

Lesson 33 – The Rapture to the Revelation of Christ

Almost all Bible scholars agree we are in the last days of human history as we know it, and that the end-time events described in the Bible will occur shortly. There is some disagreement, however, concerning at least two areas of prophecy:

We are covering a lot of ground in a short time in this lesson. That being the case, there are a lot of details we are skipping over in order to give a brief outline of things to come.

1. The order of the events that will occur.
 - a. Pre-Tribulational Rapture
 - i. Jesus will evacuate His church from the earth before the Tribulation
 - ii. This is the Scriptural teaching.
 - b. Pre-Tribulational Partial Rapture – Unscriptural see 1 Cor. 15:51
 - i. Only spiritual Christians will be raptured
 - ii. Some Pentecostals teach that only Christians who have been “baptized with the Holy Ghost” will be raptured. Other Christians will be saved, but they will go through the Tribulation first.
 - c. Mid-Tribulational Rapture – Unscriptural see 1 Thess. 5:9
 - i. Jesus will evacuate His church from the earth during the middle of the Tribulation
 - d. Post-Tribulational Rapture – Unscriptural see
 - i. The church will suffer through the Tribulation
2. Whether or not God really meant what He wrote – literally – concerning the coming Kingdom.
 - a. Premillennial Return of Christ
 - i. God’s promises to Israel all through the Old Testament are literal.
 - ii. Israel is not the Church; the Church is not Israel.
 - iii. The Millennium is the period when God’s unfulfilled promises to Israel will be fulfilled, because God keeps His promises.
 - b. Postmillennial Return of Christ
 - i. The church will evangelize the world, and the world will become more and more Christian, prepare the world for the return of Christ. This era of Christianizing the world will be the Millennium, lasting 1,000 years.
 - c. Amillennial Return of Christ
 - i. God’s promises to Israel are not fulfilled in Israel; they are fulfilled in the church.
 - ii. Amillennialists do not take the prophetic promises of God literally.

Coming Events

The Rapture

- a. The events of the Rapture – 1 Thess. 4:14-17
 - i. The Lord Jesus will descend from Heaven – 4:16
 1. He will bring the dead Christians (their spirits and souls) with Him.
 2. He will come to the clouds, not all the way to the Earth

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3. There will be a shout
 4. There will be the voice of the archangel
 - ii. The dead in Christ will be resurrected
 1. This refers to the bodies of the dead Christians.
 2. Their bodies will be raised (the decomposed will be recomposed)
 3. Their spirits and souls will be reunited with their new bodies
 - iii. Living Christians will be caught up to meet Him in the air
 - iv. From that time on, we will be with Him forever.
 - b. The description of the Rapture
 - i. Critics of Bible truth complain that the word *rapture* is not found in Scripture.
 1. This is true – the English word *rapture* does not appear in the Word of God.
 2. However, the Greek word for *Rapture* is there, it means “caught up.”
 - ii. Caught up - Gr. ἀρπάζω *harpázo*
 1. To snatch up, to seize with force
 2. English word *harpoon* comes from *harpazo*. The harpoon is the tool used by whalers to catch a whale and bring it up out of the water.
 3. At the Rapture, we will be *harpooned* – snatched up like a whale by the Lord Jesus, without the metal tool, of course.
2. The Judgment Seat of Christ – 1 Cor. 3:9-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10
 - a. We are accountable for our lives as Christians. This is where we will give account to God for what He has entrusted to us.
 - i. Some Christians will be ashamed because they didn’t take their Christian responsibilities seriously – 1 John 2:28
 - ii. Some will hear the Lord say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” – Matt. 25:23
 - b. The Greek word for “Judgment Seat” is *bema*
 - i. The *bema* was the place of rewards for winners of ancient Olympic events.
 - ii. The *Bema*, or Judgment Seat of Christ is the place where Christians will be rewarded for faithful living and service.
 - c. Results of the Judgment Seat of Christ
 - i. Some will receive rewards – 1 Cor. 3:14
 - ii. Some will suffer loss – 1 Cor. 3:15
3. The Marriage of the Lamb – 2 Cor. 11:2; #ph. 5:23-27; Rev. 19:7-9
 - a. The ancient Jewish wedding tradition
 - i. On the appointed day the bridegroom would go to the bride’s house
 - ii. He would ceremonially take his bride to his house
 - iii. They would have a great celebration feast.
 - b. This will follow the same tradition
 - i. Jesus, the Bridegroom will come to the clouds to call for us.
 - ii. He will take His Bride – the Church – to His house – Heaven
 - iii. We will have a great celebration feast during the time the earth is going through the Tribulation Period.
4. The Tribulation Period – Rev. chapters 6-19
 - a. This period is called “The Time of Jacob’s Trouble” – Jer. 30:7

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- i. It is also known as the 70th Week of Daniel – the time when God begins dealing with Israel as a nation again.
- ii. God will use this time to bring Israel to her knees to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. The 7 Seals
 - i. Seal 1 – White Horse – the antichrist
 - ii. Seal 2 – Red Horse – Peace leaves the earth – Rev. 6:3-4
 1. Global war
 2. Great weapons
 - iii. Seal 3 – Black Horse – famine – Rev. 6:5-6
 1. It will take a whole day's wages to pay for one day's worth of food. (One denarius was the daily wage for the average working man – Matt. 20:2).
 - iv. Seal 4 – Pale Horse – Death – Rev. 6:7-8
 1. ¼ of the world's population will die from war and hunger.
 - v. Seal 5 – Souls under the altar (martyrs who were killed in the Tribulation) – Rev. 6:9-10
 1. These are the people who get saved after the Rapture
 2. Many of these believers during the Tribulation will be martyred.
 - vi. Seal 6 – Great Earthquake – Rev. 6:12-17
 1. The sun darkened
 2. Great meteors hit the earth
 3. Mountains and islands will be moved – Rev. 6:14
 4. Universal panic and terror – Rev. 6:15-17
 5. 144,000 Jews sealed – Rev. 7:1-8
 - vii. Sea; 7 – Silence in Heaven
 1. Trumpet 1 – One third of the earth is burned up – Rev. 8:7
 2. Trumpet 2 – One third of the sea and it's life stricken – Rev. 8:8-9
 3. Trumpet 3 – One third of the waters made bitter by star from heaven. Many will die. – Rev. 8:10-11
 4. Trumpet 4 – One third of sun, moon and stars stricken – Rev. 8:12
 - a. This will affect the light and temperatures on earth
 - b. This could be the reason people won't be able to see a lot of the stars
 5. Trumpet 5 – Torment for all unsaved people by demonic creatures – Rev. 9:1-4
 6. Trumpet 6 – Another third of the earth's population killed by fire, smoke and brimstone (burning sulfur) – Rev. 9:13
 - a. Even then the people would not repent – Rev. 9:20-21
 - b. An angel with a little book declares that there should be time no longer – Rev. 10:6
 - c. The 2 Witnesses appear to represent God to the world – Rev. 11:1-4
 - i. The Beast (Antichrist) kills them
 - ii. They are resurrected
 7. Trumpet 7 – Announcement “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” – Rev. 11:15
 8. God's last message: a great sign in the heavens. – Rev. 12

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9. **The second half of the Tribulation Period begins** - The beast (the antichrist) and the false prophet are revealed – Rev. 13:1-4
 - a. World government under the antichrist
 - b. World religion
 - i. Led by the false prophet
 - ii. Worshipping Satan and the antichrist – Rev. 13:4
10. The 144,000 are resurrected and stand with the lamb on Mount Zion
11. There is no human witness left, so God, still wanting to save souls, sends an angel to preach the Gospel as a last effort to reach sinners – Rev. 14:6
12. The 7 last plagues – the 7 bowls of wrath
 - a. Bowl 1 – great sores on the unsaved – Rev. 15:1-2
 - b. Bowl 2 – The sea becomes as blood of a dead man. All life in the seas will perish. – Rev. 16:3
 - c. Bowl 3 – Rivers and fountains of waters become blood – Rev. 16:4
 - d. Bowl 4 – People will be scorched with fire and great heat – Rev. 16:8-9
 - e. Bowl 5 – The Beast’s kingdom stricken – Rev. 16:10-11
 - f. Bowl 6 – The Euphrates River dried up – Rev. 16:12-16
 - i. The nations gather for the great battle of Armageddon – Rev. 16:13-16
 - g. Bowl 7 – A great earthquake and great hail – Rev. 16:18
 - i. Judgment of the great harlot – Spiritual Babylon – Rev. 17
 - ii. Judgment of political Babylon – Rev. 18
- b. The Second Coming of Jesus to earth – Rev. 19:11-21
 - i. Descends on a white horse – Rev. 19:11-16
 - ii. Defeats the Beast and his armies with His Word – Rev. 19:17-21
- c. The Millennium – Rev. 20
 - i. Satan is bound 1,000 years – Rev. 20:1-3
 - ii. We reign with Christ 1,000 years – Rev. 20:4-10
- d. The Great White Throne Judgment – Rev. 20:11-15
- e. The New Heaven and New Earth – Rev. chapters 21-22

Challenges of the Rapture: Because of the Rapture, Christians should:

1. Attend church services – Heb. 10:25
2. Observe the Lord’s Supper – 1 Cor. 11:26
3. Love other believers – 1 Thess. 3:12-23
4. Be patient – James 5:8
5. Live a separated life – 1 John 3:2-3; Titus 2:12-13; 1 John 2:28
6. Refrain from judging others – 1 Cor. 4:5
7. Preach the Word – 2 Tim. 4:1-2; 1 Peter 5:2, 4
8. Comfort the bereaved – 1 Thess. 4:16, 18
9. Win souls – Jude 21-23
10. Be concerned – Col. 3:1-4

Taken from *Panorama of Prophecy*, Dr. H. L. Willmington, Liberty University