

The Rapture of the Church, Facts and Myths

The topic for today's program is the rapture of the church and I will be focusing on many of the myths surrounding the rapture. For example, the term rapture itself, is misleading, because it is taken from chapters in Saint Paul, which had nothing to do with the rapture. But first let's look at the four groups who will survive into the millennium, and the four comings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The four groups who will survive into the millennium are the raptured Protestants, the protected Catholics, the holy martyrs and the converted Jews. The four comings of our Lord Jesus Christ are His first coming as the babe at Bethlehem, His second coming at the rapture, His third coming in power and glory at Armageddon and His fourth coming in judgment, at the end of the Millennium. One of the many myths about the rapture is that there will be no rapture. For those false prophets, I recommend that you read the Olivet Discourse, where our Lord describes the rapture eight times, whereas He only describes His third coming at Armageddon twice, and His fourth coming at judgment another two times.

First, let's look at Matthew chapter 24, verses 27 to 30, where he describes our Lord's third coming at Armageddon. 'For as lightning comes out of the east and shines to the west, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be.' This is not the rapture because it is very visible. Our Lord's third coming at Armageddon will be a very visible and noteworthy event for the entire world. Now, let's look at verse 30 in the Olivet Discourse. 'Then they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' Again, this refers to our Lord's third coming at Armageddon. Notice the power and the glory; therefore this cannot be the rapture.

Now let's look at Jesus' fourth coming in judgment after the millennium. In verse 19 of chapter 25 of St Matthew we read, 'after a long time', and the long time refers to the thousand year reign of peace, 'the Lord of those servants came and reckoned with them'. This word 'reckoning' means judgement; it therefore refers to our Lord's fourth coming, not His second coming at the rapture. In verse number 30, we read, 'the Son of Man shall come in His majesty and all the holy angels with Him. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His majesty.' Again this is His fourth coming when He separates the sheep from the goats. This refers to our Lord's coming at judgment, His fourth coming.

All of the other comings, which our Lord refers to in the Olivet Discourse, concern His second coming at the rapture. Notice in these descriptions of our Lord's second coming at the rapture, there are no archangels, no fanfares, no trumpets, no raising of the dead. All of these are very important in helping us to distinguish our Lord's three End Times comings. The characteristics of the rapture are that it is personal and private.

Let's see how Jesus describes the rapture in verse number 37. 'As it was in the days of Noah, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be.' This is our Lord's second coming. Notice that there is a tone of warning about this description. Let's read verse 39, 'and they knew not till the flood came so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be.' So again we see the warning aspect, when Jesus talks about His second coming. In verse number 42, Jesus says, 'watch therefore for you know not at what hour your Lord comes', again the warning aspect.

In verse number 44, 'wherefore be you ready for you know not at what hour your Lord will come'. We do not know the timing of the rapture. It may be different for different people. When Jesus says that two men will be working in the field or two women grinding at the mill, that suggests a time before the harvest, and a time after the harvest. In Luke, we find that there are different times of the day mentioned. It's very possible that our rapture will be on an individual basis.

Now let's read in chapter 25, the parable of the five wise and the five foolish virgins because this parable is about the rapture. In verse number 6, we read, 'and at midnight there was a cry made, behold, the bridegroom comes, go you out to meet him.' Notice the midnight hour. That does not refer to the specific time of the rapture; it is symbolic of the End Times. In verse 10, Jesus says, 'the bridegroom came, and they who were ready went in with him to the marriage.'

When we read about those who are raptured in Saint John's book of Revelation, we will see that the raptured have four of the exact same characteristics as the virgins in our Lord's parable. First, they are virgins, second, they are called, third, they follow the Lamb wherever He goes and fourth, they go in to the marriage supper.

In Revelation chapter 19 we read, 'and I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude 'let us be glad and rejoice for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and he said to me blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' Notice St John uses the word 'called'

instead of raptured, and he also uses the word later on 'purchased' to describe the raptured.

Another myth about the rapture is that Saint Paul is talking about the rapture in Thessalonians. Let's read First Thessalonians chapter 4. 'For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first.' But nowhere in the Olivet Discourse, do the dead rise at the rapture, there is no shout of archangel, there are no trumpet fanfares. Therefore what Saint Paul is talking about here is Jesus' fourth coming at judgment.

And Saint Paul continues, 'Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, wherefore comfort one another with these words.' Again this is our Lord's forth coming at judgment, not at the rapture. Notice Saint Paul says 'comfort one another with these words'. Whenever our Lord talks about His second coming at the rapture, He is always warning people, He is not comforting them. Therefore Saint Paul is comforting his listeners that the early Christians who have died will be eligible for the resurrection at the last judgment. He is not warning them about the rapture.

Next, let's look at First Corinthians: 'Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet.' Now this is not the trumpets that are mentioned in Revelation. The last trumpet is at judgment and then he adds, 'the dead shall be raised.' Again, the dead are not resurrected at the rapture but only at the third or fourth comings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now that we have corrected some of the many myths about the rapture, in part 2 of the series, we will be looking at that 12 aspects of those who are raptured. If you want to know if you qualify, please check out part 2 of 'the rapture of the church'.