

Revelation: The Time is Near

The Rapture

Topical

This is a controversial topic among some believers and unbelievers alike.

I'm not going to go into intense detail in this message.

But what I want to do is try and show you what I believe is the heart of God
Based on scripture.

There are arguments for many views on the Bible and even against the Bible by some
But that doesn't make them true.

As believers, I don't believe that we need to be totally separated on some of these views.

They are not matters of salvation.

They are matters of timing.

All believers in Jesus and his atonement for sin and resurrection alone as God, will be saved.

We are talking timing.

Order of operations.

As I like to say to my post-trib believing friend,

"You can be wrong and just take the late bus! I'll take the early bus."

Because again, the scripture can argue for both, although I believe only one is true.

Although, I do believe Jesus' letters to the church show some of the church leaving and some of it staying through tribulation and some of it going to judgment. And a new time period of faith called Tribulation saints in those who come to faith during the tribulation but do not take the mark. I believe they will ultimately pay the price for their faith with death.

Again, we are talking about future events. Things prophesied about. Things that can shift and change from our perspective based on our understanding of the world, it's powers, etc. But don't change from God's perspective.

So to claim to know with absolute certainty the details I don't believe is possible.

However, to claim with near absolute certainty the conditions, I do believe is possible.

[pray]

Rapture - the snatching up (harpazo) of believers to meet Jesus

[1Th 4:13-18 NKJV] 13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 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.

The Great Tribulation

- The final seven years of trouble on the earth meant to judge the nations (nations don't go into the afterlife, people do)
- During which time God pours out his wrath on the earth not just to judge but as a last ditch effort to get people to turn to him before an eternity of hell
- Satan will be in full control of the earth without the Holy Spirit and the church (from the church age) in the way. He will eventually possess a man, the final Antichrist, who will at some point have a false resurrection (probably the man dies and Satan takes his body over, much like Satan sought for Moses' body but couldn't find it), people will pledge their allegiance to him with a mark that will condemn them to hell or die
- I could go on and on, it's quite the time to come (and I'm glad I won't be here for it)

Pre-Trib - basically the believing church (notice the adjective believing) is taken to heaven, along with those who have died already as believers, to skip over the tribulation since we "are not appointed to wrath"

[1Th 5:9-10 NKJV] 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

Either immediately in the aftermath the AC will be revealed and will promise peace and strike up an accord with Israel with peace that is supposed to last 7 years. He will break it half way through.

Mid-Trib - that God will remove his church half-way through. (I think has the least evidence)

Post-Trib - that the church will be dealt with at the end as with the others. (Has a better argument)

However...

Matthew 24:36-44

We see that we will not know the exact day or hour. So if we don't know the exact day or hour, yet the Bible is clear about the 7 years (Daniel, Ezekiel, Revelation, otherwise) we would be able to set a countdown clock based on the peace deal with Israel.

That's the other problem...if it's not pre-trib and looking to Heaven for Jesus to get us...what do we end up doing? Looking to the earth and looking for the Antichrist as our sign. But that's not our implicit instruction.

It will be a surprise.

We're to watch (ten virgins Matthew 25).

One person left another taken.

We're to be ready, that it could happen at any moment...and it could.

Just because we've gone 2,000 years doesn't mean it couldn't have happened in the first century.

I think the church was being effective and somehow staying, via the Holy Spirit, the stay of execution on the earth and truly preventing an AC from arising.

However, with the church being lukewarm (laodicea), the world growing darker and more rotten exponentially, Israel being a nation in a day (fulfilled prophecy), plus all the political alliances, technology advancements for the things outlined, it's starting to seem totally inevitable.

I'd wager even within the next decade at the most,
but again, I don't know the day or hour. It could be 100 years, but I doubt it.

We can't know the hour, but we can know the season

Much like it's the days of Noah today, things going on (it's not exactly like Noah), but isn't the world afraid of another flood - global warming, ice caps melting...a flood. Which won't come. That's why I don't believe it, because I know the next judgment is FIRE.

[1Th 5:1-5 NKJV] 1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should

overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

So we can know a good idea of when he's coming. **It shouldn't take us by surprise.** If we're paying attention.

But since Jesus brought Noah up and his time, let's go back to then.

[Gen 5:18-24 NKJV] 18 Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. 19 After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 20 So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died. 21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. 22 After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God; and he [was] not, for God took him.

So right before God brings judgment on the world, we have this man, Enoch. His name means "dedicated"

Most interesting part, right before the flood...the judgment...God TAKES him. He's walking with God and taken! Because he's walking and dedicated to God. Does that not sound like a picture of the church?

Well what about Noah? Well...

[Gen 6:1-13 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they [were] beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. 3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he [is] indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore [children] to them. Those [were] the mighty men who [were] of old, men of renown. 5 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. 6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 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." 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Now Noah found grace in God's eyes, just like the church...so God saves him through the judgment (a post-trib argument).

However, God hadn't brought his salvation plan to fruition yet and wanted to keep mankind going because at least one man and his family were worth saving...Noah. Enoch was gone.

Side note: imagine Noah didn't listen...but God knew he would.

God's plan wasn't done yet. In the end, his eternal plan isn't done yet, but he's done the work of salvation and the church has no need to go through it.

[Rom 5:9 NKJV] 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

So if the tribulation is God's WRATH poured out on the earth, why should we, who have been judged already at the cross, where God's wrath was poured out on Jesus, why would we get double jeopardy? The answer is, I believe, we won't.

Not to mention Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah...taken out of the city by angels prior to judgment, right after God had visited the city himself...just like Jesus visited the earth.

Shameless plug for my study through Genesis, God and Man. Stream for free on the website or via the New Wine podcast.

Now back to the letters to the churches from Jesus...it's clear they have to hang on. It's clear they need to repent...or they will face judgment.

So I believe Christians who have been faithful, have not been corrupted (are actually following Jesus and not just name only) will be raptured.

[Eph 1:13-14 NKJV] 13 In Him you also [trusted], after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

We are sealed. There's no way you'd take the mark. There's no way you'd not call out the AC for who he is the minute he showed up.

2 Thes 2:1-12

The Holy Spirit is restraining him from being revealed...holding back the floodgates of evil. As evil as things are now, they are restrained! Yet the world kicks and moans and screams to get God out of everything. Just wait until they truly get what they want.

So brethren...you can take whatever bus you want. BUt I believe the early bus is the only one that's coming. So wouldn't it be wise to live for that bus? If I'm wrong, there will be another bus.

And I don't want to go through wrath. It's what got me to repent. Sure, God can save us through trials and tribulations, but what logical reason, what loving reason would he have for us to go through the Great Tribulation meant for the nations that rage against him? None.

Even after the Great Tribulation, God's salvation plan isn't over. Even in it ANGELS will proclaim the gospel flying through the sky...it's no longer left to the church since the church age is over. And people still won't believe. So don't fault yourself...it's the Holy Spirit they're resisting.

Now again, there are many more places to look, but I think this is a good primer, a good thought-starter to rationally consider the scriptures and lovingly think about what our Heavenly Father is saying to us and what he thinks and feels about us.

Even countries get their citizens out of a foreign entity before they attack, before war is officially called. Why would God be any less just to the people HE LOVES AND DIED FOR?

Salvation invitation