

## The Rapture and the Surrounding Events

### 1 Thessalonians 4

**Introduction:** Today I want to extend some of what we looked at last week. Last week we looked at Ezekiel 38-39 briefly and, in that message, we considered the battle of Gog and Magog. Let me first of all say that the battle in Ezekiel 38-39 is not the same battle of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20.

#### Revelation 20:7-10

<sup>7</sup> *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

<sup>8</sup> *And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

<sup>9</sup> *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

<sup>10</sup> *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

This battle happens after the 1000-year Kingdom on earth. The battle of Ezekiel happens either before or during the Tribulation. I gave you some possibilities last week. We cannot know for sure when the battle will happen but we do know the current events of today are giving the appearance that the battle will be sooner than later.

These things are exciting and important but there is another event that is going to happen and that is the Rapture.

#### Titus 2:13

<sup>13</sup> *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

The "blessed hope" and the "appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ" are two separate events. The rapture is our blessed hope and the second event, (the appearing of the Lord) will happen when Jesus returns to the earth at the end of the tribulation. The rapture happens before the tribulation and the second coming happens at the end of the tribulation.

➤ **The Second Coming.**

**Matthew 24:29-31**

<sup>29</sup> *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:*

<sup>30</sup> *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.*

<sup>31</sup> *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.*

John gives us another description in Revelation 19.

**Revelation 19:11, 14-15, 19-21**

<sup>11</sup> *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*

<sup>14</sup> *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

<sup>15</sup> *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

<sup>19</sup> *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.*

<sup>20</sup> *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

<sup>21</sup> *And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

These passages refer to the Second Coming. But the rapture is the "blessed hope."

**I. What happens when the rapture takes place?**

**1. In the believer's life.**

**Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

These verses describe what will happen to the dead in Christ when the rapture happens. Their spirits will return with the Lord and their body will be resurrected as a glorified body and the spirit and the body will come back together. We who are alive will be caught up from the earth with them. We too will receive a glorified body.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

<sup>51</sup> *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

<sup>52</sup> *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.*

<sup>53</sup> *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Why is the rapture called the blessed hope?

**1. We get to see our Savior face to face.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:17**

<sup>17</sup> *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.*

**1 John 3:2**

<sup>2</sup> *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.*

**2. We lose these sinful bodies as we get new glorified bodies.**

**3. We are united with our friends and loved ones who have died in the Lord.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:16b-17**

*the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

<sup>17</sup> *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds*

**4. We receive our eternal inheritance.**

**1 Peter 1:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

<sup>4</sup> *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

5. **Those who are alive do not die.**

II. **What happens on earth?**

1. **Restraints loosed.**

**2 Thessalonians 2:6-8**

<sup>6</sup> *And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.*

<sup>7</sup> *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

<sup>8</sup> *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

The "HE" spoken of here is the Holy Spirit. Please understand the Holy Spirit is not removed from the earth but He will step aside and allow the demonic forces to be set free. The Holy Spirit working through the church today is the Restrainer. When the church is raptured away the removal of restraints will bring about widespread lawlessness. The unique ministry of the Spirit through the church began on the day of Pentecost and it will end as abruptly as it started when the church is raptured away. It will be then that the Spirit's ministry will be as it was in the Old Testament.

**Genesis 6:1-3**

*And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,*

<sup>2</sup> *That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

<sup>3</sup> *And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

The Spirit will remain on the earth during the tribulation and He will bring about one of the greatest revivals of all time.

**Revelation 7:9, 13-14**

<sup>9</sup> *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;*

<sup>13</sup> *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?*

<sup>14</sup> *And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

**2. Life goes on as normal.**

As I told you last week, I do not believe the rapture will devastate the world.

**Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23**

<sup>13</sup> *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

<sup>14</sup> *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

<sup>21</sup> *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

<sup>22</sup> *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

<sup>23</sup> *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Let us remember the Parable of the Sower.

**Matthew 13:18-23**

<sup>18</sup> *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*

<sup>19</sup> *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

<sup>20</sup> *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

<sup>21</sup> *Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

<sup>22</sup> *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*

<sup>23</sup> *But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

Here in this parable only 1 out of 4 have a positive response to the Gospel.

Let us remember Noah's day when there were billions of people and only 8 were saved. Consider the Old Testament pictures of the rapture.

- ✓ When Enoch was taken the world never noticed.
- ✓ When Lot and his family were pulled from Sodom the city went on as always.
- ✓ When Elijah was caught up everything continued on as normal.

**3. God removes the world from Satan's grip through the judgments.**

### **Revelation 5:1-5**

*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*

<sup>2</sup> *And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?*

<sup>3</sup> *And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.*

<sup>4</sup> *And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.*

<sup>5</sup> *And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*

**Revelation 11:15**

<sup>15</sup> *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

The tribulation will be to release the grip of Satan on this world so that it can be given back to the original Owner.

**Conclusion:**

The missing people will not devastate the world but the removal of demonic restraints certainly will. Lawlessness will increase greatly after the church is gone. Be sure you are ready for the rapture! Many will be left behind. Be sure you are of the few.