

"The Rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus"

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction: Today we are stepping away from our study of Zechariah and we are going to look at a study on the Rapture and the Second Coming. There are many who see these as the same event, but the Truth is they are not.

2 Timothy 2:15

¹⁵ *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

We are called to be people who rightly divide the Word of Truth. The two events that we are going to look at today are two Truths that involve two different groups of people, and they are two events that happen at completely different times. These two events are roughly 7 years apart as we shall see.

"The Rapture"

A. It is a Mystery

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

⁵¹ *Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

⁵³ *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

When Paul calls this event a MYSTERY, he means that it is something that was not known of in the Old Testament. It is pictured in several ways in the Old Testament, but it was a Truth that was not known until it was revealed to Paul.

The church/the body of Jesus Christ was also a mystery in the Old Testament.

Ephesians 3:1-6

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

² *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:*

³ *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

⁴ *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

⁵ *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

⁶ *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

B. The Details

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:13

There was a question about what would happen to those who had died when the rapture takes place. In 1 Corinthians 15 we see what happens to those who are alive when the rapture happens.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

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⁵³ *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:14

Those who have died in the Lord will come with Him. That will be their spirits.

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:15

This Truth was revealed to Paul by the Lord. This was not something that he received from a book or that he had heard on the street corner. This was the Mystery that was revealed by Jesus Christ. Paul goes on to say that those who are living will not have an advantage over the dead in Christ.

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:16

The Lord will descend and the dead in Christ will rise first. This is a resurrection of the body, but it will be a glorified body. The spirit of the believer that returns with Jesus will be united with the new glorified body. This event will be announced by a SHOUT from the Lord, by the VOICE of an archangel, and by a TRUMPET.

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:17

After the resurrection of the believers in Christ then we who are alive will be caught up together with them in the CLOUDS. The phrase "shall be caught up" is the word "**harpazo**" which means "to snatch out or away." We will instantly be snatched away from this world and taken into the presence of the Lord. This is where 1 Corinthians 15 comes in.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

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⁵² *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

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When this verse happens Jesus will return IN THE AIR not to the earth. This event is promised only to the church. This event is known as "THE BLESSED HOPE."

Titus 2:13

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

The rapture is an event that is imminent and that means it can happen at any time. It is also a SIGNLESS event meaning that there is NOT one thing that must happen before the rapture can take place. Paul believed it would happen in his day. That is why he used the pronoun "we."

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:17 again.

The Rapture will happen before the Anti-Christ comes into power and before the Tribulation starts.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

² *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

³ *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

"The Second Coming"

The Rapture is the return of the Lord in the air, and we will be caught up to Him. The Second Coming is the return of the Lord to the earth.

Zechariah 14:1-4

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

² *For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*

³ *Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*

⁴ *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is often referred to as THE DAY OF THE LORD. The Day of the Lord can refer to a single day or a period of time.

The DAY OF THE LORD begins after the Rapture, as a period of time, and it will last right up to Revelation 21. It will include the entire Tribulation period and the Millennial Kingdom. The DAY OF THE LORD also refers to the very day that Jesus will return.

The Day of the Lord is compared to a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:3-4, 9-12

³ *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

⁴ *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

¹¹ *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

¹² *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

² *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

³ *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

The Rapture is NOT referred to as a thief in the night. A thief in the night is a bad thing and the Rapture is not something bad, but it is the BLESSED HOPE.

The Day of the Lord is referred to as a thief in the night for several reasons.

1. **It will bring a time of tribulation like the world has never seen.**

Matthew 24:21

²¹ *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Let us notice a few verses that will help us see just how terrible the Day of the Lord will be.

Revelation 6:7-8

⁷ *And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.*

⁸ *And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

Here in this verse one-fourth of the world's population dies under the 4th Seal. Today's population is about 8 billion so when this Seal is broken 2 billion people will die. Let us notice what happens when the 6th Trumpet sounds.

Revelation 9:16-18

¹⁶ *And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.*

¹⁷ *And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.*

¹⁸ *By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*

Here one-third of the people die. This would be another 2 billion people. So in two different judgments 4 billion people will perish. Then at the end of the tribulation is the Battle of Armageddon where who knows how many will perish in the battle.

Then there will be the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25 where the unsaved that are living at the end of the tribulation will be sentenced to hell.

2. It will come upon the world unexpectedly just as a thief in the night.

Matthew 24:27-31, 36-44

²⁷ *For 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.*

²⁸ *For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

²⁹ *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*

³⁰ *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

³¹ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

³⁶ But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Conclusion:

The Rapture and the Second Coming are 2 different events that will happen approximately 7 years apart. The Rapture pertains to the church and the Second Coming pertains to Israel.