**SIGNS OF HIS SOON RETURN** May 10, 2020

**THE RAPTURE**

Having looked at some of the signal events that herald Christ’s return, we can now consider the sequence of major events at the time of His return. Today and going forward, we will consider the Rapture, the Battle of Gog and Magog, the Great Tribulation, the Return of the King, Heaven on Earth, and Eternity to Come.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

1. **Defend the Truth of the Rapture (v.13, I would not have you to be ignorant)**
* conflicting ideas about pre-, post-, and amillenial views of prophecy come because of lazy study, failure to rightly divide the word of truth, or fear to follow where it leads
* Call this event “resurrection’ if you like…but resurrection has 2 categories – for the righteous and wicked, unto life or condemnation (Jn 5:29 / Dn 12:2), separated by 1,000 years. And the first phase has two parts, as we will see

John 5:29 and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. NKJV

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,

Some to everlasting life,

Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. NKJV

* Besides, “rapture” is a state of being carried away or “caught up” (v.17) and was experienced by Enoch (Ge. 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kg 2:11)

Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him. NKJV

2 Kings 2:11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. NKJV

1. **Discern the Timing of the Rapture (v.14)**
* not the time (no man knows the day nor hour, Jesus said), but the timing of this event in the final sequence of prophetic history
* again, conflicting views, even among conservative interpretations; does the rapture occur before, during, or after the Tribulation? Heated arguments all around, some vicious attacks
* come feel believers will not (and should not) escape the Tribulation. But all godly believers will have tribulations and persecution (Ac 14:22 / 2 Tm 3:12)

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying,* “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” NKJV

2 Timothy 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. NKJV

* that’s not the same as the Great Tribulation – Mt 24:21 – which is a judgment on the ungodly, to convince all that the Lord is God. God removes His Own from judgment, having judged them already at the cross of Christ…

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. NKJV

 compare Noah – Gen 7:1,14 / Lot – Gen 19: 16,22

Genesis 7:1, 14 Then the Lord said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen *that* you *are* righteous before Me in this generation. 14they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. NKJV

Genesis 19: 16, 22 And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. 22Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” Therefore, the name of the city was called Zoar. NKJV

* it’s safe to say and reasonable to expect true believers will escape God’s wrath – 1 Th 1:10 / 5:9

1 Thess 1:10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. NKJV

1 Thess 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our

Lord Jesus Christ, NKJV

1. **Delight in the Trappings of the Rapture (v. 15-18)**

the Sounds

* the Lord’s shout -

Jn 11:43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” NKJV

* voice of the archangel –

Jude 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” NKJV

* the trump of God – calling to worship and to war

the Sights

* dead in Christ rise first –

1 Cor. 15: 51-53 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52in 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. 53For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.  NKJV

* we which are alive and remain caught up – final generation escapes physical death
* to meet the Lord in the air –

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. NKJV