THE RAPTURE
End Times Bible Study – Pt. 2
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I. THE THREE POSITIONS ON THE RAPTURE

“Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.’ Then he said to them: ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.’” Luke 21:9-11

“For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive...” Matthew 24:21-22

Here in Luke 21 & Matthew 24, Jesus is talking about the ________________________________.

The Tribulation is a seven-year period that precedes the Second Coming of Christ (c/f Rev. 19:11-21) and will be a time of God’s wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth.

“Rapture“ = Latin word meaning, “caught up.”

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

(See Figure 1 next page)

1 All Scripture is quoted from the NIV84 unless otherwise noted.
The **Rapture** of the Church

Three Views

- **Pre-Tribulation**
- **Mid-Tribulation**
- **Post-Tribulation**

**Day of Pentecost**
- **Bride of Christ**
  - Believing Jews & Gentiles
  - RAPTURE
- New Testament Believers

**CHURCH AGE**
- **The Last Days**
  - Pentecost - Rapture

**TRIBULATION**
- **Unbelieving Jews & Gentiles**
- Tribulation 3.5 years
- Great Tribulation 3.5 years

**MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**
- Personal Rule & Reign of Jesus Christ on Earth
- 1,000 years

**Great White Throne Judgement**

Figure 1
Where the rapture positions line up:

1. All agree that there will be a ____________ 7-year Tribulation.

2. All agree that an ______________ Rapture will take place.

Where there is disagreement is in the ________________ !

Pre-Tribulation Position:

Mid-Tribulation Position:

Post-Tribulation Position:

II. MAINTAINING A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE RAPTURE

1. The Rapture should bring me ________________.

“Therefore encourage each other with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

2. The Rapture should bring me ________________.

“...the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13

3. The Rapture should ________________ me for godly living.

“Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.” 1 John 3:3

“...the writers of the New Testament always discussed the rapture in the context of godly living. The truth of the rapture was to bring about changes in the way believers thought and lived. The truth of the Lord’s return was to help Christians become more loving, diligent, generous, and righteous and less impacted by sin and by Satan’s world system. In all our theological discussion and analysis of the rapture (as important as these things are), the end result ought to be a movement toward greater godliness in our personal lives.”

-Dr. Paul N. Benware: Understanding End Times Prophecy, 236.
III. HOW DO I KNOW THAT THE RAPTURE IS GOING TO HAPPEN?

Answer: Because Jesus ______________ He would return!

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” John 14:1-6

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Why were the disciples hearts troubled? (John 13:21)

1. The disciples were troubled because Jesus told them one of them would betray Him.

   “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.” John 13:21

2. The disciples were troubled because Jesus told them that Peter was going to disown Him three times.

   “I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” John 13:38

3. But mostly they were troubled because Jesus told them He was leaving them (v. 33) and that they could not follow. (v. 36)

   “My children, I will be with you only a little longer.” John 13:33

   “Where I am going, you cannot follow now. . .” John 13:36

The Disciples (as well as the rest of the Jews) were confused about the details surrounding the coming Messiah because their seemed to be conflicting accounts.

   The Suffering Messiah: Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 & Zechariah 12
   The Victorious Messiah: Isaiah 63, Psalm 110 & Zechariah 14

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.” 1 Peter 1:10-11
IV. WHEN THE RAPTURE HAPPENS WHAT IS GOING TO TAKE PLACE?

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

UNPACKING 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

“The word here for “asleep” is the same Greek word that is used to describe spending the night at an Inn...

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The importance of the phrase “in Christ.”

To be “in Christ” refers to every person who has trusted in Jesus as their Lord and Savior from the Day of Pentecost forward—every born-again Christian, at the moment of salvation every Christian is baptized by the Holy Spirit and placed “in Christ.”

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” 1 Corinthians 12:13

“And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” Rom. 8:9

As a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in me.

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” Romans 8:11

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” 1 Corinthians 6:19

The BENEFITS of being “in Christ.”

I am the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13).
I am the light of the world (Matt 5:14).
I am a child of God (Jn 1:12).
I am part of the true vine, a channel of Christ’s life (Jn 15:1,5).
I am Christ’s friend (Jn 15:15).
I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit (Jn 15:16).
I am a slave of righteousness (Rom 6:18).
I am enslaved to God (Rom 6:22).
I am a son of God; God is spiritually my Father (Rom 8: 14,15; Gal 3:26; 4:6).
I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him (Rom 8:17).
I am a temple—a dwelling place—of God. His Spirit and His life dwell in me (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19).
I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (1 Cor 6:17).
I am a member of Christ’s Body (1 Cor 12:27; Eph 5:30).
I am a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).
I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18,19).
I am a son of God and one in Christ (Gal 3:26,28).
I am an heir of God since I am a son of God (Gal 4:6,7).
I am a saint (1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2).
I am God’s workmanship—born anew in Christ to do His work (Eph 2:10).
I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God’s family (Eph 2:19).
I am a prisoner of Christ (Eph 3:1; 4:1).
I am righteous and holy (Eph 4:24).
I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now (Eph 2:6; Phil 3:20).
I am hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3).
I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Col 3:4).
I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Col 3:12; 1 Thes 1:4).
I am a son of light and not of darkness (1 Thes 5:5).
I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling (Heb 3:1).
I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life (Heb 3:14).
I am one of God’s living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5).
I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession (1 Pet 2:9,10).
I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live (1 Pet 2:11).
I am an enemy of the devil (1 Pet 5:8).
I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns (1 Jn 3:1,2).
I am born of God, and the evil one—the devil—cannot touch me (1 Jn 5:18).
I am not the great “I am” (Ex 3: 14; Jn 8: 24,28,58), but by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Cor 15:10).

“Understanding your identity in Christ is essential for living the Christian life. People cannot consistently behave in ways that are inconsistent with the way they perceive themselves . . . If you see yourself as a child of God who is spiritually alive in Christ, you will begin to live accordingly. Next to a knowledge of God, a knowledge of who you are is by far the most important truth you can possess.”

-Neil T. Anderson, Victory Over the Darkness, 47.

RECAP

1. Every Christian who has died “in Christ” since Pentecost will be raised first.

2. Every Raptured Christian will be with the Lord forever.

3. Every Raptured Christian will be united with their loved ones who died “in Christ.”

4. The Salvation of every Raptured Christian will finally be complete meaning that we will be fully infused with Christ-like character.

V. GUIDELINE FOR LIVING

Guideline #1: Remain __________________________ in God’s Word!

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11