

Title: The Two Phases of Christ's Second Coming

(The ULTIMATE TRIP)

Text: I Thess. 4:13-18

Review

There are three great facts in the N. T. All else revolves around these facts. First, Christ has come to earth and has gone back to heaven. Second, the Holy Spirit has come to earth and is still here. Third, Christ is coming back again.

The first fact is that this world has been visited by its Creator - God. The feet of the Lord of glory have ^{walked} the earth on which we dwell. He came down from heaven's throne and dwelt for more than 33 years among men. He did not come in pomp and splendor. His glory was veiled, His divine power was laid aside. He, who was in the form of God, took upon himself the form of a servant. He, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was made in the likeness of men. He, who had received the adoration of angels, was born in a stable.

Amazing Grace *How Sweet The Sound*
~~What matchless condescension. What amazing grace.~~ As we think of all that He gave up for us we ought to want to fall at his feet and cry out, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. Hallelujah to our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Now remember how the world received Him. Did ~~men~~ ^{people} hail His coming as the world's greatest event? Did the kings of the earth cast their crowns at his feet? Did the people bow down and worship him? ~~Of course,~~ ^{No!} the human heart was too full of sin. Eyes were blind. Romans 8:7 tells us that "the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Jesus came to his own and His own received him not. He came to Bethlehem and there was no room for Him in the inn. *I Believe There is one statement which sums up the*

~~This statement sums up the whole tragic story -~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{people} did not want God. His holiness condemned their sin and they could only say, "Away with him, Crucify Him."

LaFol of Jesus

out Jesus came to heal the broken-hearted, to deliver the captives of sin, to give sight to blinded eyes, to save men from death. But they hated Him, They said, Crucify Him." And Jesus was crucified as a criminal. But, although they knew it not, they were fulfilling God's eternal purpose. Christ was "delivered by the ^{pre-determined} ~~determinate~~ counsel and foreknowledge of God." They could not have crucified Him if ~~God~~ ^{God} had not permitted it. From the standpoint of the world His death was deliberate, cold-blooded murder. From the standpoint of God it was the penalty being paid by His Son for our sins.

Man despised and rejected Jesus; but God raised him from the dead and "highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name," ~~the name~~ (Phillippians 2:9).

2 The second great event in the N.T. is that the Holy Spirit came to earth and is still here. The world rejected God's Son, but Jesus did not abandon the world. This would have been only just - why should God deal in mercy with a people who had killed his son? But "where sin did abound, grace did much more." God postponed His wrath. He sent His Holy Spirit down to earth and gave man another chance.

The Holy Spirit came on what we call the Day of Pentecost. What is purpose of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is here to fill the place of an absent Christ. He is here to convict, to reprove, to point sinners to Christ. He is here to comfort, guide and strengthen the Christian. This is a precious truth - the Holy Spirit is here taking the place of Christ whom the world put to death.

3 The third great event of the N.T. is that Christ is coming back. He is now seated on the throne of heaven, but one day He will descend into the air, receive His own and take them up to be with Him. Later he will come back with the faithful. ~~Jesus~~ In His farewell address to His disciples Jesus told them that he would "come again" and receive them unto Himself.

From that time this event is mentioned time after time. Paul's first letter was to the Thessalonians and He mentioned it in every chapter. In speaking of the Lord's Supper, Paul states that we are to observe that memorial meal "until He comes." The last recorded words of Jesus in the Bible are, "Surely I come quickly."

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The Rapture of the Church
I. ~~THE TWO STAGES OF HIS SECOND COMING~~

Now

The second coming of Jesus is mentioned 318 times in the N.T. But, a careful examination of the passages reveals what appears at first to be conflicting concepts. For example, one passage tells us that Christ will come "in the air" (I Thess. 4:17), whereas another tells us he is coming "to the earth." One passage tells us that his coming is to be secret, "as a thief"; another tells us "every eye shall see him." One passage teaches that his coming will be a time of joy and blessing; another tells us the people of the earth shall "mourn."

The only way to correlate these teachings regarding Christ's coming is to understand that his coming is in two stages. The First stage is the Rapture, or taking away, of the ~~of church~~ Christians; the second is the ~~of church~~ Glorious Appearing to the whole ~~world~~ earth. Christ will come secretly in the Rapture. The Only people who will see Christ at the Rapture are the faithful - those who have accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour. But Christ will come publicly in the Glorious Appearing. Then every eye will see and all hearts will fear.

Now Friends

Get this matter straight and you'll understand ~~better~~ the Bible teaching as to Christ Coming. The second coming of Christ is to be a two-stage event. And these two stages are separated by a seven-year interval. This seven years is the fulfillment of the "seventieth week" of Daniel, or the time of "Jacob's trouble." This seven year period is called in the Gospel of Matthew "the Great Tribulation."

Now, Tonight's lets look at ⁻⁴⁻
The Order of Events In The Rapture.

Take your Bibles attention to

The details of this great event are clearly seen in our Scripture lesson. Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18. (Read)

The people of Thessalonica were concerned about their departed loved ones who had put their faith in Christ, thinking that perhaps they would miss ^{The Rapture} ~~the Rapture~~. They sent word to Paul about their concern, and in answering them the Apostle teaches us also.

^{Y 13} ~~The passage is written~~ ^{In vs 13}, Paul says, ~~because~~ ^{do} "I would not ~~be~~ ^{want you to} ignorant," and also "that you sorrow not even as others which have no hope." Note: The Holy Spirit has not said that believers should not grieve, but that we are not to grieve as the hopeless. Thanks to God, though we grieve to lose our departed loved ones, it is but a temporary separation until we meet together in the Rapture of the Church.

Verse 14 refers to those that "sleep in Jesus." This is referring to all those saints (Christians) who have died from the time of Pentecost until the Rapture of the church.

Verse 15 clearly points out the fact that Paul is not teaching this as his personal opinion, but; "This we say ~~unto~~ you by the word of the Lord."

We find in verse 16-18 seven distinct steps taking place in the "twinkling of an eye" at the Rapture.

(1) "For the Lord himself shall descent" The Lord is not sending someone else. The Savior himself is coming for us. The heavens will open and Jesus will come into the air.

(2) "...with a shout..." The shout for the believer is going to be ^{from} the Lord himself, whose voice has already proven its authority to raise the dead. One day, standing at the tomb of Lazarus, who had been dead four days, Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come forth," and before the eyes of many witnesses Lazarus "came forth." Just as dead Lazarus reposed, so all those that sleep in Jesus will respond when he calls.

(3) "/"/"/"/the/voice/of/the/archangel/."

(3) "The dead in Christ shall rise first." That is all the millions who have trusted ~~him~~ ^{him} and have died in the faith shall be raised, ^{first} This will be the "first resurrection." It will be a resurrection "from among the dead." The Bible does not teach a partial resurrection. When it says that "the dead in Christ shall rise," it means all of them. Every soul that has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and who had gone through the experience of death shall be raised. Or to put it another way, it means that all dead Christians will be given a glorified body which will unite with their soul and spirit. This is called the resurrection of the believer.

(4) Then the living Christians - all of them - will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We who happen to be living at the Rapture will be "made incorruptible." Our ~~soul~~ ^{soul} and spirit never leave the body, but ~~sudden~~ suddenly our body becomes "like unto his glorified body," referring to our Lord's resurrection body, and we will immediately leave this earth. No matter what we are doing we will suddenly be taken out of this world.

Have you ever tried to visualize what will be the attitude of people after the Rapture.

Read page 136 of "The Late Great Planet Earth"

(5) "...to meet the Lord in the air..." It seems that our Lord permists us to meet one another in the clouds before we gather together unto him. What a blessed reunion we will have renewing fellowship with other saints and with loved ones who have passed away before our Lord's coming. Then we will meet our blessed Lord face to face, ^{fulfilling} ~~filling~~ the Scriptures that we will "see him as he is."

Those are the
Five Things that will
Happen at the Rapture

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Vs 17... "And so we shall always be with the Lord." What words these are, promising that after the Rapture of the church we will forever enjoy the presence of our Lord. A little girl was asked by a ^{Doubter} ~~scoffer~~ of the Second Coming of Christ, "How can you enjoy heaven? Christ is supposed to come down to earth." Now this question bothered the little girl but for a moment before she replied, "It really doesn't matter, because wherever he goes I'll go with him."

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Vs. 18: "Comfort one another with these words". There is much comfort to be found and shared with other Christians through this anticipation. The Christians future is not just bright -- it's dazzling.

Any questions

III. Preparation For The Rapture

Now these events that we have just discussed in these verses is only for those who have met the condition of verse 14: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again"---that is, if you have put your trust in the dying and resurrected Saviour. If you have never personally trusted in him, you will not join him at his coming,

The selective nature of the Rapture is illustrated by our Lord in Luke 17:34-36: Turn and Read

Have you ever been to a large junk yard. A place where they deposit wreck cars and steel scrap. There you will usually find an electromagnetic crane. This electromagnetic will move over a large railroad car filled with ~~what/sees/so/tp/~~ what seems to be junk steel. At the flip of a switch everything in the car leaped up to magnetic crane. Then I saw a strange thing: some pieces of steel fell back into the car. Being curious, I ask a workman why these piece fell back into the car. He explained that they were not ~~st/~~ steel. They were pieces of wood. Only those objects that were made of the right components responded to the magnet; the rest were left behind.

That is exactly the way it will be when the Lord comes. Those of you who do not have the Spirit of God within you through faith in Christ Jesus will not respond to the "short of the Lord."

John Knox, the great Scotch preacher, went away to minister in Southern Europe. The Scotch people were so anxious for him to return that they flooded him with letters begging him to come back to Scotland. Finally the message came back to Scotland that Knox would soon return. The news was so glorious that everyone became a messenger. Every time one person met another, they would say in great excitement, "John Knox is coming home."

Tonight I bring you another joyful message, "Jesus is coming." What if he came tonight? Are you ready?

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