

End Times Prophecy

Winter 2022

“The Blessed Hope - The Rapture ”

Intro: What is the hope of all believers? Titus 2:13 *“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our... Savior Jesus Christ,”*

1. The Revealing of the Rapture – John 14

➤ The Promise

(John 14:3 NKJV) "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."

➤ The Place

2 *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to **prepare a place** for you."*

The “place” is in the Father’s house which is huge. Rev. 21:16 says it is 1500 miles cubed: 2,250,000 sq. miles. One architect calculated it could easily hold 100 billion people.

“Many dwelling places” gives the word picture of the N.T. house with a courtyard in the middle. Every time a child married, another section was added on the house, so that eventually the “dwelling places” surrounded the inner courtyard.

“Prepare” does not mean build, but to make ready.

➤ The Reception

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."*

Just as personally, and literally as Jesus went to heaven, He says He is coming back to receive us unto Himself. The disciples had no concept of the “rapture” and going to heaven; that idea went right over their heads:

(John 14:4,5 NLT) "And you know where I am going and how to get there." "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We haven't any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

(Acts 1:6 NLT) "When the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, are you going to free Israel now and restore our kingdom?"

What happens to a Christian when he dies?

Phil. 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

23 *I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;*

2 Cor. 5:6 *So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.*

7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

8 *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

The moment, the instant that a believer dies, his spirit enters the presence of God and Jesus Christ.

2. The Plan of the Rapture (Phase 1) – 1 Thessalonians 4

➤ The Qualities of the church there

2 *We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly.*

3 *As we talk to our God and Father about you, we think of your **faithful work, your loving deeds, and your continual anticipation of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

6 *So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord.*

7 *As a result, you yourselves became an example to all the Christians in Greece.*

8 *And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Greece, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don't need to tell them about it,*

9 *for they themselves keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the true and living God.*

10 *And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven--Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.*

➤ The Question of the church

They were anticipating Jesus' return daily, and when it did not happen, they began to worry about His coming, and their departed.

1 Thess. 4:13 *And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope.*

➤ The Answer for the church

14 *For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died.*

15 *I can tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise to meet him ahead of those who are in their graves.*

16 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves.*

17 *Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever.*

18 *So comfort and encourage each other with these words.*

3. The Plan of the Rapture (Phase 2) – 1 Corinthians 15:49-57

➤ The **Mystery** of the Rapture

This was hidden in the O.T., but revealed in the N.T.

➤ The **Changes** at the Rapture

1 Cor. 15: 49 Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ, the man from heaven.

50 What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These perishable bodies of ours are not able to live forever.

51 But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed.

52 It will happen in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, the Christians who have died will be raised with transformed bodies. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die.

53 For our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die.

54 When this happens--when our perishable earthly bodies have been transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die--then at last the Scriptures will come true: "Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

56 For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power.

57 How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord!

58 So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and steady, always enthusiastic about the Lord's work, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.