

Your Future in the Rapture

By Nathan E. Jones

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Nathan Jones: And it is a great blessing to be here, and to be here not only as a member of the church but also serving with Lamb & Lion Ministries. We are a Bible prophecy teaching ministry whose mission it is to proclaim the soon return of Jesus Christ. We are excited that Jesus Christ is coming back. And we want to help other people be just as excited as we are. So, I hope, my goal is after you leave today you have a renewed excitement that Jesus Christ is coming for you, and greater things lie ahead. Pastor Glenn when he approached me and Tim who will be here next week, he said, he had a great burden, this is how you know you have a wonderful pastor, he had a great burden for you all because he is feeling that during this last year that many of you were losing hope. And he didn't want that. So, he said, "Let's do a series where we teach about the future." Because the future has more hope in it if you know Jesus Christ as your Savior. For the lost it is a terrible future ahead, but for us it is a glorious future. And he wanted that shared with you, and hence that is why I am here today.

So, switching gears. I'm going to ask you a question that has nothing to do with hope. How many of you like sports? Alright. I can't say I honestly follow it too much, but I do like sports bloopers. Would you be interested if I showed a few sports bloopers to get us started?

This is my favorite. My wife loves extreme sports, how's this for extreme? If the going up is fun, it's the landing that is going to be bit of a challenge.

I got to admit I was in track; I was a sprinter and a pole vaulter. And I wasn't a very good pole vaulter because I was terrified that the pole would snap and impale me, and I'd be like a bug hanging up there over the back. So, I didn't do very well. But I never, ever did hurdles, because, yes, that.

Well, did you all know that the Apostle Paul was a big sports fan? When you read his letters, it shows that he made a number of sport analogies while he was teaching. And I'd imagine you could probably find him often at the Olympics, maybe he was sporting a toga. Maybe he even looked like this. And in 1 Corinthians 9 Paul explained that sports competitors they go into strict training. He said they beat their bodies; they want to be the best so they can win the prize. And the prize of course was usually a crown of leaves, and 15 minutes of fame. Paul pointed out that the crowns they wouldn't last, being of course leaves, right, they dry out, and eventually their victories would be forgotten. After all, how many of you remember who the Superbowl Champions were of 1952?

I was thinking one person would know. I have no idea. See it is forgotten over time.

So, an athlete they put in this strict training, they beat their bodies, they feel quite beaten after working out. But no matter how much they train, and they get better, and better, and better, and they hope to master their skill one day. They know eventually that all of us will get what?

We are going to get old. And in getting old we will become too feeble, and we are going to lose those skills that we have developed. I will die. And you will die. And everyone here in this room will die one day, it is inevitable.

As a matter of fact, there are only two things inevitable in this world right? And they are? Death and taxes. Right. I mean that's it. I can be sure of taxes, but death? Hmm... is that truly inevitable for everybody? Well, would you believe that the Bible teaches that for one particular generation in history death will not come to them?

Let's look at what the Bible has to say about that. Now, everything about the future is tied to this one promise that Jesus made. He said, "I will come back and take you to be with Me." Now, this is Jesus' Second Coming promise. He came already but the Second Coming of the 31% of the Bible, almost a third of the Bible that is dedicated to Bible prophecy, the Second Coming is the most prolific prophecy in the whole Bible. Matter of fact there are 500 prophecies in the Old Testament, and 1 in 25 verses in the New Testament that prophesy the return of Jesus Christ at His Second Coming.

Now, how can we be sure that Jesus will fulfill these prophecies? We look at the First Coming prophecies. There are 300 general, and 108 specific prophecies about the First Coming of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ fulfilled how many of them? All of them. 100%. Statistically that should be impossible.

Well, I have a short video here to show you that shows just if you take 8 of those 108 prophecies what those statistics would be like.

Bible Prophecy Insight Video can be found at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oE5Z4uKEd4&list=PLFRtcZUaLr_EPL0NC9QS4yUSDjf43Pgaz&index=1

Nathan Jones: I'm Nathan Jones with your Bible Prophecy Insight. Can math prove the accuracy of Bible prophecy? Well let's start with just 8 of the 108 prophecies fulfilled in Jesus' life. Mathematician Peter Stoner calculated that the probability of all 8 being fulfilled in the life of one person is 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That's 17 zeros! That would be like filling the entire state of Texas two feet deep in quarters. Mark just one, throw it in. The odds would be like walking for days and then the very first coin picked up, that would be the one with the mark. Impossible, right? Well, not if the Bible is truly God's Word. To learn more about Bible prophecy visit us at lamblion.com.

Nathan Jones: People ask me if I got to keep the quarters. I did not. I didn't get to keep them.

Now, the Second Coming coincides with the very end of the worst time in human history. It's called the Tribulation, it is also called the time of Jacob's Trouble, or Daniel's Seventieth Week Prophecy. Jeremiah 30:7 says, "How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it." And we know because of Daniel's prophecy

it begins when Israel makes a peace covenant with a coming one world ruler who John calls the Antichrist. And it also tells us that this will last seven years. So, this Tribulation time period, this worst time in all of human history will last for seven years.

And the purpose is threefold. Number one it is time for God to put wrath against the evil of this world. What is God's wrath? Dictionary.com defines it: vengeance or punishment as the consequences for anger. The Bible shows it is like a cup, and as God's anger fills up, once it overflows then God acts. Now, it has been thousands of years since the Flood and the anger is just still building. It shows how patient God is. How forgiving God is. But at some point that cup will overflow, and God will act. It will be a unique time in human history. The Tribulation is like the Flood was, it's when the cup finally overflowed, and it was time for God to deal with all of the sin and evil in the world. It's time for God to come and punish evil.

The second reason is to regather Israel back into the land and force Israel to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. There are many promises that God made to the Jewish people that have yet to be fulfilled. He said a remnant of them, a third of them, are still to come and accept Jesus Christ as Savior, and they will be a priestly people when He sets up His physical kingdom on this earth.

And you know how life has got to be sometimes, life sometimes has to be so rough that it gets you on your knees and finally turns you to the Lord. And the Tribulation will be so bad that it will get the Jewish people on their knees and turn to the Lord. It will also, we read how many Gentiles, if you are not Jewish you are a Gentile, how many of them will come to know Jesus during that time as well. So, there will be so many people that will come to know Jesus as their Savior during that time period.

And three, it is Jesus' victory. Jesus promised to come back victorious. To defeat evil, and set up His kingdom, and that is what the Tribulation is. At the end, that second coming for Jesus to return, defeat Satan and the Antichrist, and set up His Kingdom of peace and righteousness, and justice.

Well, twenty-one judgments that the book of Revelation describes. Two earthquakes that flatten the world. Mass wars including nuclear. Famine. Death. Most of the world population by the end of it, only enough people left to fill a valley. That's how bad it is. So, many people then say, "Am I going to be in that seven year Tribulation? Am I going to have to live through the wrath of God?"

Well, what does the Bible say about the Church living or not living through the Tribulation? And when I say Church, I'm not talking about this church, or the Catholic Church, Church overall means everybody from Pentecost up to now, or when Jesus returns to take us, that is the Church. So, if you know Jesus as your Savior, you are the Church.

So, let's look at Ephesians 5:6. "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient." So, this time of wrath is only for those who are disobedient. Well, who does the Bible say are the disobedient? John 3:36 tells us, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them." So, who are the disobedient? Those who have rejected Jesus as their Savior. The unsaved. Those are the people that never grab hold of Jesus' lifeline of salvation; God's wrath remains on them.

Is that the only verse? Let's look at Romans 5:9, it confirms that believers in Christ will be saved from God's wrath. "Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!"

Or 1 Thessalonians 5:9, "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 1:10, "And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."

Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

And 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."

So, again, and again, and again, and again, these verses make the promise that those who believe in Jesus Christ and who have called Jesus as their Savior, their sins are forgiven, they are saved, they are never meant to experience the wrath of God, both on the earth, and eternal wrath of God in Hell forever. And therefore, the Church is never meant to experience the wrath of God during the Tribulation.

Usually, I get an amen from that. Amen, isn't that exciting? Praise the Lord, you're not going to have to live through a living hellscape like a Terminator movie, it's not going to happen to you.

Now, how do we know this? Does the Bible provide examples to kind of back this up?

Well, let's look at Enoch for instance. Do you know that a man named Enoch was taken off this earth before the Flood? Hebrews 11:5 says, "By faith, Enoch, was taken from this life so that he did not experience death, he could not be found because God had taken him away. For before he was he was taken he was commended as one who pleased God."

Now, Enoch was a relative of Noah, and he was a righteous man, and God took him from this earth physically before the Flood came. But he needed people to populate the world. So, Noah and his righteous family were taken out of the Flood and kept secure while the rest of the earth was deluged.

Same thing with Lot, when Sodom and Gomorrah's sexual and violence and all their sins just piled up, God said, "I'm going to destroy them." And Abraham begged God, if there are just a few righteous people will you save those cities. And Jesus said, "Yes I will," the preincarnate Jesus. But there wasn't, it was just Lot and his family. And then Lot's wife of course turned back and she was turned to a pillar of salt.

There is also Rahab, she was saved from the destruction of Jericho. So, there are biblical examples of God's wrath, when it is ready to be poured out, it doesn't fall on the righteous.

So, if Jesus promised to spare from His wrath those who have accepted His lifeline of salvation, then how is He going to do that. Well, we find that answer in 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."

Now, the Bible wasn't written in English, right? It was originally written in Hebrew, and Greek and a little bit of Aramaic. So, you have to go to the Greek, and the original Greek for that term "caught up" is "harpazo." Now, the Bible was translated into Latin, and the only Bible people had for 1,100 years was in Latin, "harpazo" was translated into "rapio". Well, when we take the English transliteration we get the word rapture.

It's kind of like this, you like pizza? It's like when you go to the pizza place and they've got the pizzas waiting for you and you just grab it, you snatch it, you catch it, you take it. And where do you take it? You take it home. And that's what this passage says that Jesus is going to do with His Church. He is going to come. He is going to catch up. He's going to snatch up. He's going to rapture His Church up to Heaven before He pours His wrath upon this world.

So, I can call this the great snatching, or the catching up, but it's just easier to say rapture. Right? Can you all say rapture? Rapture, yeah, a lot easier.

Okay, well, where can we find the text that support this? We can find the Rapture described in say for instance John 14:1-4 where Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 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. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Well, where did Jesus go? What was the place that He was preparing for us called? You all do not sound so sure. Where did Jesus go after He ascended. Yeah, He didn't go to a space station, He went to Heaven right. Jesus says, He's preparing a place for us in Heaven, in the Father's house. So, that means that our destination when we will be raptured to Heaven, we are told that that's our destination, and that we can trust God that He will do this, and knowing this will bring us hope.

We can also go to Luke 21:36, Jesus said, "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." Well, in this verse we are told to stay watchful, to keep an eye out for Christ's return. And when we escape that terrible times ahead that will be the wrath of God the Son of Man, Jesus Himself. So, Jesus again says we will be spared from the wrath of God.

Well, how about 1 Corinthians 15:50-57, "I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Amen. Alright.

Well, this passage gives us quite a lot of details about what this Rapture is going to be like. For one, no death for a particular generation of Christians. Not everyone will eventually die. We get to if it happens in our lifetime, and I do believe it will happen in our lifetime, skip that death

thing. We get an upgrade, like a 2.0 upgrade. And the dead in Christ, in other words this is for the whole Church, not just us who are alive, but the dead in Christ are resurrected as well.

And death, what is the sting of death? It's not the actual death part, right, if you are a believer. It's the pain that leads up to it. I'm not worried about dying. I'm not worried about falling out of the plane with my parachute not working, I'm worried about the landing. Right? That is the sting of death. And this is saying that for a particular generation of Christians they will not experience that sting of death.

And when we are raptured that's the resurrection of the bodies, the human body, right, it can't tolerate, we would be like fish out of water in Heaven, we would need to have new bodies that could stand before the might and power of God and look upon Him face to face. Remember Moses couldn't look at God's face because the glory of it would have killed him. Likewise, we need new upgraded eternal bodies to be able to go to Heaven. So, our bodies will be transformed.

First Corinthians 15 says they are imperishable, in other words they won't die. They are glory, they are built in glory. They are powerful. And they are a spiritual body. They are physical you can touch them; you see them. You'll look at me and say, "Oh, that's Nathan." Although I'll hopefully look more like 30, and not whatever I am.

First John 3:2-3 says, "When He appears, we shall be like Him, Jesus, for we shall see Him as He is." Jesus' resurrected body is the template for our eternal bodies. And that transformation of our bodies will kill the old sin nature. We can try to be as good, as good as we can in this earth, but that sin nature, that old man, as Paul called it, lives in us, and it needs to die. And that transformation, our new bodies will finally kill that sin nature.

It will also happen lightning fast. When it happens it's like, boom, it's gone. One minute you are there, and the next second you're not. It's super-fast, like the twinkling of an eye. And it says, now I don't know if it's just believers, or the whole world, but it says there was a trumpet from heaven will sound, and we will hear it and know that it is about to happen. Maybe for us time will kind of slow down a little. I don't know. But this is Jesus' victory. It's His victory over death. His resurrection made it possible.

Now, I can explain. I can read. But you know 60% of people on this earth are visual learners. So, let me show you what one rendition of what the Rapture might look like. Do you want to see that? Okay.

Video Presented can be found at:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v= Y4J2IpJ1Bo&list=FLKQxxsBSSpr9FAUmSDhEjgg&index=15](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4J2IpJ1Bo&list=FLKQxxsBSSpr9FAUmSDhEjgg&index=15)

Nathan Jones: I have to confess a sin. I enjoy showing this video to watch the audience leap out of their chairs. You all did pretty well. It was like a 5 or 6 on a scale of 1-10 not bad.

Okay, well let's look at some other passages that deal with the Rapture. Does that kind of give you more a picture of what it might look like?

First Thessalonians 4:13-18 gives us some more details. It says, "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, and are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up, raptured up, together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words."

Well, likewise this passage has a lot of details about what the Rapture will be like. For one it reiterates again that Jesus' resurrection makes it possible for us, His Church, to be resurrected as well. It also says that Jesus will come down from Heaven, but He will stop in the clouds. This is why it is different than the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation, when Jesus' feet land on the Mount of Olives and split it in two. And He walks through battle and destroys His enemies. This is Jesus up in the clouds, He never reaches earth. He calls us up to Him, and then with Him we go into Heaven.

Again, there is a loud call, the archangel screams, maybe, "It's time," or "Come on up," or "The Time is Now." We don't know what it says. But between the archangel's call and a trumpet, there will be a sound, and it says again that the dead in Christ rise first. Those who got saved during the Church Age will be resurrected, and they will get their new glorified bodies. And where is our destination? It is to go to Heaven to be with the Lord where He lives forever. And that folks is meant to give the Christian hope.

The knowledge of the Rapture is one of the teachings of the Bible that is meant to affect our daily living and give us hope.

Well, let's look at the Old Testament, I have a few more verses. Now, the Church was a mystery in the Old Testament but there are some verses that kind of hint about what the Rapture will be like. For instance, Isaiah 26:19-21, "But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. And you who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give up her dead. Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until His wrath has passed by. See, the Lord is coming out of His dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer."

So, this Old Testament passage reiterates that God's people will stay in those rooms that we read about in John 14 that the Lord prepared for us, some people call it our mansions in Heaven. There we will wait out in Heaven while the seven year Tribulation rages upon the earth.

Malachi 3:17 also says, "They will be mine," says the Lord Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him."

Well, those who are saved are the Lord's. And you know what He calls us? He calls us His treasures. Have you ever thought about yourself as a treasure? In this time where we hear some many people committing suicide, do they not realize their worth and value to God? The fact that He gave them life and died for them. And then He's promised that if we put our faith

and trust in Him that we will be His treasured possession in Heaven. Each of you folks, who know Jesus as your Savior are a treasure to God. Think about that a little bit.

Well, I can talk. But I think it is easier to show. So, let me show you one more video here that gives kind of an example of what the Rapture might be like.

Rapture Video Presented can be found at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHe4uVjDsiQ

Nathan Jones: I think my favorite part of that video is when they are panning across the crowd and that one woman, she looks up, she knows, she's heard the teaching of the Rapture and she knows it's come. And it has given her that hope throughout her life. And now she has the joy of seeing it be fulfilled.

Real quickly, folks ask, well, what happens to the Old Testament Saints; those who put their faith in God? They are not part of the Church, and Daniel 12 promises that they will be resurrected, their time is at the end of that Tribulation, at Jesus' Second Coming. And those who get saved after the Church has left, we call them Tribulation Saints, according to Revelation 20:4, their resurrection is also at the end of the Tribulation.

So, let's put some application to this. While we are waiting for Jesus to return, what we, as the Church, what should we be doing?

Number one we need to be watchful. Over, and over, and over again in the scriptures Jesus told us to watch for the appearing of the Lord at any moment. 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. Matthew 24:42, "Therefore, keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." Luke 12:35, "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning."

I kind of think of it like relatives say they are coming for a big family gathering and they are traveling from far away. And they said, "Well, I'll be there in the evening." You don't know exactly when, you do have kind of an idea, but not the exact minute." So, you put the light out, you got the house cleaned up, you check out the windows periodically, you know they are coming. And that's what Jesus over and over again told His followers, look out, keep watchful, you know it is coming. Don't give up. Don't stop looking. It's going to come when you don't expect it, but it will come.

So, God wants us to be watchful for the Lord's return. It is something exciting to look forward to, like Christmas, right? It's something to put your hope and future into knowing that Jesus is coming back.

Number two, do good works. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." "And always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that you labor in the Lord is not in vain."

A lot of times people who believe in the Rapture, those who object to it, would say, "Well, those people are too heavenly minded to be any earthly good." And they kind of have this idea that we are all sitting around on our suitcases looking up in the sky waiting. But that's not the case

at all. I've found that people who are expectantly waiting for Jesus to return are some of the most active in their church because they know the time is short, and they want to bring as many people as possible, as quickly as possible to know the Lord Jesus as their Savior. And so they are active. So, use whatever skills and talents that the Lord has given you, and give that to the service of the Lord in your church, and in non-profit organizations, with your neighbors, on the streets. We are to be busy doing the Lord's work, the calling that God gave us.

And number three have hope. "While we wait for that Blessed Hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." That's the main verse that Lamb & Lion Ministries puts a lot of our faith and our hope into, Titus 2:13. The Rapture is called our Blessed Hope. It is meant to give us hope about the future.

First Peter 1:13 says, "Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed." And 1 John 3:2-3, "But we know that when He appears, Jesus, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

So, the Rapture, the teaching of Jesus' return to take His Church up to Heaven, to defeat evil, to return and set up His Millennial Kingdom, folks that is meant to give us hope. That's meant, even as rough and terrible as this time period seems to be, and it's only going to get worse, I promise you, that we live by hope, unlike anybody else.

I love this poem by Emily Dickinson, she is an author. She says, "Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul- And sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all."

You've lived life, and I'm sure all of you had at one point were without hope. It's like an emptiness, a despair inside. But the teaching of Jesus' return is meant to be that bird in the soul that sings and gives you hope even in the darkest hour, that's what it's meant to do.

I have one more video to show you. I'm going to let my alter ego sum it up.

Bible Prophecy Insight Video can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8M-4G_GVn1I

Nathan Jones: I'm Nathan Jones with your Bible Prophecy Insight. The Bible tells us that Jesus will return one day soon to catch up, to rapture those who have accepted Him as Savior. Two people are together and then in the time it takes to snap one will be left standing.

In the blink of an eye millions will be gone. We will be taken off this earth to meet Jesus up in the clouds to live with the Lord forever. Those left behind will face the worst period in history, the Tribulation. Have you given your life to Jesus today? Will you be part of the Rapture?

To learn more about Bible prophecy visit us at lamblion.com.

Nathan Jones: So, I am going to leave you with this question: Are you ready? What does are you ready mean? The only way that you get to participate in the Rapture of the Church is to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. So, when the Bible says, "Are you ready?" It is saying, "Have you given your life to Jesus Christ?" Have you turned to Him and asked for forgiveness of your sins? Have you made Him the Lord of your life? That's how you get ready.

That's how you embrace that hope. And that's how you have eternal life, and an eternal future with Him.

If you haven't accepted Jesus Christ today, why are you waiting? I'm sure the Holy Spirit is tugging on your heart. Give in to Him. He loves you. You are a treasure to Him. And He wants you in His Kingdom forever. He wants to dwell with you forever. To walk, and talk, and have fellowship just like the Garden of Eden.

So, if you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your savior today then pray something from your heart in faith like, "Dear Lord Jesus, please forgive me of my sins, I'm a sinner and I need forgiveness of those sins. And I believe in you as the Son of God, and the Lord of my life, please come save me." And Jesus will do that. The guilt of your sins will be erased. You will inherit eternal life from Him. And you can claim that Blessed Hope of the Rapture. Thank you.