

# Rapture 101: When Jesus Returns I Thessalonians 4:13-14

The climax of all human history is coming. The purposes of God long hidden in His eternal counsels are now made clear. Jesus will soon step back into history, no longer the suffering servant, He is Lord of All.

Look closely as God pulls back the veil and reveals the awesome majesty of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in all His glory. As we look at each facet of His wondrous character let your heart rest in the security that comes of trusting in Him. See the folly of the world as they deafen their ears to all the warnings God has given over all of time since the Garden of Eden!

There are two separate moments coming in the perhaps not too distant future when life as we know it will forever be altered.

**THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MOMENT** is the unexpected sweeping away out of this earth of Christ's church.

The Bible teaches that the Rapture or Jesus coming FOR His saints, takes place first, followed seven years later by His Second Coming WITH His saints to rescue Israel. There are no signs for the Rapture, no warning that it is about to occur. All the signs listed in the Bible are for the Second Coming. Jesus Christ comes secretly to catch His saints up to heaven. At that moment the world is living in self-complacent pleasure. The world will seemingly be on its way to solving ecological problems and establishing perpetual international peace. Believers in the Rapture will be widely ridiculed. Few Christians will expectantly await this glorious event. Tonight are we eagerly watching and longing for Christ to take us to heaven?

Will the unsaved world be aware of what is happening? Will they hear the shout, the voice, and the trumpet? First Corinthians 15:52 indicates that this will happen so suddenly that it will be over in the twinkling of an eye. Since the shout, voice, and trumpet apply to God's people, there is no reason to believe that the unsaved masses will hear them. If they do, they will hear sounds without meanings (see John 12:27-30). Millions of people will vanish instantly, and no doubt there will be chaos and great

concern. Except for those who know the Bible teaching, the world will wonder at what has happened.<sup>1</sup>

AT THE RAPTURE: The saints meet Christ in the air.

AT THE SECOND COMING: Christ returns to earth.

AT THE RAPTURE: The Mount of Olives is untouched.

AT THE SECOND COMING: The Mount of Olives splits.

AT THE RAPTURE: Living saints are translated.

AT THE SECOND COMING: No saints are translated.

AT THE RAPTURE: The body goes to heaven.

AT THE SECOND COMING: The body comes to earth.

AT THE RAPTURE: Christ comes for His saints.

AT THE SECOND COMING: Christ comes with His saints.

AT THE RAPTURE: The world is not judged and sin gets worse.

AT THE SECOND COMING: The world is judged and sin is dealt with.

THE RAPTURE: Is not preceded by detailed signs or warnings.

THE SECOND COMING: Is preceded by specific detailed signs.

THE RAPTURE: Concerns only the saved.

THE SECOND COMING: Concerns the saved and the lost.

Beloved, they have to be separate events. The Tribulation will come. And do you know what will happen? You say, "Men will probably repent with all that judgment." Revelation 16:11 says, "And (they) blasphemed the *God of heaven* because of *their pains and their sores*, and repented not of *their deeds*." Sad, isn't it? The Tribulation will be a terrible time for sinners ... I don't think it's a time for Christians!

**THE 2ND MOMENT** is the Day of the Lord. Christ's return in glory and powerful vengeance upon the earth. It will be a time of strange signs in the sky. The Sun will start dimming much to the dismay of the astronomers, the moon will turn red as blood. Meteors will crash to the earth even to the point of poisoning the air and water. Then the Sun will crank up so hot it actually burns the flesh of people exposed to its fierce rays. Earthdwellers will faint for fear at sights of countless fiends who race from a deadly abyss and out a fissure in the Middle East. Like bats from a cave these demonic monsters darkened the sky. They are impervious to all weapons and their way horribly into the securest of rooms. Upon facing any humans they inflict upon them a vilest of venom that burns with such intensity that the paralysis of agony sets in.

Let's read our text v. 13-14. Some have said the Rapture in our text is an escape. An escape from what? What does the Rapture allow us to escape? The Tribulation to come. Walk with me through the pages of Revelation chapters six, eight, nine, and sixteen, and let me briefly describe the living hell you will escape by being part of the Rapture. These are but a few of the things that will happen during the Tribulation:

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W., The Bible Exposition Commentary, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

1. REVELATION 6:5-6 - There will be worldwide famine unlike anything the world has ever seen (see Rev. 18:8).
2. REVELATION 6:8: One-fourth of mankind will die (see Rev. 6:8), some because of war, some because of famine, and still others by the wild beasts of the earth. Whether by death that is swift and instant or death that is lingering and excruciating-25 percent of all people will die. Now the world's population in 1995 is 5,733,687,096, so a quarter of this is 1,433,421,774 or almost five and a half times the current population of the United States-can you imagine that? And remember that the population of the world is doubling every 39.5 years. So every day the number of people who will die becomes larger and larger.'
3. REVELATION 6:12-17 - This will be a time of unprecedented terror from cosmic earthquakes and earthy disasters. Mankind will come to the point of longing to die and have it over with.
4. REVELATION 8:7 - One third of all vegetation will be burned up. All grass, every tree, everything green will be destroyed (see Rev. 8:7).
5. REVELATION 8:12 - The sun and the moon will be darkened as nature goes into revolt (see Rev. 8:12).
6. REVELATION 9:3-6 - The gates of hell will open and hordes of locusts, the size of horses, will come upon the earth. Those locusts will be allowed to sting men like scorpions and the pain will last for five months. The Bible says men will beg God to let them die but they will not die (see Rev. 9:3-6).
7. REVELATION 14:20 - There will be a world war so bloody that the blood of those killed in battle will flow for two hundred miles up to the bridle of a horse in the valley of Jezreel. This will be the Battle of Armageddon. (see Rev. 14:20).

The Second Advent as portrayed in Zechariah 14:1-11

- **THIS IS THE PROMISED DAY OF THE LORD** : Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
- **THIS IS THE DAY THE ULTIMATE WORLD WAR OCCURS**: 2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
- **THIS IS WHEN CHRIST FIGHTS BACK**: 3 Then the Lord will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.
- **THIS IS THE DAY OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING**: 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. 5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You.
- **THIS IS A DAY LIKE NO OTHER DAY**: 6 It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish.7 It shall be one day Which is known to the Lord— Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light.
- **THIS IS A DAY THAT STARTS CLIMACTIC TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL CHANGES TO THE EARTH**: 8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both

summer and winter it shall occur. 9 And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—"The Lord is one," And His name one.10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses.11 The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

There are two separate moments coming in the perhaps not too distant future when life as we know it will forever be altered. **THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MOMENT** is the unexpected sweeping away out of this earth of Christ's church. **THE 2<sup>ND</sup> MOMENT** is the Day of the Lord. Christ's return in glory and powerful vengeance upon the earth. What does the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus call us to this evening? Revelation 19:11-21 records the same event. We can pick up some exciting truth in the 1<sup>st</sup> verse.

#### v. 11 SURRENDER TO His Truth

Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. (NIV)

Christ now returns with His saints. He came for them in Rev.4:1. During all of human history He has been watching and waiting. Nothing has missed His eyes. Now He will begin to bring truth to bear upon all lies and falsehoods and deception:

He will execute vengeance, so wait on Him.

Jude 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (NIV)

2 Peter 2:9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. (NIV)

He will repay evil, so trust Him.

Hebrews 10:30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." (NIV)

He will vindicate the oppressed, so hope in Him.

Psalms 103:6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (NIV)

Psalms 9:9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble. (NKJV)

He will reward the righteous, so work For Him.

Psalms 58:11 So that men will say, "Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth." (NKJV)

Matthew 5:12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (NKJV)

⇒ Are all your sadnesses, anxieties and woes poured out on Him? Only Jesus can give us the rest and peace that all will be well in Him.

How do we get ready? I see three attitudes that Christ's return has built into my life:

- **YIELDEDNESS: Luke 24:27** And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. **LET JESUS OPEN THE BOOK TO YOU!**
- **EARNESTNESS: 1 Peter 1:10-11** Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. **LOOK FOR CHRIST WITH ALL YOUR HEART EVERY DAY!**
- **PRAYERFULNESS: Psalm 119:18** Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. **LET HIM GET SO CLOSE YOU JUST CAN'T STOP TALKING TO HIM!**

#175 Hallelujah what a Savior