

## Afterlife 1 – A timeline

O I want to see Him

Verse 1:

As I journey through the land, singing as I go,  
Pointing souls to Calvary—to the crimson flow,  
Many arrows pierce my soul from without, within;  
But my Lord leads me on, through Him I must win.

Refrain:

Oh, I want to see Him, look upon His face,  
There to sing forever of His saving grace;  
On the streets of glory let me lift my voice,  
Cares all past, home at last, ever to rejoice.

There is an afterlife. Everyone thinks about it. Christians and non-christians alike have always asked the question..

### What happens after you die?

Mankind has always asked this question. We are all assured of death and always wonder what comes next... Mankind has come up with many different answers to the question..

Some believe in reincarnation.

Some believe your spirit goes into another plane of existence.

Even belief systems that don't believe in a supernatural afterlife are focused on a natural afterlife. Take this **Biodegradable Urn** for example. Even if you don't believe your soul or spirit live on you might believe that you could live on a source of life to the planet.

As a Christian **What happens after you die?**

I am sure you thought of 2 words Heaven & Hell. If you did then this sermon series is perfect for you. A major idea of this series

is that **The Afterlife is a lot more than just Heaven & Hell.**

This series is not meant to scare us, but to lead us, educate us, and give us hope. Here is an **overview of the series.**

Week 1 (Today) The Afterlife Timeline – Rapture

Week 2 – The Rapture Reward & Millennial Kingdom

Week 3 Heaven

Week 4 Hell

Week 5 The 2 Resurrections & 2 Judgements

Make plans to be here all 4 weeks. Tell others about the series. Also feel free to ask questions on our anonymous text line 214 856 0550

## **The Afterlife is a lot more than just Heaven & Hell**

Before we dig in I want to give a disclaimer..

1. People will disagree with it.
  - a. That is ok.
2. This is one way of interpreting Endtime scripture. It is the way I understand it best.
3. If you have any questions or even disagreements I am happy to talk with you about them.
4. This is not a salvational doctrine. This is interpreting prophecy that is in some cases purposely shrouded by God. If we disagree on some points here we can still agree on the saving work of Jesus Christ and His cross. (and the Church said amen!)

## **Timeline**

There is lot more than just heaven or hell on this timeline ahead of us. These things will take place in the future. As I am speaking to you now they have not yet occurred. I will be covering THE RAPTURE, The TRIBULATION, THE MILLENNIAL REIGN, & The 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection today.

## **The Rapture**

You may be familiar with the word “rapture,” but perhaps you don’t know the word doesn’t appear in your Bible. That should give us pause. If it is going to be a belief, it should actually be in the Bible right?

The word Rapture comes from the greek word RAPARE which means "seize", "snatch" or "take away." There is a moment prophesied in Scripture when God will RAPARE, seize, take away, His people. His followers will be CAUGHT UP.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.(NIV)

1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.(NIV)

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.(NIV)

Although the word rapture is not written point blank in your Bible, the doctrine of the Catching Away of the Church is.

There will be a Rapture. It is the keeping of a promise Jesus made to His disciples..

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.(NIV)

Jesus Himself will come for us!

Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.(NIV)

Matthew 24:31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.(NIV)

Jesus coming on the clouds was also prophesied in the Old Testament.

Daniel 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.(NIV)

Daniel 7:14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.(NIV)

Jesus ascended into the clouds and will return in the same way.

Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.(NIV)

Acts 1:10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.(NIV)

Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."(NIV)

## When is the rapture?

We long to know when Jesus will return to “Catch Away” His people. When will it happen? There are those that have tried to predict the day of His coming... they have all be wrong.

Matthew 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.(NIV)

We can look at the seasons... look at the prophecies and compare it to the world to know that His coming is near... but we will never know the Day or Hour. Look at the next verse...

Matthew 24:37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.(NIV)

How was it in the days of Noah?

- Great Wickedness – Continual Evil(Genesis 6:5)
- Earth full of violence (Genesis 6:11)

Not only is our message that Jesus is coming... Our message is that He comes quickly.

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.(NIV)

## When is the rapture?

This is a complicated question. We don't know the day or the hour... but we can look to signs, seasons, and scriptural prophecy. So we are really asking "when is the rapture in relation to..."

## The Tribulation

The Tribulation is a period of time foretold in Bible Prophecy. In the Books of Daniel and Revelation it speaks of two 3 ½ year periods that will come in the end time. The 1<sup>st</sup> 3 ½ years are the tribulation and the 2<sup>nd</sup> 3 ½ years is the great tribulation. Together they make 7 years of tribulation.

Now a study on tribulation could stand alone as its own sermon series. We don't have that kind of time to devote to the tribulation today, but we have studied it in the past. Search our website ([www.redemption-church.com](http://www.redemption-church.com)) for the Revelation Series.

The Tribulation is a period of time at the end. There will be an Anti-Christ & False Prophet. There will be a one world government, religion, & currency. There will be signs and plagues. There will be severe persecution for all who believe in Christ. The nation of Israel will be deceived by the Ant-Christ but then wake up and turn to Jesus Christ the Messiah. The Tribulation ends with the Savior returning to conquer Satan and his armies and to rescue Israel at the battle known as Armageddon.

When people ask when the rapture will take place. They are really asking “where in relation to the tribulation is the rapture?”

Not everyone agrees with this of course. There are 4 major views. Pre-Tribulation rapture, where Jesus takes us before the tribulation. Mid-tribulation where it occurs somewhere within the 7 years. And then post-tribulation where the rapture happens after the 7 year tribulation. Then there are some who don't think there will be a rapture.

**The importance of the rapture is not WHEN it happens but being ready for when it happens.**

End time prophecy is covered in secrecy. All has not been completely revealed. Why does God do that? Because it is not clearly understood every generation of the church age has lived thinking that Christ's return is soon. This is a part of God's design.

God wants a Church that is looking for His return.. and anxious for His return.

## Who is the Rapture for?

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.(NIV)

1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.(NIV)

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**The Rapture is for the dead & the living.**

**The Rapture is for the bride of Christ.**

The Tribulation is for Israel. The prophecy from Daniel is clearly a process of readying and bringing Israel to Christ.

The Tribulation is not meant for the Church... The Rapture – The catching away is meant for the Bride of Christ that is ready for the surprise arrival of the Groom, Jesus Christ.

We spoke in the Bachelor series (February 2015) about the Jewish marriage process and how it pointed to the coming of Christ. The groom would go away to prepare a place for the married couple to dwell.. The groom's return would be a surprise and the bride would need to be ready for the moment of His return.

Church we need to be ready for the moment Jesus returns.

### **The Rapture is for a prepared bride.**

I am about to share something with you that is not a popular doctrine. It won't take you long to find someone who disagrees. But I believe it is important that I share it.

Many people.. most people believe that all believer's will be taken at the rapture. And if that is true PRAISE GOD. But my heart has been burdened at the chance of a different outcome. Please keep an open mind to what I share and check it with Scripture.

What if not all believers were raptured? How would you feel if others were raptured and you were not? Would you be mad that no one told you that could happen? Would you be wondering why you were not taken?

The more I study scripture the more I think this could be possible. Because I think it is possible, I think it must be brought to your attention.

Revelation 19:7 says the THE BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF READY.

A bride that is prepared. A bride that has made herself ready for the groom.. That is who the rapture is for.

Matthew 25 speaks of 5 wise & 5 foolish virgins who were waiting for the groom. The foolish virgins ran out of oil for their

lamps and they ran to buy some but while they were out the groom showed up and took the 5 wise virgins who were prepared for his arrival. Jesus is the groom that will return for wise prepared brides.

The parable of the wise and foolish servant echoes this message. One servant was not prepared for the master to return, but the wise servant was prepared. The master returns and takes the prepared servant and brings him deeper into His kingdom.. puts that servant in charge of the kingdom.

Matthew 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.(NIV)

We are told repeatedly to KEEP WATCH, to BE READY, to BE PREPARED for the coming of the Lord.

I am afraid that we aren't doing that. I fear that we think saying a sinners prayer is enough. I am certain that we think going to church is enough. WE ARE TO BE WATCHING, WAITING, HOPING, FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST EVERY DAY.

Honestly.. are we doing that?

If you miss the rapture you can still be saved from hell. We will explain that in the next few weeks.

But if you miss the rapture you are not saved from the tribulation.

If you miss the rapture there is still hope... that is something not said in churches...

But if you miss the rapture it is because you did not love Jesus enough to be ready for Him.

Matthew 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.(NIV)

Luke 21:36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."(NIV)



1 Thessalonians 5:6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.(NIV)

Hebrews 9:28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.(NIV)

Revelation 3:3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.(NIV)

Revelation 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.(NIV)

I have another support for this shocking claim.. it takes some explaining.

In Revelation 2 & 3 it speaks about 7 candlesticks that represent 7 churches. These were actual church congregations at the time John wrote the letter, but they serve as a dual prophecy. They spoke directly to the churches but also serve as a prophecy to us today.

God speaks to the 7 churches.. No there is one church of Jesus Christ... why 7? I think the best answer is that the 7 churches named in Revelation 2 & 3 represent the church eras since the birth of the church in Acts 2. Whether you agree or not.. the point I want to make is the promise.

When God speaks to the Churches he gives them 1 of 3 things. #1 praise. He offers them a well done. #2 He offers them a judgement. This is an area where you are wrong and you need to correct.. #3 He offers them a promise to the ones who overcome.

- (Ephesus) To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life.
- (Smyrna) The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

- (Pergamum) To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.
- (Thyatira) To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter..
- (Sardis) The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.
- (Philadelphia) The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.
- (Laodicia) To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne

These promises aren't to the entire Church.. To the one who is victorious.. These promises are to those in the Church who are victorious.

These promises and rewards are very similar to the promises and rewards to those that are raptured. I believe they are one and the same... We will discuss the promise and reward of the rapture next week...

But right now I want to ask you.. Are you ready for the return of Jesus? Are you the one who is victorious? Are you the one that is watching a waiting for the groom to come?

Are we guilty of watching & waiting for other things?

There are those in the Churches of Revelation 2 & 3 that may be saved from HELL but not saved from the tribulation.

I have to warn us that there maybe those in Church with us today or watching on the internet that are saved from Hell...

praise God for that... but they may not be saved from the tribulation. They may miss the groom when He comes..

You want to be in the rapture. You need to reorganize your life and make that your top priority today. Whatever it takes to be ready when Jesus comes... that is what we need to do.

If you aren't sure what that is then you need to meet one of our pastors at the front during altar prayer.

I have given you a lot to think through.. But let me close with something simple. Paul makes the rapture, heaven, & being with Jesus in the afterlife really simple.

2 Timothy 4:8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.(NIV)

There is a rapture reward coming for Paul.. but not to him only. The reward is coming to all who.. Long for His appearing.

Notice it does not say – All who are perfect. All who are sinless. But all who love.. long.. are expecting & waiting for His appearing.

You can't fake this. You have to love Jesus.

The coming of Jesus is ahead of us... but the crown is available... when? The answer is in the first word of the verse.. Now.