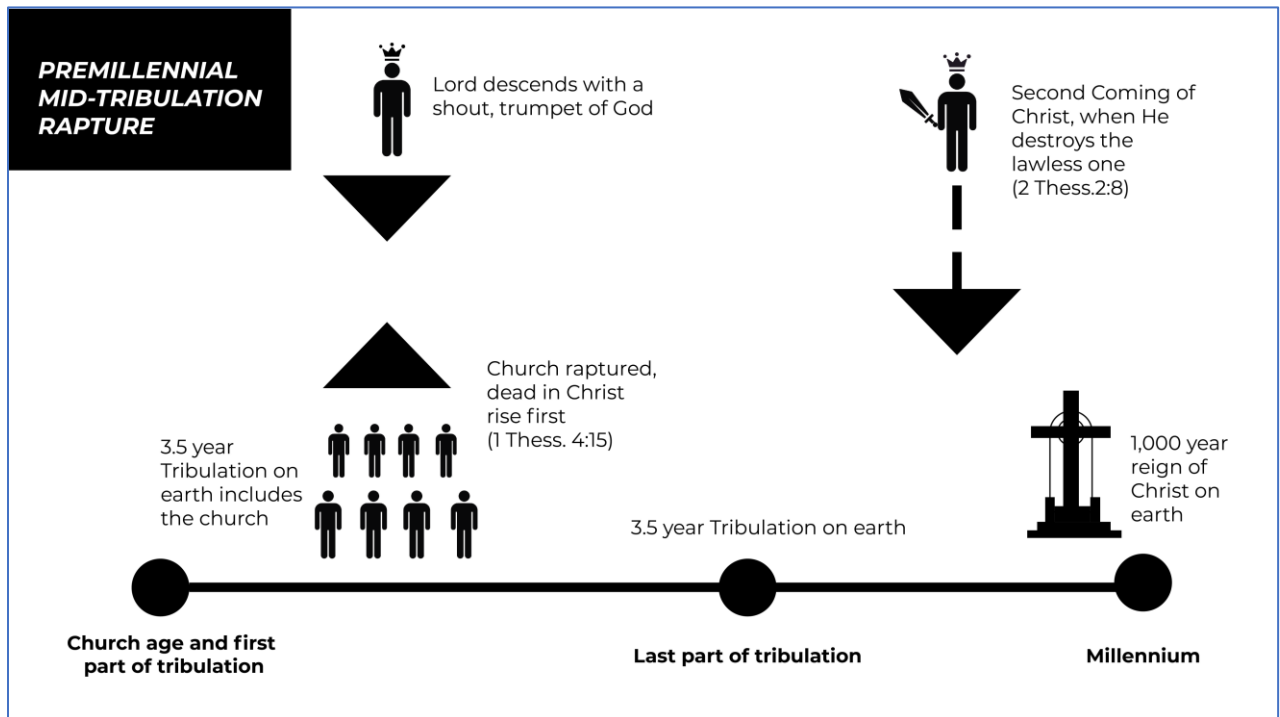
- 1) Post millennium return of Christ with (no rapture): In this scenario the return of Christ accomplishes all things at His return
 - The lawless one is destroyed, the general resurrection and the judgment, this starts the beginning of the 1000-year reign of Christ on the earth known as the Millennium.



- 2) Pre-Millennium, pre-tribulation (partial rapture): In this scenario Christ comes secretly with the shout and with the trumpet of God to receive spiritual Christians, the dead in Christ rise first. Carnal Christians are left behind. This is followed by a seven-year tribulation. After the great tribulation, the second coming of Christ on the earth takes place and the Millennium and rule and reign of Christ begins.



- 3) Pre-millennial, mid-tribulation (rapture) - In this scenario the Lord comes secretly with the shout of the trumpet of God; however, He returns halfway through the tribulation to receive the church. Afterwards, the second coming of Christ where he destroys the lawless one and the 1000-year reign of the Lord begins on the earth.



- 4) Pre-Millennium, post tribulation (rapture): In this scenario Christ returns to the earth, He destroys the lawless one and the seven-year tribulation on the earth includes the church but when Christ returns the dead in Christ rise first. This is followed by the 1000-year reign of Christ on the earth. Christ returns with the Saints and the Angels to begin the millennium and rule on the earth.

