



Prophecy in Perspective

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An email newsletter

Our Times - *Prophecy in Current Events*

The Rapture! Will It Happen Soon?

I believe growing numbers of people who believe in the Bible and in the prophecies of the Bible believe that the Rapture cannot be far off. At this Easter season, with war rumblings in Russia, Iran and Israel, the rise of earthquakes and pestilences around the world, we cannot help but take notice that these occurrences are abundantly signifying the Lord's soon return. Even President Obama's compulsion to take every opportunity to berate Christianity and Christians, this time, by essentially calling Christians who believe in Jesus' definition of marriage (Matthew 19:3-8) "unloving," signals that the end time attitude of evil being called good and good being called evil is now upon us. (Isaiah 5:20, Luke 17:26) This is good to remember in these "*perilous times*," (2 Timothy 3:1) that the Rapture is a predicted event that is clearly described in the New Testament. One of the best passages that describes the Rapture event is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. (4:13)

Perhaps the most despairing time in anyone's life is when a loved one dies. Out of the inevitable sadness that comes with the passing of a saved loved one is this assurance that the Scripture gives to encourage us that God has an amazing plan for the future that involves both we who are living and those who have died. Paul writes here that we do not have to grieve like the rest of humanity when our saved loved one dies. We can still have hope! God intends to include them in His awesome plans for the future!

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (4:14)

Believing that Jesus died for you and me and that He actually rose again from the dead is absolutely key to having the hope that Jesus promises to us in the Rapture. Jesus said to His disciples in John 14: 1-3, "*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*" Jesus comforts us with His assurance that He will come again "and receive you unto myself," which speaks of the Rapture of living saints to heaven to be with Him. When He comes back to

get us, Paul says that Jesus will bring "them also which sleep" with Him. While their bodies are asleep in the grave on the earth, their soul and spirit are with Jesus. He will bring them back with Him when He comes for us at the rapture!

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (4:15)

Paul declares upon the clear and irreversible declaration of God's Word, that when Jesus comes back at the rapture, He will bring those who are with Him in heaven and while still in the air over the earth, He will first raise up their bodies before He raptures us as the living saints with Him. This order of events at the rapture shows us that Jesus will actually reverse the death of our loved ones and raise up their bodies as glorified resurrection bodies and join them once again with their soul and spirits forever! GREAT NEWS!! We can be sure at the funeral of our saved loved one that his or her grave is only a temporary holding place. Their grave will be completely empty after the rapture! "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (4:16)

The angels told the disciples on the Mount of Olives after Jesus was taken up to heaven that, "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 1:11) Jesus "Himself" is going to "descend from heaven." As Jesus descends through the upper atmosphere of planet earth he will call up "the dead," in Christ. They "shall rise first."

The "shout," the "voice of the archangel" and the "trump of God" are to announce and signal the assembling of the church, living and dead, to arise with the Lord and to assemble before Him. The church will certainly hear these sounds. I believe that the world in general will hear something from the skies that will be indistinguishable and perhaps even frightening to them. Even today there are sounds being heard around the world that have unknown sources which resemble the moving of troops among other ominous sounds. I suspect that the instantaneous disappearance of millions of living saints, and the sudden opening of graves to expose how they are emptied of their occupants, as Jesus' tomb was so opened, will strike terror in the hearts of those left behind. Many disasters will result as airliners are emptied of pilots, cars of their drivers, etc. The rapture will be a time of sudden terror to those left behind! What an appropriate ending of the Church age and beginning of the Great Tribulation Period. The Antichrist will no doubt seek to explain all of this away! I believe he is alive today and has many helpers around the world preparing the masses by turning them away from the one true God and by exalting rebellion and sin.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (4:17)

Immediately after the dead in Christ are raised up, "then we which are alive," "shall be caught up." We will all "meet the Lord in the air." That is, we will meet together with the Lord Jesus Himself in the upper atmosphere of the earth! What a grand reunion it will be! And "so shall we ever be with the Lord!"

Wherefore comfort one another with these words (4:18)

These last words are key for the church today to take to heart, in terms of how we witness to others as well as how we live for the Lord. The reality of the Lord's any-moment coming to rapture us to heaven before the Great Tribulation begins (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11) is a fact that brings great comfort. This comfort is especially powerful for believers who have a Christian loved one who has died! But the testimony of the any moment coming of the Lord for the church is also comforting to sinners who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. They can know through the biblical doctrine of the Rapture that, if they get saved, they will be kept from the hour of trial which is to come upon the earth called the Great Tribulation period. Jesus said to the faithful saints of the church of Philadelphia: "*Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*" (Revelation 3:10) This promise from the Lord certainly places the time of the Rapture before the beginning of the Great Tribulation Period. Are you telling people you know about the fact that Jesus came the first time to die for their sins and then rise victoriously from the dead? And then are you also telling them that Jesus is coming back to gather up at the Rapture all those who are dead and living in Christ to bring us to Himself and to be with Him forever? These truths will certainly be a "*blessed hope*" (Titus 2:13) for many anxious, worried, and lost people in these "*perilous times*" (2 Timothy 3:1) in which we are living today.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"

Titus 2:13

Happy Resurrection Season!

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