

Current Affairs #81 – The Rapture, Part 1

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In summary, we understand that the scheme of the enemy to oppress the son has been as old as the human race itself. We looked at how he came to tempt Adam and Eve, and how he approached them with an attack upon their sonship, beginning with basic things like food and proceeding to some entrapment based upon the attempt to sow confusion as to what their nature truly was and what their relationship to God truly was. That approach was built upon and expanded until Christ came.

And then again in the temptations of Jesus, we see essentially the same familiar approach. “Command that these stones be made to bread, because You are hungry.”¹ This was an appeal to the flesh, an appeal to a legitimate appetite, I might add, because if you have been fasting for forty days, you will be ravenously hungry. It isn’t that the temptations are, in and of themselves, unexplainable. It is not that at all. It is that they are like barbed hooks; if you ingest it, it will trap you. It is key to understand that, because the devil seems quite reasonable. So when Jesus confronted him, and of course the attack was very directly on the sonship of Christ— “If You are the Son of God” was the twin approaches for the first temptation and the second temptation. And the third was, as I have characterized, a temptation with the gloves off. The idea being, “Look, I am really in power here, and You have no alternative except to acknowledge my strategy of rule by which I have entrapped all mankind.”² That is the word hegemony. It is the way that you control and entrap, so people have to do your will.

There is so much I could say about these things, but moving right to the point: this learned methodology, this original methodology that the enemy has employed has been the consistent theme of everything the enemy has done, including how he has built this kingdom called the *kosmos*,³ or the kingdom of darkness. It is not that it is actually flooded with darkness, physical

All Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless otherwise noted.

¹ See Matthew 4:3: “Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ ”

² See Matthew 4:8-9: “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’ ”

³ See *kosmos*, Strong’s Greek 2889 - <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/2889.htm>

darkness; it is that it obscures the light of revelation and the glory of God. So much so, that the purpose for which we, as human beings, were put in the earth is obscured. Because the son, you see, is the radiance of his Father's glory.⁴ Darkness is an obscuring, a cloaking of the son so that he cannot put on display the Father's glory. Well, the Father's glory, frankly, is how the appearing of the Father in you reveals the goodness of God's nature: His mercy, His compassion, His salvation, His kindness, all of the rest of the full range of His personality. Darkness has you focused on just how you survive: provision and protection. It was exactly what Satan offered Adam and Eve, and it was a successful entrapment. It entrapped Adam and Eve.

For the entrapment to fully capture human beings, it would have meant that the Savior Himself would have been so cloaked in the darkness of the enemy's schemes. After trying the first two things:

- “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,”—so he starts at the lowest level, which is the human concern for enough bread in his stomach, for food.
- When that did not work, the devil tried to present Him against a religious background, hoping that would attract Him.⁵ But that, too, was darkness. To define the Son by religious terms is darkness. You can take Him to the pinnacle of the temple, but all that is, is a predetermined religious identity so that the Son is shown by association to religion. Religion is the craft of Satan. It is a substitute. It is the blinding effect. It keeps you from the reality of walking with God. I cannot tell you how outraged I am when I hear the highest levels of religious leaders in the biggest denominations say, “Well, you know, we cannot ever know God. It is foolish to suggest that. Who do we think we are that we could say we know God or God talks to us?” Do these idiots not realize that you were created with a spirit out of God, the same as God's own nature, so that God could talk to you? But they are so consumed by their religious positioning, they are on the pinnacle of the temple. And to these ones, the temptation to act out of their religious framework is irresistible. If you

⁴ See Hebrews 1:3a NIV: “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

⁵ See Matthew 4:5-6a: “Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down.’ ”

follow their lead, you will fall to your death. I do not want to say any more about it, though there is much more that can be said about it.

Finally, the enemy comes in his attempt to capture the Son, to cloak Him in darkness by fear. That is when the enemy shows his whole hand, and it seems so impossible, it seems so inescapable, because his dominance, his hegemony is so thorough, so complete, so entrapping, so enslaving, that the rational response is to say, “Okay, I will fall down and worship you.”

Those are the processes that the enemy has used since time immemorial. Those are exactly the processes he will continue to employ. He has too much invested in them, and he does not have an alternative. Everything about the end of the age concerning the efforts that the enemy is making to shroud the mature son in darkness so he cannot reflect the glory of his Father’s nature, everything the enemy has done is based upon these pylons. His entire kingdom sits upon this foundation. And that foundation, as far as he is concerned, is inescapable.

Now the descriptions of this that the enemy has done, in the Book of Revelation the descriptions of those are “the kingdoms of this world”—the seven heads and ten horns of the beast.⁶ That is what he is known for. This is simply how these earlier trials—Adam and Eve in the Garden, Jesus in the wilderness—it is just how they have matured. They have matured to this extent. So that, for example, you cannot buy or sell apart from receiving the mark of the beast.⁷ So, it is the seven heads representing seven systems and the ten horns representing the power of these systems invested in individuals, who are like kings. Their intent is to bring in to this control, everybody, including the mature sons of God. It is the full-blown thing. Whereas before it has existed partially and in developmental stages, now it is fully ready. And the enemy is proud, and he is parading.

Certain ones, looking at how thoroughly the enemy has planned to dominate human beings, conclude that there is no escape from these systems. Because they believe, you see, that the Kingdom of Heaven is a future occurrence; it does not exist contemporaneously with the kingdom

⁶ See Revelation 13:1b: “And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.”

⁷ See Revelation 13:16-17: “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

of darkness. So, they look forward to going to heaven and being “safe” in the Kingdom of Heaven, in heaven. With that mindset, you see, they have interpreted the Scriptures—which do not remotely support the notion, as we will see in a moment—they have interpreted the Scripture to say that when it really gets terrible, we will get out of here; we will be raptured out.

Now let me point out that the theory of the rapture is a new thing. Let me talk about the rapture first, and then we will come back to the theory of the rapture—who thought it up; and how it was foisted upon people; and how fearful, religious men, who also saw opportunity to put it out in the general population for consumption, agreed to do so and distorted the Scriptures.

But let’s start with the distortion of Scripture. There are essentially two passages in the Scriptures that are used to talk about the rapture. The first is from 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, and we will start at verse 13. Here is what it says. Paul, speaking to the Thessalonians, says,

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 (1 Thessalonians 4:13 NKJV).

His premise in speaking about it is the desire to inform the Thessalonians about those believers who had already died, lest the living believers are sorrowful as those who have no hope. Essentially, this is talking about the resurrection of the dead. He is talking about when the dead will be raised. Keep that in mind because that is the context. Verse 14,

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

He refers now to the fact that all believers, particularly believers in Thessalonica (or as the Greeks would call it, *Thessaloniké*⁸), had already accepted that Jesus died and rose again. When he said “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again...,” what is the point? We believe Jesus died and

⁸ See *Thessaloniké*, Strong’s Greek 2332 - <https://biblehub.com/greek/2332.htm>

rose again. Therefore, what? “...even so will God bring with Him those who fall asleep in Christ.” It is pretty obvious that he is talking about the resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ. And he is using the principle, the known example, and we will go to 1 Corinthians 15 to hear the same Paul talk about, the resurrection of Christ as the foundation of our hope in being resurrected as well. The same Paul is saying, just as we have known that Christ was raised from the dead, He showed Himself alive after His resurrection to over five hundred people on one occasion, and otherwise by many infallible proofs (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). In fact, it is the premise of Peter for the message on the Day of Pentecost in Acts, chapter 2, where he concludes the message by saying, “You took Him, and with wicked hands you crucified and you slew the Son of God, and God raised Him up from the dead, a fact of which we are all witnesses” (cf. Acts 2:22-32). There, Peter was referring to himself and the eleven who were with him (a total of twelve)—Matthias being added to the number after Judas died, because of the requirement of twelve witnesses in order for a matter to be conclusively presumed to be true. So, the resurrection of Jesus is the foundational doctrine upon which our faith lies.

So Paul says, “Inasmuch as you already know that this is true, let me say to you that the further proof to you is that those who have fallen asleep in Christ will be raised just like Jesus was raised. They will be resurrected, and God will bring them with Christ when Christ comes again.” That is the implied reference. It is not somebody going to heaven for seven years to wait out the storm that has come upon the earth by the rampaging of the beast. It is when Jesus is coming back for... Look, “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.” So they will come back, when? The dead will be raised, when? When Christ is coming back, they are to come with Him. That is the premise here.

Now there are many who would like to ignore the context, but you do so to your own detriment. When you ignore the context, you come up with something that is inherently false. But let’s go on. Do not just let me rely upon the contextual framework, the actual language says exactly what I am saying. Verse 15,

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord [In other words, “It is not my opinion. I have been given this revelation by the Lord Himself.” What is the revelation?], that we

who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord... (1 Thessalonians 4:15a, comments added in brackets).

Did you see that? Those of us who are alive, on what occasion? Because people are alive all the time. We are alive today. But Paul is speaking about the return of the Lord, and bringing with Him those who have fallen asleep in Christ. So he says, “we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord...” Everything that follows happens on the occasion of the coming of the Lord. The Lord is already coming back when this happens.

...we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep (1 Thessalonians 4:15b).

This is critically important. What is Paul saying? He is saying the dead in Christ are going to arise first. When? At the day of the return of the Lord—not seven years before. Jesus will have come by the level of the clouds, just like where He was when we last saw Him on the earth, according to Acts 1:11. Two men stood by them in white apparel, who said, “This same Jesus who has gone to heaven in the manner in which you have seen Him go up, will so come again in like manner as He went up.” Which was what? “And while they beheld, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Check it out—Acts 1:11.⁹

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 (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

When He is coming back from heaven and has reached the level of the clouds, there will be a shout of an archangel and there will be a blast of a trumpet, because it announces the return of the King. This is the real Rosh Hashanah. It is how a king is announced when he makes his entrance. The

⁹ See Acts 1:9-11: “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’ ”

page is the archangel, the announcer is the archangel, and the trumpet gets everybody's attention. The whole world stops. So on that day when the Lord is coming back, when the archangel announces, "Hear ye, Hear ye," or however he announces, and there is this loud trumpet blast and the whole world is riveted on the event of the return of the Lord, in that instant when the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ shall rise. The basis of what he is saying here in 1 Thessalonians is those who have fallen asleep in Christ are not done for. They will live again. And their resurrection will be when the Lord is returning visibly to the clouds, like it was prophesied in Acts 1 that we would see Him again in the same manner in which He goes up. When He comes to the level of the clouds where every eye now sees Him, the trumpet blast and the sound of the archangel will awaken the dead, and the dead in Christ shall arise first.

Now he says something else here which seals the deal. You cannot get around this. He says those of us who are still alive at that time shall by no means—Do you know what "shall by no means," means? ain't gonna happen—shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep in Christ.¹⁰ In other words, they get to rise first at the time when the Lord has reached the clouds with the sound of the archangel and the trumpet call of God. That is the day of the Lord's return. I mean, I do not know how to make it any plainer. If you choose not to believe this and instead hold on to the foolish doctrine of the rapture, you are going to be disappointed. You are bound to be disappointed. So if you choose to be disappointed, fine. That is your choice. But you have heard the truth.

Let me read the whole of it now, because it says you will not be caught up—if you are alive, there is not going to be a rapture; you will not be caught up to meet the Lord in the air—before those who have fallen asleep in Christ (in other words, all of the righteous dead whose bodies are now in the grave), before they are resurrected. But you will be changed in an instant. In a twinkling of an eye (which is the Greek expression for the shortest measure of time), you will be changed from this mortal body. You will put on immortality. You will be caught up together with them. Who is

¹⁰ See 1 Thessalonians 4:15: "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."

the “them” again? It is those who have fallen asleep in Christ, because they get to rise first. All of this is about the day the Lord returns.

Let me read the whole passage now, and see if there is any possible way you could come up with a different explanation. I am rereading and concluding to the end of the chapter, beginning at 1 Thessalonians 4:13. This is the principal passage used by proponents of the rapture to support that false, stupid doctrine. Because what it does, you see, is it tells us we are going to get out of here because we cannot stand the trials that are to come upon the earth, and that leaves you naked and vulnerable. You are going to be here if you happen to be here at the time of these things, and you will be thoroughly unprepared. If the teachers of this foolish doctrine—I cannot find the words to tell you how ignorant this perspective is—if the proponents of this doctrine truly knew the truth to the contrary, their negligence in failing to prepare you to go through the times that lie ahead would be an unconscionable dereliction of duty. But they are simply deceived. Don’t you be deceived along with them. Here is the Scripture.

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep [in Christ], lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

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. 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. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, comments added in brackets).

In the next segment I am going to delve even further into this and into 1 Corinthians 15, beginning at verse 16, which further talk about the resurrection of the dead and the return of the Lord as one contemporaneous event. I am Sam Soleyn. We will talk then.