

**FAST FORWARD PART THREE
THE RAPTURE AND THE REVELATION
OR, WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CHRISTIANS?
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JESUS' OLIVET DISCOURSE #3
MATTHEW 24:26-41
1-20-08
S-1745**

Today we continue a four-Sunday emphasis on Jesus' discussion concerning future events in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24. We call this series, "Fast Forward."

Remember, the Disciples asked Jesus three questions:

1. When will this (the destruction of the Temple) happen? (70 a.d. by the Romans)
2. What will be the sign of your coming?
3. What will be the sign of the end of the age?

Jesus' answer was the Olivet Discourse.

A cursory reading of our passage reveals many signs and events which seem to occur simultaneously. For example, the Second Coming of Christ (the Revelation) seems to be simultaneous with the catching away of the Christians up to Heaven (the Rapture). *Does this mean that Christians will experience the seven years of the horrors of the end times?*

Remember the Mountain Peak Principle. Events that appear to occur at the same time may well be separated by varying amounts of time.

"Let The Reader Understand"—Daniel (Matthew 24:15).

The Framework Of The Last Days Is Outlined By The Prophet Daniel.

The Multi-Metalic Man (Daniel 2:31-35)

This dream image and the interpretation provided a description of the timing and events from Daniel's day until the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

The Seventy "Sevens" Prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27)

God has a 490 year (70 X 7 "sevens") program for Israel. This program will continue for 490 years until the second coming when Christ establishes His Kingdom on earth. The prophetic clock started on March 4, 444 b.c.. After 69 "sevens" (483 years) the Anointed One (the Christ) was to come. 483 years after the beginning date Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday 32 a.d.. At that moment God's prophetic time clock stopped. During our present generation we are now in a prophetic "time out." There is still one "seven" year period to go.

The 70th "seven" described in Daniel 9:27 allows us to gaze into the future. All prophetic passages of the last days hang on this seven-year time period.

Passages like Daniel 12:11-12 should humble us into realizing that no one can understand the time schedule of the events of the end of time with exact certainty. God has simply chosen to leave the exact ordering of events to Himself. This calls for faith and patience.

Where Will The Church Be During These Times?

The Great Parenthesis or Church Age which occurs between Pentecost and the Rapture.

Understanding Amillennialism, Premillennialism and Postmillennialism (When the Second Coming occurs—or not?) depends upon whether all the Old Testament promises were transferred by God from Israel to the Church.

Apparently, Christ's Second Coming Is In Two Stages: The Rapture And The Revelation.

1 Thessalonians 4:17: "...we will meet the Lord in the air."
Zechariah 14: 4-5: "His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives."

1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Revelation 16:15: He will come in secret, as a "thief in the night."
Revelation 1:7: "...every eye will behold Him."

Titus 2:13: the return of Christ is a time of blessing and hope.
2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: the return of Christ is a time of punishment and judgment.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and John 14:2-3: He will come "for" His saints.
Zechariah 14:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 19:11-16: He will come "with" His saints.

The first stage occurs when Christ comes in the air, in secret, in great blessing and hope, for His saints to remove them to Heaven. This is called the *Rapture*. Rapture is a Latin word, *Rapturo* which means *to catch away*.

The second stage occurs at the end of the last seven-year period when Christ comes to the ground, with every eye on Him, with His saints, to bring judgment and punishment. This is called the *Revelation*.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul Carefully Laid Out The Events And The Order Of Events Of The Rapture Of The Church.

When Does This Rapture Occur?

Pre-Tribulation: Before the last seven-year period (Dwight Pentecost: *Things To Come*)

Mid-Tribulation: During the middle of the last seven years (Robert Van Kampen: *The Sign*)

Post-Tribulation: At the end of the seven-year period (George Eldon Ladd: *A Theology Of The New Testament*)

Pan-Tribulation: Everything will all pan out in the end.

Remember Some Of The Purposes Of Studying Prophecy.

1. Prophecy is call to holy living.
2. Jesus expects us to be ready at any moment for His return. ("We are to plan as though He weren't coming for a thousand years, but we are to live as if He were coming in the next ten minutes.")
3. Fortunately, the return of Christ is our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:11-13).