



Our Blessed Hope

"I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3)

Note: Scripture used in this Bible Study is from the New King James Version.

Let's start with taking a look at some basic facts about our resurrection...

1. **What did people who lived in Old Testament times believe about life after death? (see Job 14:14-15, 19:25-27; Psalm 16:10-11, 23:4-6, 49:15; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-2)**

What did Job believe about life after death?

The oldest book in the Bible is Job who believed that he would be changed and see life after death...

Job 14:14-15 - If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; you shall desire the work of Your hands.

What did Job believe about how God would give him eternal life?

Job's belief in the resurrection is reinforced in these verses. Job knew God would send a redeemer to pay the penalty for his sins and make it possible to have a different body in which he would be able to see God...

Job 19:25-27 - For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

What did David believe about life after death?

David also expressed the certainty of life beyond the grave...

Psalm 16:10-11 - For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 23:4-6 - Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 49:15 - But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me.

What did Isaiah believe about life after death?

The prophet Isaiah spoke of life after death...

Isaiah 26:19 - Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Who did Daniel say would be resurrected?

The prophet Daniel spoke of a resurrection of both the saved and unsaved...

Daniel 12:1-2 - "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

2. **What have we learned about life after death since Jesus Christ? (see John 5:28-29, 11:25-26; Revelation 20:4-6; Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2)**

Jesus said all will be resurrected, some to eternal life, others to eternal damnation...

John 5:28-29 - Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Jesus said if we believe in Him, we'd have everlasting life...

John 11:25-26 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

The resurrection to everlasting life will precede the resurrection of the condemned...

Revelation 20:4-6 - And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But

the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The Bible makes it clear that the unsaved will be resurrected to spend eternity in hell...

Revelation 20:11-15 - Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death.** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Christ will give us new incorruptible bodies like His...

Philippians 3:20-21 - For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

1 Corinthians 15:49 - And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection, proof of what we will have ourselves...

Romans 8:29 - For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Corinthians 15:22-23 - For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

We don't know the details but our bodies will be like Christ's and we will be able to see Him as we see each other today...

1 John 3:2 - Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3. Is there any difference in the way people were saved in Old Testament times as now? (see **Ephesians 2:8 & Genesis 6:5-8**)

No... *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever"* (Hebrews 13:8).

In the New Testament we learned...

Ephesians 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

The Old Testament also teaches that salvation is not something we can achieve, it is something God gives us by His grace...

Genesis 6:5-8 - Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Something that briefly bothered me when I was first a Christian: how can people who lived in Old Testament times and died before Jesus Christ came be saved? People were saved the same way during Old Testament times as they are since we have had the New Testament, by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The difference is that today we have the benefit of knowing the "mechanism" God used for salvation (the death of Jesus Christ), in Old Testament times people who were saved knew they could do nothing to save themselves and trusted in God that He would save them. Many of them knew that God's plan for salvation had something to do with the promised Messiah but they didn't know how the Messiah would accomplish their salvation as we know today. As some people have put it, the Old Testament saints looked forward to the cross, we look back on it.

What is a mystery?

- In the New Testament, some operation or plan of God that has not been revealed before.
- Not only a truth previously hidden & presently revealed but one that retains a supernatural element that remains in spite of the revelation.

What are some of the mysteries revealed in the New Testament?

- Kingdom of heaven - Matthew 13:3-50
- The church as the Body of Christ - Ephesians 3:1-11, 6:19; Colossians 4:3
- The church as the bride of Christ - Ephesians 5:28-32
- Christ indwelling the believer - Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:26-27
- Christ is God Himself - Colossians 2:2, 9; 1 Corinthians 2:7
- Lawlessness: false teachers - 2 Thessalonians 2:6-12
- The operation by which people are restored to godliness - 1 Timothy 3:16
- Israel's blindness during the gospel age - Romans 11:25
- Babylon, the harlot (world religion) - Revelation 17:5-18

- The rapture of the church - 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

The Mystery of Christ's Return for the Church

Reference: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

4. Verse 50 - How does Paul describe the resurrected body?

Paul describes the resurrected body as not being the corruptible flesh and blood we currently have, it is incorruptible.

Can we enter the kingdom of God with our sin nature?

We can not enter the kingdom of God in our current bodies because of our sin nature, corruption cannot inherit incorruption.

What will it mean to have an incorruptible body?

As an incorruptible body, our new bodies will never perish and we will not have the inclination to sin as do now.

5. What mystery is revealed to us in verse 51?

Paul describes the translation of the living saints at the end of the church age... There is a generation of the church that will be caught up (raptured) off the face of the planet to meet our Lord Jesus Christ in the air.

Where does the term "rapture" come from?

It is derived from the Latin word which means "caught-up" in English.

Why wasn't this truth revealed in Old Testament times?

We are in the dispensation of grace when God has blessed us with the revelation of His Son...

Hebrews 1:1-2 - God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

With this in mind, here is a humbling thought: *"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required"* (Luke 12:48)

6. Verses 51-52 - What does "sleep" mean here?

The Greek word *koimao* which is translated "sleep" here means to be deceased, physical death.

So what does it mean that we will not all sleep when the resurrection of the Church occurs?

The implication here is that there will be some translated who are living when the resurrection of the church occurs

What happens to people when they die, do their souls sleep?

There is no "soul sleep," souls do not die. Instead the souls of Christians go to be present with the Lord when they die...

2 Cor 5:6-8 - So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Phil 1:21-24 - For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

Where do the souls of the unsaved go when they die?

The souls of the unsaved go to Hades, a temporary place of torment (see the story of the certain rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31). While Hades is effectively hell, it is not the same as the eternal hell which is the lake of fire where the unsaved go after the Great White Throne judgment (see Revelation 20:11-15).

7. Verses 51-52 - What are the two parts of the mystery Paul reveals?

- (1) the dead in Christ will be resurrected,
- (2) the living will be changed to glorified bodies

8. Verse 52 - How fast will the change of the corruptible to the incorruptible occur?

Our resurrection will occur in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. This is faster than a blink... people left on earth after the rapture will sure be doing some blinking!

9. Verse 52 - What does the trumpet signal?

The trumpet signals the last call at the beginning of the change, we will hear this declaration just prior to the change. If we are not listening for the Lord's call, we will miss it. Certainly those who are truly saved will be listening for the Lord's call for Jesus said...

John 10:27 – “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

I believe that this call will be much like the Apostle John experienced when he received the Revelation of Jesus...

Revelation 4:1 - After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Note that the book of Revelation is basically chronological per Revelation 1:19, so Revelation 4:1 represents the rapture as the division between the church age described in previous verses and the tribulation described after. John's being taken to heaven represents the rapture by its similarity. This is consistent with a premillennial timing of the rapture since it happened after the letters to the church are given and before the tribulation is described. Also, the church is nowhere to be found on earth in the description of the tribulation.

Revelation 1:19 - "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."

Certainly when John experience the glorified Jesus speaking to him, He spoke loud and clear as trumpets...

Revelation 1:10-11 - I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,"

I heard one prophecy teacher say that there are so many signs of the Lord's return that he had stopped looking for signs of His coming and started listening for them.

- At the rapture, I expect to hear the Lord say to me, "come up here" as the Apostle John heard.

Likewise, "come up here" is used for another resurrection of the two witnesses that all the world sees...

Rev 11:12 - And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

The dead in Christ will be summoned as Jesus raised up Lazarus from the dead:

John 11:43 - He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

10. Verse 53: What must be taken off us and put on? How will we be changed?

- The resurrection of the saved will involve taking off corruption and mortality which includes our sin nature that is resident in our current flesh and blood bodies.
- The resurrection of the saved will involve putting on incorruption and immortality, we will be sinless with completed sanctification in glorified bodies like Christ has right now.

11. Verses 53-54 - How essential is this change to the incorruptible?

Absolutely essential: "must", it is emphatic. Our current bodies are limited, they are deaf and blind as far as Heaven is concerned. We can only see and hear a small spectrum of God's creation. Heaven will no-doubt have even more elements to sense than what can be sensed in the physical world.

12. Verses 54-55: What victory does Christ give us?

Our resurrection is our victory along with our being incorruptible, immortal, with no Hades or second death.

13. Verse 56: How is death and sin related?

The sting of death is a direct consequence of sin.

14. Verse 57: How do we achieve victory?

We are victorious through the provision of our Lord Jesus Christ who died in our place to pay the penalty for our sin so that our sin may be forgiven.

15. Verse 58: What conclusion does Paul draw from his teaching on resurrection at the rapture?

That those who have been redeemed by Christ should be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Who will be Resurrected?

Reference: 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18

- 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.
15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.
16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

16. Verse 14 - Who gets to be with Christ when they die?

Those who believe that Jesus died and rose again will get to be with Him when they die.

17. Verse 15 - When does the resurrection happen & in what order?

The resurrection happens when the Lord comes, the dead Christians rise first, then *"we who are alive and remain."*

18. Verse 16 - What will happen just prior to the resurrection of the church?

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

19. Verse 17 - Where is Christ during the resurrection of the church?

Christ meets the church in the air at the rapture.

20. Verse 18 - How are these verses comforting?

We have been promised that if we trust in Jesus, we will be saved at His coming... verse 14 – *"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus."* (*"lest you sorrow as others who have no hope"*, verse 13)

Two Phases of Christ's Coming

Why is the timing of the rapture important?

It is not possible to properly interpret Bible prophecy if you have a wrong view of the timing of the rapture of the Church. If this basic aspect of Bible prophecy is not correct, there will be problems with the rest of your interpretations leading to discouragement or, in the extreme, the formation of dangerous false doctrines.

Besides properly interpreting Bible prophecy, how does holding to a pre-tribulation rapture benefit your Christian walk?

With a pre-trib rapture, there are no prophetic events which must occur before it. This is the doctrine of imminence which says the Lord could return for His Bride, the Church, at any moment. Applying this truth to your life is strong medicine against procrastination about what God is calling you to do (or rationalizing about what you should not do). One of the paradoxes of the Christian faith is that we must live as if the Lord is returning today and also be executing a plan to build knowing that He may not come back in our life-time.

If you are not expecting the rapture to occur at any moment, what are you doing?

Alternative views about the timing of the Rapture have it occurring during the Great Tribulation, after it, or at the end of the millennial reign of Christ. All these views put the Church in the dubious position of looking for the Antichrist rather than our Lord (see Matthew 25:1-13). Both the Great Tribulation and the millennial reign of Christ have very clear periods of time associated with certain key events. If the

return of the Lord for His Church was not imminent, it would be possible to have a pretty good idea when it will happen. And this is contrary to the instructions He gave us...

Matthew 24:44 - Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

What kind of dangerous doctrines can come from other than a pre-trib rapture?

Thinking that the Church will have to go through some or all of the Great Tribulation has turned some people into survivalists stock-piling weapons and food in anticipation. This is a dangerous doctrine because it teaches people to depend on their own resources for deliverance rather than the power of God. Another dangerous doctrine is thinking that the Church has replaced Israel in the promises of God. This is one of the roots of anti-Semitism which is devil-inspired and it will keep you from discerning prophetic truth.

How does 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 indicate that the rapture precedes the tribulation?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Per verse 18, the Rapture must happen before the tribulation because it a comfort to the Church. Knowing that we have to face the tribulation before we are resurrected is no comfort yet this is what many people teach.

How does verse 17 show that Paul expected the rapture to be an imminent event even back in his day?

Paul expected that the rapture could happen at any time because he included himself in those who would not face death, *"we who are alive and remain..."*

How does 1 Thessalonians 5:9 indicate that the rapture precedes the tribulation?

1Thes 5:9 - For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

Wrath is a reference to the tribulation which is also known as the Day of God's Wrath (revelation 6:17. God does not intend for His children to suffer through this time of wrath. This is the comfort we have in knowing that the rapture is imminent and will occur before the Tribulation. The Lord has promised that He will keep us from *"the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world"* (Revelation 3:10).

How does 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 indicate that the rapture precedes the tribulation?

2 Thes 2:7-8 - For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

The Apostle Paul wrote the second epistle to the Thessalonians to put their mind at ease that the persecution they had been suffering was not the Great Tribulation. This would have meant that they missed the Rapture he described in his first epistle.

Who is He who restrains?

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 tells us the Holy Spirit Who indwells the Church restrains the lawlessness in the world.

Where is the Holy Spirit in the world?

The Holy Spirit indwells believers.

Where will the Holy Spirit be immediately after the rapture of the church?

Once the Lord removes the Church from the planet, the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit will be removed with it and the lawless one who is the Antichrist will be permitted to come to power. So the Antichrist will not come to power or be revealed until after the Church is raptured out of the world. James and Peter also echoed Paul's expectation...

James 5:8-9 - You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

1 Peter 4:7 - But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

How does 1 Peter 4:17 indicate that the rapture must occur prior to the tribulation?

1 Peter 4:17 - For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

The judgment of non-believers can not begin until it is completed in believers first.

21-27. Explain the distinction between the following sets of verses describing the second coming of Jesus:

21. 1Thessalonians 4:17 and Zechariah 14:4

1Thessalonians 4:17 - Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Zechariah 14:4 - 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.

There is a difference in where Jesus will be seen; at the rapture we will meet Him in the air, at His Second Coming, He will set feet on earth.

This same prophecy is recorded by the apostle Luke...

Acts 1:10-11 - And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Who were the men in white apparel?

These men were angels.

Which is Acts 1:10-11 talking about, the rapture or the Lord's second coming?

From Luke 24:50 we know they saw Jesus ascend from Bethany which is on Mt. Olivet so this is a reference to His Second Coming.

22. John 14:2-3 and 1Thessalonians 3:13 or Jude 14

John 14:2-3 - "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. 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.

1Thessalonians 3:13 - so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Jude 14 - Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,

These verses represent the difference between where the church will be; at the rapture we will be with the Lord in heaven, at the Lord's Second Coming, we will return with Him to the earth.

23. Hebrews 9:28 and Revelation 1:7

Hebrews 9:28 - so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Revelation 1:7 - Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

These verses represent the difference between who will see Jesus when He comes; at the rapture only believers will see Him, at His Second Coming all people on earth will see Him.

24. 1 Peter 1:7 and Matthew 25:31-32

1 Peter 1:7 - that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Note: The apostle Paul refers to testing by fire as well and makes clear it is for rewards, not salvation...

1 Cor 3:13-15 - each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Matthew 25:31-32 - "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."

These verses represent the difference between who is judged when the Lord comes; at the rapture only the works of believers are judged to determine degrees of reward, at the Lord's Second Coming the nations of the earth are judged.

- The book of Revelation also talks about how Christ will come in judgment of the nations...

Rev 19:11 - Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Which nations will God bless when He comes?

Those nations who helped God's children as symbolized by giving them a cup of cold water in Matthew 25 will be blessed when Jesus returns. God told Abraham which nations he would bless when He judges them...

Genesis 12:2-3 - "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

25. Titus 2:13 or James 5:8 and Daniel 12:11-13

Titus 2:13 - looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

(Does Paul say we should look for the appearing or a sign?)

James 5:8 - You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

(What does the term "at hand" mean?)

The term "at hand" means He is close and can come at any time. Since his coming is at hand, we should live like it now - not after we see the signs...

1 Peter 4:7 - But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Daniel 12:11-13 - "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

(How can a prophecy be more specific?)

These verses represent the difference in predictability; the rapture can not be predicted, it is imminent, the Lord's Second Coming follows given signs to the day.

26. Psalms 12:1-2 or Micah 7:2 or Genesis 5:24 and Daniel 7:13

Psalms 12:1-2 - Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

(note that this is from Israel's perspective)

Micah 7:2 - The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net.

(note that this is from Israel's perspective clearly during the tribulation)

Genesis 5:24 - And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

(note that this is a prophetic type of the rapture)

Daniel 7:13 - I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

(note that this is just one representative example)

These verses represent the difference between where in Scripture the two phases of the Lord's coming is revealed; the rapture is veiled in the Old Testament, His Second Coming is described many places in the Old Testament.

How does Enoch represent a type of the rapture?

Enoch was removed from the earth prior to the flood in Noah's day. He was saved from the wrath of God while Noah was preserved through the wrath. This makes Enoch a type of the church with Noah and his family a type of Israel...

Hebrews 11:5 - By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

What is a type?

A type is an example that is intended to help us understand a deeper truth. Consider:

1 Corinthians 10:11 - Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

The word translated "example" is from the Greek word *tupeos* which means "form, figure, or pattern." The English word "type" is developed from the Greek word and provides the basis for why Bible students coined the word "typology." Typology refers to Old Testament patterns that illustrate doctrine, usually New Testament doctrine.

Should we use a type to teach doctrines?

No, doctrines should be taken directly from the Biblical text however types can be used to illustrate a doctrine to help us understand it better.

Besides Enoch, can you think of any other Bible stories that may serve as a "type" of the Rapture when God delivered someone from judgment and destruction?

Genesis 19 - The deliverance of Lot and his family at the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah. Note that Lot's wife didn't obey the instructions from God and had to take one last look at the world... this reinforces that we should keep our focus on Christ even more so as we see the Day approaching.

- There will be those who are aware the rapture is taking place but who are not saved by it. See the appearance of Christ to Paul (a.k.a. Saul)...

Acts 9:7 - And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

Some more...

How is it that 2 Kings 2:1 is a type of the rapture?

2 Kings 2:1 - And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

Like Enoch, the prophet Elijah was taken to heaven without dying. This event was further described...

2 Kings 2:11 - Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

The chariot of fire was probably angels sent from God...

Hebrews 1:7 - And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire."

Note the pattern here, Elijah was taken to heaven while Elisha was left behind as Enoch was taken with Noah remaining behind.

How is Isaiah 6:1 a type of the rapture?

Isaiah 6:1 - In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

The prophet Isaiah also had an experience in which he may have been raptured, how else could he have seen the Lord sitting on His throne?

How does 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 help us to better understand the rapture?

2 Corinthians 12:1-4 - It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man-- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Paul related an experience where he found himself in heaven getting direct revelation from God.

How does Acts 8:39-40 help us to better understand the rapture?

Acts 8:39-40 - Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Philip was not raptured to heaven but was "caught away" on a mission. We too will be receiving special assignments when we are raptured to heaven, it is not the beginning of our eternal retirement. America's concept of retirement is clearly not biblical.

How does Revelation 11:12 help us to better understand the rapture?

Revelation 11:12 - And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

During the tribulation there will be two witnesses of God that God protects until He allows the Antichrist to kill them. All the world watch as they are raptured "in slow-motion" to heaven. Many think one of these witnesses could be Elijah because it is prophesied that he would be sent before the Lord returns...

Malachi 4:5 - Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

People are divided over who the other witness could be, some say Enoch because he too had been raptured, others say Moses because of the nature of the miracles the two men perform and that it was Elijah and Moses who were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3).

How does Revelation 12:5 help us to better understand the rapture?

Revelation 12:5 - She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

The Child here is Jesus, the Son of God who came to the earth as a Jew and a descendant from David. Jesus illustrated God's plan for the Church when He was caught-up to heaven. He deliberately ascended in slow motion so that those watching would not miss the point about where He was going...

Acts 1:9-11 - Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

How does 2 Corinthians 5:20 help us to better understand the rapture?

2 Corinthians 5:20 - Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Another type that is worth mentioning is the role of believers as ambassadors for Christ. What does a government do with their ambassadors just before they go to war with another nation? They pull out their ambassadors because they have given up on peaceful means of reconciliation. Likewise, God will pull His ambassadors out of the world just prior to His going to war with those who have rejected Him. We are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) and are "not of the world" (John 15:19, 17:14, 16).

So what should we be doing as ambassadors for Christ?

We should follow Paul's "type" by making good use of our time to help others join God's side before it is too late...

Ephesians 6:19-20 - and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

27. 1Thessalonians 5:9 or Revelation 3:10 & Isaiah 13:9

1Thessalonians 5:9 - For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Revelation 3:10 - Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Note that "wrath" refers to the tribulation which is part of the Day of the Lord...

Zephaniah 1:14-15 - The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

Isaiah 13:9 - Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.

These verses represent the difference in timing between the rapture which occurs before the tribulation and the Lord's Second Coming which occurs during the day of wrath.

The Rapture Precedes the Tribulation

Reference: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

- 1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,
- 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.
- 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,
- 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.
- 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?
- 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.
- 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.
- 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.
- 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,
- 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
- 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,
- 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

28. Verses 1-2 - What is Paul consoling the Thessalonians about?

Paul wrote this passage to the Thessalonians to assure them that their persecution is not the tribulation, they have not missed the rapture.

29. Verse 2 - What is "the day of Christ"?

(see **Jeremiah 46:10**)

The day of Christ is "the great and awesome day of the Lord" (Acts 2:20) which is the tribulation...

Jeremiah 46:10 - For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that He may avenge Himself on His adversaries. The sword shall devour; it shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood; for the Lord GOD of hosts has a sacrifice in the north country by the River Euphrates.

30. Verse 3 - What must come before the day of Christ?

The falling away comes first and then the man of sin is revealed .

31. Verses 3-4, 8 - Who is the man of sin (a.k.a. son of perdition & lawless one)?

The man of sin is the Antichrist, the Beast of Revelation.

What is the falling away?

The Greek word "apostasia" which is translated "falling away" here means a falling away from or departure from the faith. The Greek root is from where we get the word apostasy.

When will the great apostasy happen?

The great falling away from the faith is given as a sign that the rapture is near since it will occur prior to the rapture. Please note that some Bible say that this "falling away" refers to the church "falling away" from the earth... so this is either saying that the turning from the faith or the rapture occurs before the Day of Christ.

32. Verses 6-7 - Who restrains the lawless one?

The Holy Spirit who indwells the church...

1 John 4:4 - You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

When will the Holy Spirit be "taken out of the way"?

The Holy Spirit will be "taken out of the way" when the church is removed at the rapture.

Does this answer the question Jesus asked in Luke 18:8?

Luke 18:8 - "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

The answer to Jesus' question is no, He will not find faith on the earth when He comes because all those of faith will be gone in the rapture.

33. Verse 8 - When will the lawless one be revealed?

"And then" is key here, it is after "He who restrains" is taken out of the way. The lawless one (the Antichrist) will be revealed after the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way.

34. Verses 10-12 - Is it a good strategy to wait until the rapture to put your trust in Christ?

No, it is not a good idea to wait until the rapture to receive Jesus into your life. People who think they can wait are fooling themselves since there will be a strong delusion that will explain away the rapture.

Do these verses say that people can not be saved after the rapture if they have heard and rejected the gospel prior to the rapture?

No, people who say this are reading more into the passage than it says. God will send a strong delusion so that those who have hardened their hearts to Him will have an explanation they can latch onto but God's Word does not return void (Isaiah 55:11) so seeds of the truth planted prior to the rapture will bear fruit after the rapture if the ground of the heart has been prepared by the Holy Spirit who does not retire at the rapture. A great many people will be saved following the rapture (Revelation 7:14, 20:4).

What explanations do you think will be given for the rapture?

Jesus said during His Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24) that there would be great deception during the tribulation. I'm sure a lot of this deception will be explanations to dismiss the rapture as something other than what it really is...

- New Age Religious people will say something like this is the cosmic god taking away the "bad seed" to prepare the way for a quantum leap into a new state of existence.
- Secular people may believe space aliens zapped them: "We have a common foe so we must all work together". -OR- "We have a common friend so we must all work together." Note that Jesus said there would be signs in heaven preceding His return...

Luke 21:11 - "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."