

## Biblical Answers to Difficult Questions: Are We in the Last Days

June 05, 2022

Rev. Ch. 6-22; Matt. 24, 2 Peter 3:8-18; 1 Cor. 15:24-26, 50-54; Is. 11, 65; Dan. 9; Jn. 14

What is coming? Should we expect to see the rule of Christ?

### **6 Eras of Prophetic History:**

**6<sup>th</sup> Era: New Heavens and a New Earth:** Rev. 22:1-5, We see in this passage: A city with a river, nations, the Tree of Life, no sin, saints are fulfilling the original intent of God to reign on earth. In Rev. 21:9-14, we see a new Jerusalem, 1400-1500 miles high and wide. We see in Rev. 21:1-2, a new heaven and earth. Christ giving to the Father a pure people and kingdom where death is destroyed, 1 Cor. 15:24-26.

**5<sup>th</sup> Era: Great White Throne Judgement:** Rev. 20:11-15; Jn. 5:27, resurrected unbelievers prepared for judgement. Every action judged by Christ. Death and Hades (hell) cast into the Lake of Fire which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> death.

**4<sup>th</sup> Era: Reign of Christ on Earth:** Rev. 20:1-3, Satan is bound for 1,000 yrs. Rev. 20:4-6, the saints rule with Christ on Earth for 1,000 yrs.- the Millennial Reign. A literal, bodily reign of Christ. Christ will rule with justice, Is. 11:1-5. Is. 11:6-9, animals will be at peace. Zech. 14:16-21; Is. 2:2, every nation will come to worship in Jerusalem. No more war but peace for all nations, Is. 2:4.

The population will be those who survived the Great Tribulation as mortals and their offspring and the church saints ruling alongside Christ. 100 years old will be the age of those who are wicked--infant mortality will end, Is. 65:20. Is.35:1-10, the earth will be green and lush and the people be disease free (v5).

**3<sup>rd</sup> Era: Return of Christ and Earthly Judgements:** Rev. 19:11-16, Christ returns and destroys His enemies on the earth (Rev. 9, 16, Zech. 14). OT Saints are resurrected after Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming and the end of the Great Tribulation, Dan. 12:2. Antichrist rules for 1,260 days (3 ½ yrs.), but Dan. 12:11-13, speaks of 1,290 days. What are these 30 days after Antichrist rule? Matt. 24:30, the coming of Christ with His saints. Christ appears. V31: Christ gathers the elect from the Tribulation. Some of the Jews were faithful and ready, some weren't, Matt. 25:1-13. Gentile nations judged for their treatment of others during the Tribulation, Matt. 25:31-33. Those who rejected Christ are sent away to everlasting judgement, Matt. 25:41-46.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Era: Great Tribulation:** Rev. Ch. 6-18, Matt. 24:3-28. Three points of Order:

- a) **The Tribulation:** V4-28; signs everywhere, the Gospel preached to all. V24-27, Jesus coming will be obvious. V28; Ez. 39:17-20, birds and animals will eat of those slain by Christ.
- b) **Cosmic Signs:** Rev. 16; Matt. 24:29
- c) **The King Coming to Establish His Kingdom:** Matt. 24:30

**1<sup>st</sup> Era: Rapture and Resurrection of the Church:** 1 Thess. 4:13-18, V17, "caught up," is a translation of the word "harpazo" meaning snatched up, taken up, sudden. This happens prior to the wrath of God being poured out.

- 1 Thess. 5:9-10, no judgement upon believers.
- 2 Thess. 2:1-3, Paul comforting the church that the Day of the Lord hadn't come yet because they were still on earth.
- 1 Cor. 15:51-54, changing of mortality and corruption to immortality and incorruptibility.
- There are no OT passages on the rapture because it is for the church.
- 1 Jn. 3:2, we will be like Christ when He appears.
- Phil. 3:20-21, Christ will transform our lowly bodies conforming them to His glorious one.

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- No time in the Bible are Christians asked to worry about the Day of the Lord.
- Jesus saves from the wrath of God but not persecution, Rev. 9:1-5.

### Differences of the Rapture vs. Second Coming:

| <u>Rapture</u>                           | <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Coming</u>                   |
|--|--|
| • Coming in the Air                      | Coming to Ground (Mt. Olives)                  |
| • No judgement                           | Christ comes with Judgement                    |
| • No kingdom yet                         | Christ coming with saints for kingdom          |
| • Rapture before wrath                   | Wrath poured out - then 2 <sup>nd</sup> Coming |
| • No signs, imminent                     | Saints can follow signs in Scripture           |
| • Take saints to heaven                  | Coming with saints from heaven                 |
| • Believers taken away, unbelievers left | Unbelievers taken away, believers left         |

Rapture events that demonstrate a prolonged view of the raptured ascending to heaven: Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11-12. Rev. 11:11-13, the two witnesses seen by all. Jesus in Acts 1:9-11, seen as He was carried away into the clouds.

Jesus said in Jn. 14:1-3, He has prepared a place for us and will take us there.

### To Answer the Question in 5 Parts: Are we in the Last Days?

**P1: Yes:** from Acts 2:17 and Joel 2:28-32, we are in the last days now 2000 yrs. later.

**P2: But:** 2 Pet. 3:8, one day with the Lord is as a 1000 years.

**P3: And:** Everyday could be our last. The rapture could happen at any time. 1 Pet. 4:7, Jam.5:8.

**P4: So:** We live everyday like it could be our last. 1 Pet. 4:7. Jam. 5:8, honor the Lord in service.

**P5: Amen:** 2 Pet. 3:10, the Day of the Lord will come and believers should be preparing for it.

## Further Discussion and Application

A great resource on the preaching of the rapture through 20 centuries of church history is found in a TMS publication in the Fall 2002 pages 149-171 by James F. Stitzinger, "The Rapture in Twenty Centuries of Biblical Interpretation."

Discuss from 2 Pet. 3:8-18 the things we should be doing?

- a) Earnestly pray for the lost, 2 Pet. 3:9;
- b) Aggressively pursue Christlikeness, V11;
- c) Longingly look for God's judgement, V12;
- d) Eagerly wait for a righteous world, V13;
- e) Firmly grasp the secretive contentment, V14;
- f) Confidently expect the church to increase, V15
- g) Purposely grow in grace and knowledge, V17;
- h) Resolutely do all for the glory of Christ, V18;

We should ask ourselves: Is what I am doing right now bringing glory to Christ? How can we answer this?

Lastly, 2 Pet. 3:18, we say "Amen!" at the preparation and labor to ready our lives and hearts for Jesus' coming, why will all the effort be worth it to be ready for His coming?