

Prophecy is like a lamp shining in a dark place. 2 Peter 1:19

MAR/APR 2026

LAMPLIGHTER

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THE BLESSED HOPE

CHRIST'S UPWARD CALL



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OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EDITOR

A few years ago, a credit card company adopted the advertising slogan, “What’s in your wallet?” The insinuation was that without their name brand card, your wallet was sorely lacking.

But the real issue isn’t what’s in our wallet—it’s what lies ahead of us. A much more urgent question is: “*What’s in your future?*”

Although that timeless question has echoed in every human heart down through the ages, it is strangely muted in our contemporary culture. Many have adopted a “Carpe Diem” mentality—focusing on the moment while quietly avoiding the deeper questions of purpose, legacy, and eternity.

Christians have embraced a different mindset. We live in an “already, but not yet” existence. Placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we have already gained life everlasting. But while we live in this world and in these mortal bodies, our Blessed Hope is not yet realized. The promise that we will dwell in the presence of the Lord in glorified bodies awaits its appointed moment.

Throughout the Church Age, followers of Christ have longed to be with Him. As Paul wrote, “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). That is why no Christian should fear death; Christ has already won the victory over that gateway, removing its sting forever. Yet, every disciple who takes God at His Word also hopes that His appearing for the Church will happen within their lifetime. The long season of waiting for His return is an expression of His patience (2 Peter 3:9). But that

should stir our anticipation, not dampen our expectation.

Whether we are looking up in eager anticipation of our Blessed Hope or merely plodding through the doldrums of this life, the Father will send His Son to collect His Bride at the appointed time. This issue of the *Lamplighter* will examine what will happen when Jesus says, “Come up here!” and we are gathered to Him in an instant. We’ll also consider “What next?” as outlined in Scripture.

As we continue moving through our “Overview of the End Times” and the Prophecy Chart we introduced in our Jan/Feb 2026 *Lamplighter*, there will be other topics that cover much longer time periods. Some of them must be preceded by other prophetic events. But the Rapture is an imminent, unprecedented event.

Our hope is that by the end of this edition, your own hope in the Blessed Hope will be rekindled, revived, and reassured.



Tim Moore
Executive Editor
Director | Sr. Evangelist
Lamb & Lion Ministries



The *Lamplighter* will utilize the NASB or LSB translations interchangeably and note when other translations are referenced.

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Grace Bible Church - Winchester, KY
Speaker: Tim Moore

APR 18 **2026 Kentucky Regional Conference**
Ninevah Christian Church - Lawrenceburg, KY
Speakers: Tim Moore, Terry Cooper, Nathan Jones, and Bob Russell

COMING SOON ON

CHRIST*in*
PROPHECY

CLICK HERE TO
WATCH NOW

The Sprint to the Finish - with Doug Cobb
Israel Decree - with Amir Tsarfati

Correction:

On page 10 of our January/February edition of the *Lamplighter*, the text should have referred to "Peter's three-time denial BEFORE Christ's crucifixion..." Many thanks to faithful reader, Steven Garland, for pointing out this error.



► In honor of Resurrection Day, see if you can find the hidden Lamb located in this edition of the *Lamplighter*.

The Next Best Thing

Tim Moore

What is the next thing you are looking forward to? The wedding of a child? The birth of another grandchild (as Amy and I are anticipating in April)? A long-anticipated trip or family gathering?

All of those blessed events are bound to inspire eager anticipation. But the best thing that Christians throughout the Church Age have awaited with great excitement is the Rapture of the Church. That is why Paul refers to His coming for us as our “blessed hope.” As we’ve said many times, because our Hope is bound up in the Person of Jesus Christ and His trustworthy promises, the phrase **Blessed Hope** refers both to Him personally and to the promise that He will come and gather us to Himself.

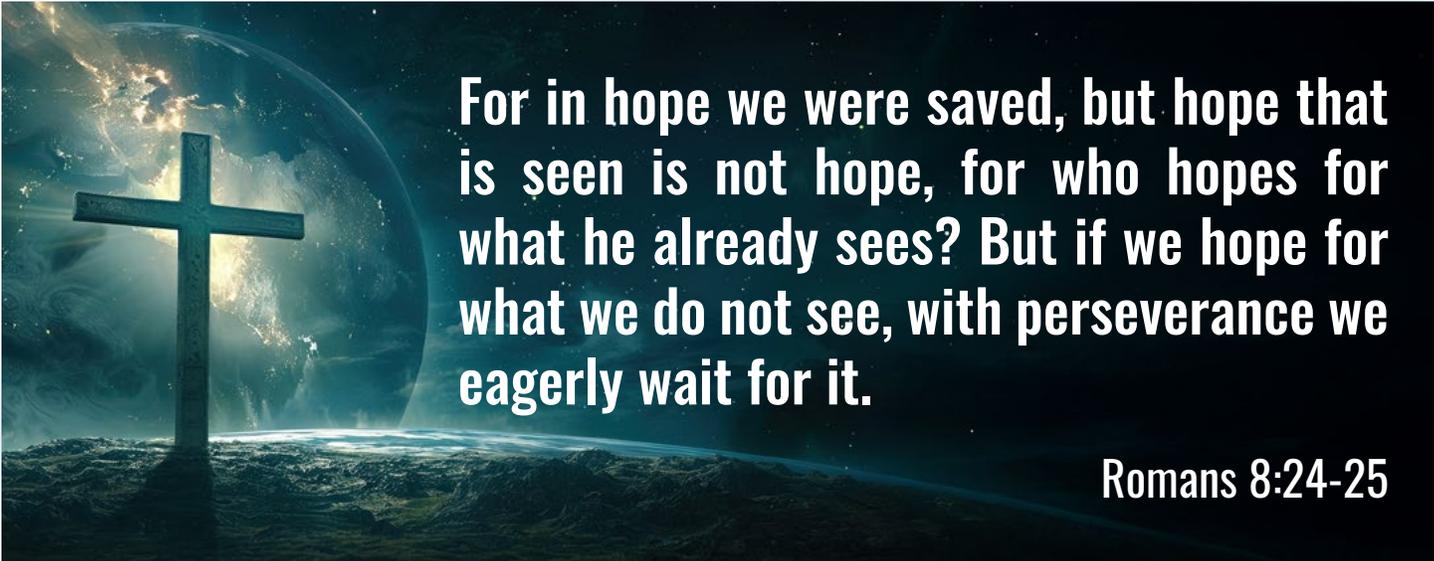
It is that upward call that will usher us in glorified bodies into the rarefied beauty of Heaven—to take up residence in the place He has prepared for us—that Paul says we should be groaning for. In fact, he assumes that every Christian is doing just that: “having

the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves *groan* within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23).

Paul advocated for what I refer to as an “already, but not yet” realization of our salvation. Yes, we are saved the moment we trust in Christ. But still, we await the glorification of our bodies, our minds, and our hearts. “For in *hope* we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with *perseverance* we wait eagerly for it” (Romans 8:24-25).

Jesus Christ, who is our Savior in accordance with the eternal will of God, is also our *Hope*.

“HaTikvah” (The Hope) is the name of the Israeli national anthem. Whereas it speaks of the Jewish longing for freedom and a home in their ancestral land, that word also speaks to the yearning for the Messiah—“*Christ Jesus, who is our hope*” (1 Timothy 1:1).



For in hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we eagerly wait for it.

Romans 8:24-25

Are You Hoping for the Blessed Hope?

Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians is the clearest scriptural reference to the Rapture, but it is not the only one. The concept of the “Rapture” is contained in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 where the word is typically translated as “caught up.” In the original Greek, the word *harpázō* was used. That word appears 14 times in Scripture and conveys the idea of being seized, snatched away, plucked up, or carried off by force. For example:

- ▶ Matthew 11:12 (take it by force)
- ▶ Matthew 12:29 (plunder)
- ▶ Matthew 13:19 (snatches away)
- ▶ John 6:15 (take Him by force)
- ▶ John 10:12 (the wolf catches)
- ▶ John 10:28, 29 (neither shall anyone snatch them)
- ▶ 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4 (caught up into Paradise)
- ▶ Jude 23 (pulling them out of the fire)
- ▶ Revelation 12:5 (her Child was caught up to God)

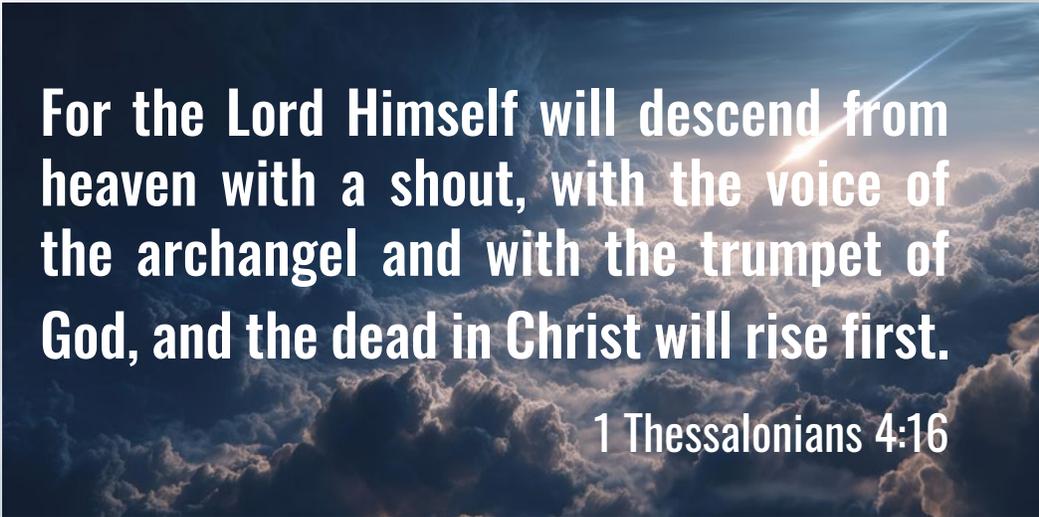
Late in the 4th century, Jerome translated the Greek New Testament into the Latin Vulgate (“vulgar” or common tongue spoken by most Roman citizens). He used the future tense of the Latin verb *rapiō*, rendering it as *rapiēmur*—meaning “we shall be caught up.”

If Paul’s Spirit-revealed reference to what we call the Rapture was the only one, it would still be a clear and valid prophecy. But other Scriptures reference this promise to the Church:

Jesus said, “I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am going (to prepare a place for you) you may be also” (John 14:1-4).

Paul revealed, “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The context of Paul’s statement makes clear that he is referring to “the dead in Christ” (to use the language of 1 Thessalonians 4:16). And, while some get hung up on the nature of the “last trumpet,” it is the final trumpet those who have been redeemed will hear with our mortal ears—even as other trumpets will sound in Heaven and during the Tribulation. I don’t believe the



For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

unsaved will hear that particular trumpet, but those with “ears to hear” will hear the wonderful shout of the archangel and blast of that trumpet that will announce Christ Himself descending to collect His Bride.

Jesus is the Bridegroom who is waiting for His Father to say, “Go, and get Your Bride.” Any man who has awaited his wedding day can testify that the sense of anticipation and joyful excitement begins at the engagement and mounts as the wedding day draws near. The same was true with a Jewish betrothal, although the timing of the actual wedding was undetermined (and unknowable) until the father decided it was time.

As she awaits the wedding day, every bride also experiences growing expectation and hope. Her hope is not a forlorn wish, but an assurance of a life to be united and shared with the bridegroom. That is why brides used to gather treasured belongings in a hope chest—readying them for use in her future home and family.



It is almost unimaginable to think of a bride who would be apathetic about her impending wedding. And yet, many in the Bride of Christ seem unconcerned and indifferent about the joy that awaits when our Bridegroom comes to snatch us away, gathering us to Himself in the blink of an eye.

Oh, what a joy-filled day that will be! But that is only the beginning of the glories and joys that await us according to Bible prophecy.

Oh, Glorious Day

There will be a moment in time when every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord of all. There will come another time when all the inhabitants of the world will see Jesus lead an army from Heaven to defeat His enemies and establish His Kingdom on the Earth. I've stood in the place where Jesus will return and looked down upon the Eastern Gate and Temple Mount, where He will enter the city and reign from the throne of David.

So many prophetic signs point to that glorious day. As described in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, those signs are multiplying. They are increasing in frequency and intensity. And, they are converging like never before—to the point that even the spiritually undiscerning are beginning to realize that something is afoot.

Throughout the book of Revelation, there are repeated glimpses of the blessings that await those Tribulation saints who endure to the end. While most are martyred during that horrific seven-year period, a small minority will witness the end of the Tribulation and be able to enter the Millennial Kingdom in their mortal bodies. But for those of us who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ during the Church Age unto salvation, there is now no condemnation for us (Romans 8:1)—and no need to be subjected to the outpouring of God's wrath throughout the Tribulation.

Simply put, Paul's words to the Church at Thessalonica would ring

hollow if we are destined to suffer through the wrath of God. Given the overview of the Rapture he described in the verses immediately preceding, the idea that the Bride of Christ must suffer God's righteous indignation undermines the sufficiency of Jesus' blood and His sacrificial propitiation on our behalf.

Propitiation: the act of appeasing or absorbing the wrath of God on another's behalf.

There is no doubt that Jesus' Second Coming to the Earth will be glorious—and that those who have trusted in Him will be there. I've envisioned that scene as described in Scripture so many times that my own heart thrills when I am on the Mount of Olives. Our friend Don Perkins has thought through this prophetic fulfillment so carefully that he has already picked out a name for the horse he'll ride as part of the heavenly army. But many intervening events must occur before the Second Coming—some wonderful and some tragic.

What Next?

The *next* prophetic event on God's timeline of the End Times is the Rapture. But there are several other prophetic events that every follower of Christ will participate in:

- ▶ The Wedding Supper of the Lamb
- ▶ The glorious Second Coming
- ▶ The Millennial Kingdom
- ▶ The New Jerusalem on the New Earth
- ▶ The Eternal State

Each one of those has unique blessings. Each one promises glories that are beyond comprehension. Citing Isaiah 64:4, Paul tells us, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, ALL that God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). And yet, those who have the Spirit of God have been given a foretaste of what awaits us in glory (1 Corinthians 2:10).

I am convinced that like a loving parent who cannot fully convey what lies ahead to an eager and excited (but unaware) child, God knows that our minds simply cannot fathom what awaits us. And He does not reveal every glory that awaits us because He expects us to trust Him.

So, with all the wonderful things that lie ahead, the *next best* prophesied thing is the Rapture of the Church.

The Bridegroom is ready. The Archangel is ready to shout. The trumpeter is ready to sound a blast. John tells us that "the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come'" (Revelation 22:17). Jesus even assured us three times in Revelation 22, "I am coming quickly" (22:7, 12, 20).

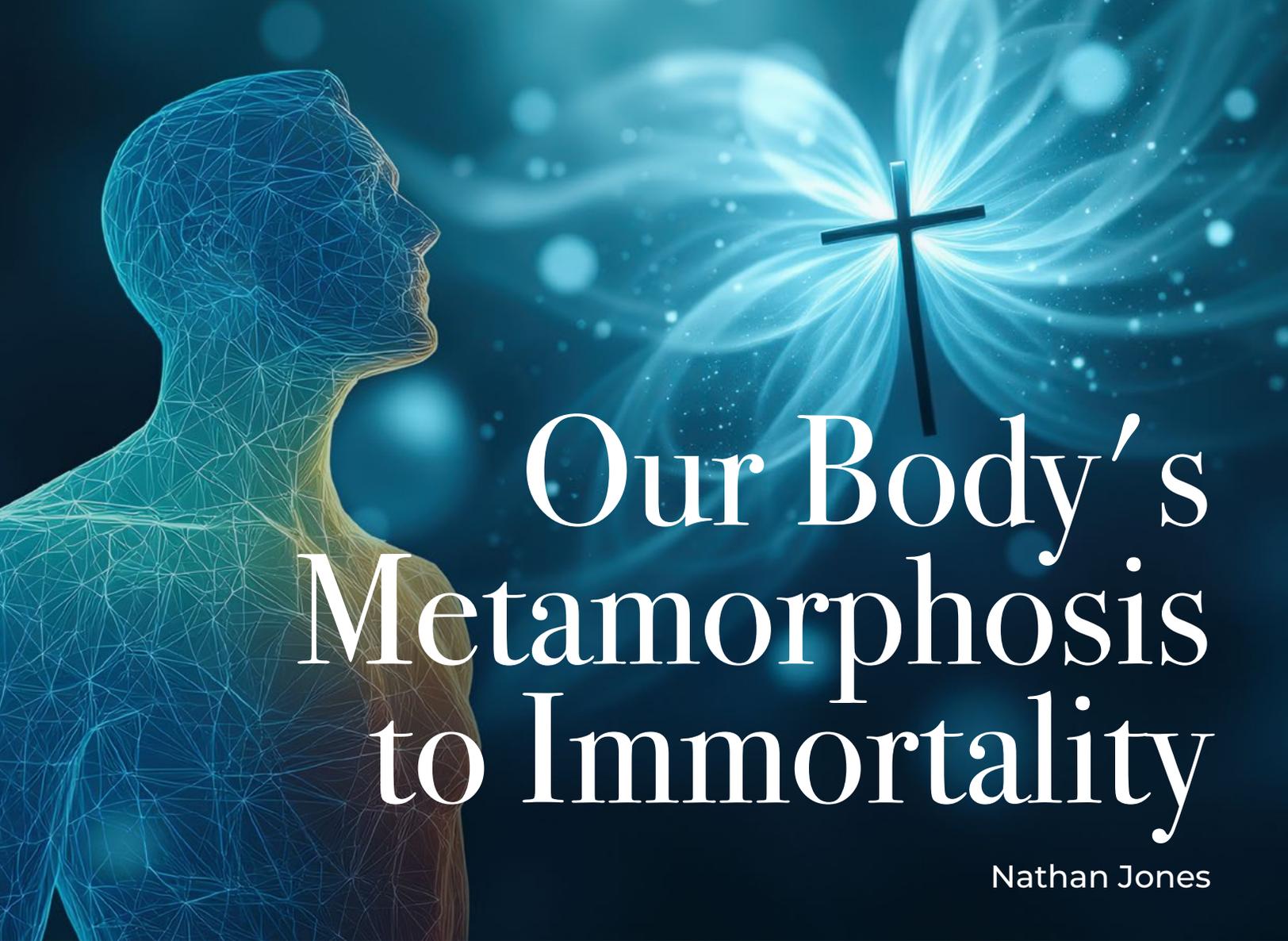
If you have a regenerate heart that loves the Lord Jesus Christ then you also have ears to hear. And if you do, I hope you'll take Jesus at His Word and join the Apostle John and all of us at Lamb & Lion Ministries in responding, "Amen. Come Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20). ☁️



He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:20



Our Body's Metamorphosis to Immortality

Nathan Jones

Have you ever watched a butterfly and marveled at its delicate lines and beautiful colors as it flits from flower to flower? The butterfly is one of God's most captivating and graceful creatures.

And yet, your butterfly hasn't always looked so lovely; why, it didn't even look like a butterfly! That's because this winged insect is in its fourth and final stage in a process called metamorphosis, a Greek word meaning "transformation" or "to change in shape." The four stages in a butterfly's life are:

- 1. First Stage: Egg** – A butterfly begins its life as a simple egg, laid on a plant by an adult female.
- 2. Feeding Stage: Caterpillar** – Bursting from the egg, the caterpillar, also called a larva, eats voraciously, shedding its skin 4-5 times to grow 100 times its size.
- 3. Transition Stage: Pupa** – Once the caterpillar is fully grown, it becomes a pupa by transform-

ing itself into a chrysalis. Over a period of a few weeks, the caterpillar exchanges its stubby features for long legs, colorful wings, springy antennae, and compound eyes.

- 4. Reproductive Stage: Adult** – Once the butterfly emerges from the chrysalis, it will often forego food in its sole mission to mate and lay eggs over the few weeks that it has left to live.

Each stage of metamorphosis provides a unique and limited point of view. For example, the egg cannot comprehend life on the move as a caterpillar. The caterpillar doesn't know why it is so ravenously hungry. The pupa can merely wonder why it is growing new appendages. Only as an adult can the butterfly look back over its lifespan (if an insect can ponder) to marvel at how God transformed it from a helpless egg to a free-flying butterfly.

The Stages of Mortal Human Life

In this respect, have you ever considered that we, as humans, are much like butterflies? We also go through progressive stages of life, metamorphosing from one form to the next. And, as we are living in each stage, our knowledge of what life will be like in succeeding stages remains quite limited.

To better understand the concept of human metamorphosis, let's walk through the stages of mortal life.



01 Prenatal Stage

The first stage of human life begins at conception and progresses through three major developmental phases over approximately 40 weeks, culminating in birth. During the germinal stage, the newly formed zygote contains 46 chromosomes and undergoes rapid cell division. It will implant itself in the uterine wall within 2 weeks.

The embryonic stage follows, lasting from weeks 3 to 8. The heart begins to beat, the neural tube gives rise to the brain and spinal cord,

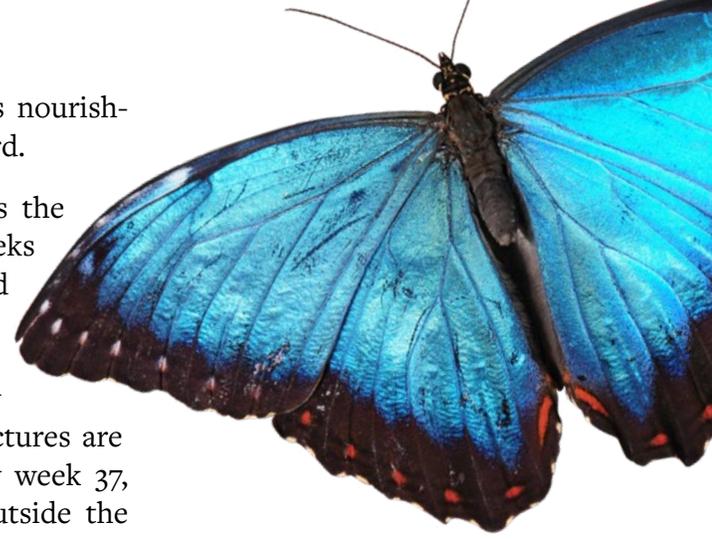
and the embryo receives nourishment via an umbilical cord.

As development enters the fetal stage, spanning weeks 9 to 40, the organs and tissues mature quickly, and the sex organs become distinguishable. By week 10, the major structures are already in place, and by week 37, the fetus can survive outside the womb. At around 6 pounds and approximately 18 inches long, we are now prepared for birth and the second stage of human life.

02 Childhood Stage

The childhood stage begins at birth and continues through four major developmental periods. From birth to age 2, infants grow rapidly, develop motor skills and reflexes, begin forming language, and progress from rolling to crawling to walking while learning basic social and emotional patterns.

Between ages 2 and 6, preschoolers expand their language, thinking, and motor abilities. They begin to gain some independence and explore the world through imaginative play and social interaction.



During middle childhood, from 6 to 11, growth becomes steady, and cognitive skills become more complex. Children refine their sense of identity through school, accomplishments, and social norms. By age 7, the brain reaches its adult size, supporting more advanced problem-solving.

Adolescence, spanning ages 12 to 18, is characterized by rapid physical changes called puberty. Teens deepen their search for identity beyond their families, marked by growing independence, strong peer influences, and increased risk-taking.

03 Adulthood Stage

Adulthood begins when a person becomes fully independent yet continues to progress through three major developmental stages. In early adulthood, individuals ages 18 to 39 have reached peak physical maturity. Emotional, social, and cognitive growth continues with a focus on building relationships, families, and careers.

Middle adulthood, from 40 to 59, is marked by stable physical and mental functioning, increased productivity, and a growing awareness of aging, life goals, and personal



commitments. During this period, people often reflect on their accomplishments and contemplate the direction their lives have taken.

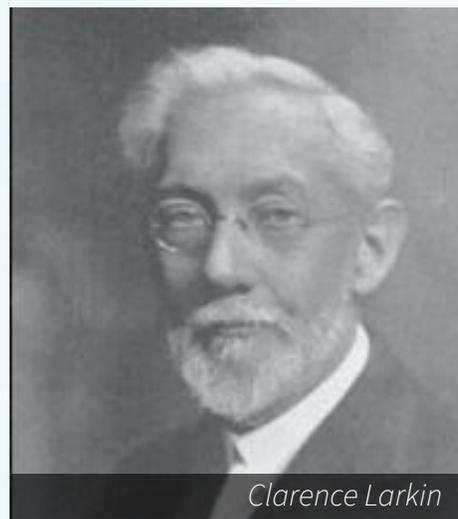
Late adulthood begins at age 60 and is characterized by increasing physical challenges, including declining muscle mass, reduced bone density, and slower cognitive processing. This stage focuses on retirement, adapting to health changes, and confronting end-of-life realities.

The Stages of Immortal Human Life

Once a butterfly dies, it is no more. It ceases to exist. Humans, on the other hand, though we possess a mortal body and a beginning, are, in truth, immortal because God has given each of us a spirit that lives on beyond this mortal coil. The apostle Paul explained, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:44).

When describing the differences between man and animals when it comes to mortality, famed Bible teacher Clarence Larkin described man as a “trinity,” or tripartite man,

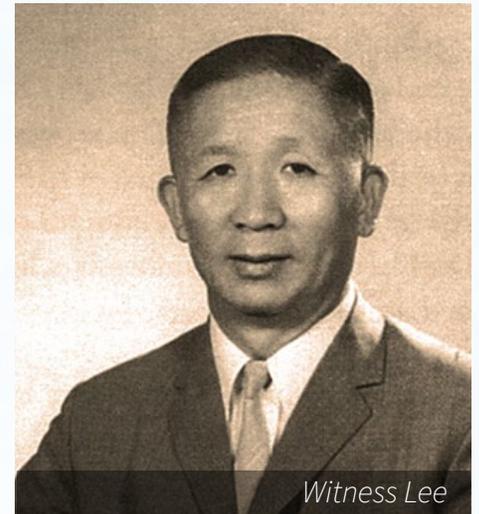
composed of a body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12). The body of man, with its five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), is that part which connects us to the physical world. The soul, in essence, the actual “person” of man, is likewise composed of three parts (the mind, will, and emotions). Our human spirit, the part animals lack, is also composed of three parts (the conscience, the fellowship, and the intuition).



Clarence Larkin

Because of the corrupting influence of sin, the human body will perish. But once we experience Christ’s salvation, the spirit, soul, and body begin regenerating. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Chinese evangelist

Witness Lee explained: “The transfiguration of our body is the ultimate consummation of God’s salvation. In His salvation, God first regenerated our spirit (John 3:6), now is transforming our soul (Romans 12:2), and consummately will transfigure our body, making us the same as Christ in all three parts of our being.”



Witness Lee

So, while the Christian renews their spirit at justification and the soul through the ongoing process of sanctification, the body awaits glorification through the resurrection. As Lee added, “Thus, in God’s full salvation, not only is our body freed from the foreign elements of sin and death, but even more, it is saturated with the divine glory and conformed to the body of His glory.” This means that after the mortal body dies, people experience two additional life stages in reaching their final form.

Does this concept of human metamorphosis surprise you? It does to most people who believe that death is the finale to human life. And yet, the Bible teaches us that death is not the conclusion of a person’s life but merely a transition to our eternal, immortal forms in a forever state.

So let us continue our exploration of human metamorphosis, beyond our three mortal stages and into our two immortal stages.

04 The Intermediate Stage

Upon death, those who are saved are immediately ushered by God's angels into the presence of Jesus Christ in Heaven (Luke 16:22; 23:43). And for those who are not saved, they are instead ushered into a prison called Torments, also called Hades or Sheol (Luke 16).

God never intended for humans to exist for eternity without physical bodies, mythically floating around on clouds as disembodied spirits. Rather, our spirits receive what theologians call an intermediate spirit body. These intermediate bodies are physical, tangible, and recognizable. For example, when Elijah and Moses appeared at the Transfiguration, Samuel appeared to Saul, and the Tribulation martyrs stand before the throne of God wearing white robes; in all these examples, they clearly possessed physical bodies, as spirits have no need for clothing.

While humans never remain bodiless, neither are our souls left unconscious. We remain conscious after death. We learn this in Christ's account of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Both men died and are described as dwelling in bodies that could thirst, see, and talk. They existed in a fully conscious state and were never dormant in soul sleep. Only the earthly, mortal body remains "asleep" in the grave, awaiting resurrection.



05 The Glorified Stage

Once the Rapture occurs, the earthly bodies of the dead in Christ will be resurrected and merged with their intermediate body for our final stage of metamorphosis—the glorified body (1 Corinthians 15:35-56). And for those in Christ who are still alive when the Rapture occurs, their earthly body will be instantly transformed into their glorified body. This will be the only generation in history to avoid death.

First Corinthians 15:42-50 describes our glorified bodies as the body that is sown perishable, meaning it can be destroyed. It is raised imperishable, meaning it cannot be destroyed. It is sown in dishonor or in that our sin weighs us down like we are slogged in filth, but it is raised in glory, meaning in purity. It is sown in weakness, in that we get sick and tired, but it is raised in power. We are sown with a natural body but will be raised with a Holy Spirit-powered body.

Best of all, we will "bear the likeness of the Man from heaven," whom we know is none other than

the resurrected Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:49 NKJV). His resurrection provides the template for mankind's own resurrection. For when Jesus returns, it is He "who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by His working through which He is able to even subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21).

It is important to note that those who died in rebellion against Christ will not experience this resurrection to glory. Instead, they will be resurrected to shame at the Great White Throne Judgment after the Millennial Kingdom has ended (Revelation 20:11-15). Having never been regenerated by Christ's salvation, they remain in their corrupted state, and so will be cast body, soul, and spirit into the Lake of Fire to face physical and spiritual suffering—eternal death.

Will you face this final stage of your human metamorphosis with eternal life... or eternal death? "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). ☁️

THE BEMA SEAT JUDGMENT:

YOUR DAY OF RECKONING

Erwin Lutzer

Lamb & Lion Ministries was delighted to include insights from Pastor Erwin Lutzer in our “Overview of the End Times” series on Christ in Prophecy. This article is based on a powerful sermon he delivered at Chino Hills Calvary Chapel in late 2025.

Scripture tells us that there are two judgments in the Bible. The Bible says it is appointed unto man once to die and after death the judgment. But in fact there are two great judgments.

One is the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Revelation 20:11-12, KJV)

The very last verse of the chapter says, “And whosoever’s name was not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

That judgment is absolutely terrifying because those who are standing before God have something in common: they are unbelievers who do not have the protection of Jesus Christ from the wrath of God.

Judgment of the Redeemed

But there is another judgment called the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ—or what we refer to as the Bema Seat. For Church Age followers of Christ, it will be a day of reckoning—something that should actually be very sobering to every believer.

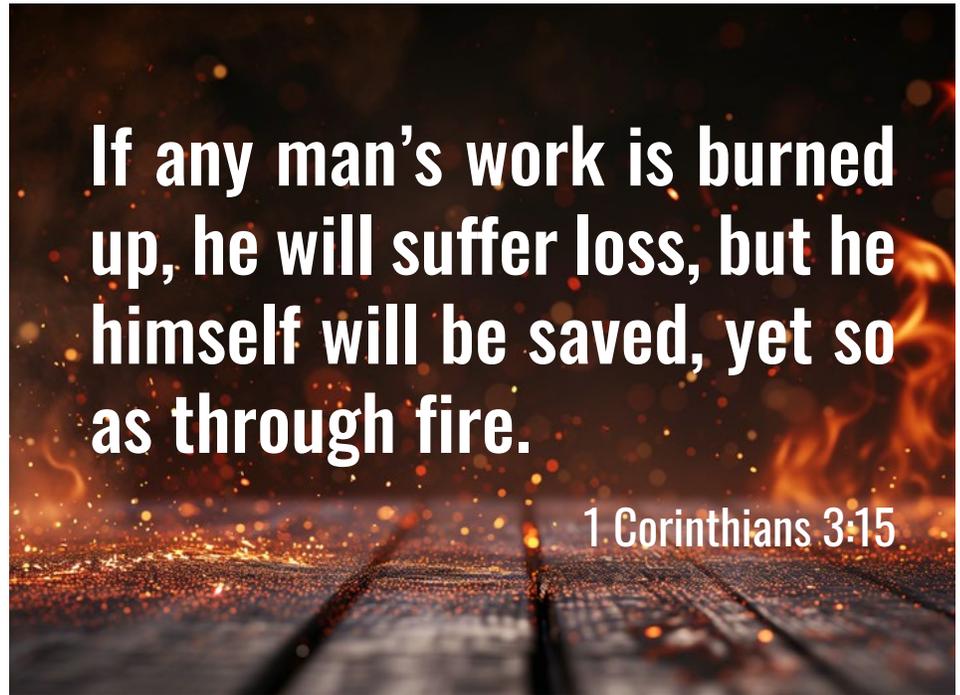
The Bible says there are tears in heaven, and that God is going to wipe away all tears (Revelation 21:4). But why tears in Heaven? Some Christians say the reason is that they will be profoundly disappointed and in great anguish because their friends aren’t there. I can imagine a mother weeping because her son has not come into heaven and won’t be there. Possibly that’s the answer.

But I would like to suggest that the real reason is tears of regret over the way we lived, despite the wonderful opportunities that God has given to us, and the fact that some of what we've invested in all our lives will prove temporal and worthless.

The Apostle Paul addresses this moment of reckoning beginning in 1 Corinthians. Speaking of his own ministry, he acknowledged that he initiated it, then others built on it. Then he says this (paraphrased):

Let each one take care of how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, or precious stones, or it could be wood, hay, and straw, each one's work will become manifest, for the day will disclose it, because it is to be revealed by fire. And the fire will test what sort of work one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

The imagery is this: even as Christians, our works will be tried before God, and He will reveal whether we have acquired gold, silver, and precious stones, or whether we've been building and living for wood, hay, and stubble. The imagery also conveys that when the burning takes place, if you're a believer, you will be saved—but only as if you've barely escaped out of a house that's burning and collapsing behind you. All the temporal, worthless works will be burned up and reduced to ash.



If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:15

Saved, But as Through Fire

Many people might say, “Wow, that seems inconsistent with the Gospel. Because doesn't the Gospel mean that we stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ?” Yes, of course, that's the Good News of the Gospel. We will be welcomed into Heaven as if we are Jesus.

But that does not mean that God does not judge those whom He has redeemed. For example, in Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira died when they were called out for lying. Because they are presented as members of the Church, I tend to think maybe they were believers. And I can imagine them arriving in Heaven saying, “Well, what was this all about? We thought Calvary covered it all.” Yes, of course, Calvary covers it all legally. But that's why the New Testament says that God disciplines those who are His.

He doesn't just say, “Well, I'm treating you as if now nothing matters because you have My righ-

teousness.” No, we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account. Imagine how surprised many Christians will be when they stand before the Lord surrounded by ash, like people in Southern California some time ago—just a chimney and some of the walls made of brick but everything else burned and gone.

Storing Up Treasure in Heaven

People sometimes raise a second objection: that we shouldn't serve God for rewards. To do so would be selfish. Let's just serve Him because we love Him. All right, let's take a deep breath. Of course, we should serve God because we love Him. But you know the way in which you love Him is to go for the reward. Let's remember that Jesus made that point very clear. He motivated people by saying, “Your reward will be great.”

Some people have the misperception that if they can just get to Heaven, it won't matter whether



For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10

they have earned any other rewards. As one man told me, “I’m a Christian, but I’m not really living for Christ. As long as I can sit in the back row in Heaven, I’ll be happy.” My word to that misguided man was that he was actually satisfied with displeasing Christ. If he were pleasing Jesus, to use his own imagery, he wouldn’t be in the back row!

Paul returns to this same theme in 2 Corinthians. He is, of course, talking about believers, including himself: “So whether we are at home (with the Lord) or away, we make it our aim to please Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:9-10, ESV).

So let’s unpack the seriousness of what awaits every believer on our final day of reckoning—the Bema Seat of Christ.

Four Characteristics of the Bema Seat

Every Christian can take comfort in four characteristics of the judgment seat of Jesus Christ when He will evaluate our lives in light of Eternity.

First – We are going to be judged fairly.

We know this will be true because Jesus Christ—the Anointed One who loves us and died for us—now sits as judge. He is going to be eminently fair. Not one single fact will be overlooked; everything will be taken into account, and nothing will be hidden.

Our rewards will be dependent not on what we did after our first birth, but what we did for Christ after our second birth. Just consider the Apostle Paul. He sought to kill Christians before his conversion. So, like him, no matter what your past was before your conversion,

you are going to be judged by what you did and how you lived after your conversion. And Jesus, our Savior and our Brother, wants us to do well at the judgment seat, so we can depend on His fairness.

Second – We are going to be judged individually.

That is precisely what the text says. “Each one [will] be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done” (2 Corinthians 5:10). In Romans 14, Paul warns us not to judge one another, for “each one of us will give an account for himself to God” (Romans 14:12). There will be no one to stand beside us and make an excuse for us.

Right about now, some people might think, “Oh, I sure hope my friends aren’t going to see this. I hope that it’s going to be totally private.” I would simply say this: First, we’ll all be in the same boat. But secondly, I really believe that when we stand before Jesus, we will not care if the whole universe (including our spouse, our family, our friends, or people before whom we made ourselves look much better than we really are) is watching. The only thing that we will care about is Jesus’ judgment and whether we will hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Third - We’re going to be judged thoroughly, whether good or evil.

The evil deeds are covered by the blood of Christ and will be burned away as wood, hay, and stubble. The question will be whether there will be any gold, silver, or precious stones left over. Again, that’s why Scripture reveals that “each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be

revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward" (1 Corinthians 3:13-14). Some people will find that all of their supposed works are burned up, but that they are saved "yet so as through fire" (v. 15).

Fourth – The Bible describes some of the things that will survive the fire: treasures that will prove to be like gold, silver, and precious stones. For example:

- 1. Joyful acceptance of injustice.** "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Your reward will be great. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).
- 2. Financial generosity.** Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust do corrupt, thieves break through and steal, the stock market falls precipitously, unexpectedly, but rather lay up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust cannot corrupt, thieves do not break through and steal (Matthew 6:19, paraphrased).
- 3.** One of the greatest lies that has been perpetuated is that "you can't take it with you." Of course, you can take wealth with you, but you have to transmute it into a different substance so that it will meet you in heaven. To paraphrase Jesus, "Use your wealth wisely so that when you get to heaven, there will

be people there to greet you in everlasting habitations" (Luke 16:9).

Transmutation – turning one substance into another.

- 4. Love the unlovable.** "Love your enemies. Do good to them. Do good to them and you will be rewarded" (Matthew 5:44-46, paraphrased).

You will be rewarded because your Heavenly Father also loves the unlovable and is kind to the just and the unjust. He sends rain to all of them. So if you want to be greatly rewarded, find somebody who's unlovable and love them.

- 5. Eagerly anticipate the Lord's return.** Paul told Timothy that he had fought hard and kept the faith, but was nearing the end of his ministry and life's journey. But he said,

"There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8, CSB).

So, do you love Jesus so much that you really long for His appearing? Or do you think the appearance of Jesus is going to interfere with your life?

Clearly, Scripture tells of many rewards that await followers of Christ—but only for the gold, silver, and precious stones that remain when the wood, hay, and stubble are burned away. Only that which is pleasing to God and done for the right motives will be rewarded.

How Then Should We Live?

With that in mind, here are three takeaways for those who want to be found good and pleasing at the Bema Seat Judgment.



In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2 Timothy 4:8



Number one, every day is a plus or a minus. It is either a loss or a gain. It is either wood, hay, stubble, or precious gold. Probably a mixture.

George Whitefield was a great Colonial preacher here in America. He dictated that these words be emblazoned on his tombstone: “Here lies G.W. What sort of man he was the great day will discover.” Each of us will discover that the sort of man or woman we really are will be revealed at the great Bema Seat Judgment.

Number Two, what is it that we can gain? We can gain ruling with Christ.

This aspiration makes me hold my breath. Jesus said, “he who overcomes, to him shall I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I overcame and sat on My Father’s throne” (Revelation 3:21).

Theologically, I don’t necessarily believe that every Christian is an overcomer, though there are those

who disagree and we can’t go into that discussion. I’ve never yet met a Christian who didn’t want to be an overcomer. But I’ve met a lot of Christians who didn’t really want to overcome anything.

Number three, tragically, not every believer will hear “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

An Indian legend tells of a wealthy raja who was riding along in his chariot when he encountered a beggar holding a small bowl of rice. The beggar was surprised when the raja stopped and said, “Give me some of your rice.” The beggar was angry, because his provisions were meager and the raja was wealthy. So, he gave the raja a single grain of rice.

Again, the raja said, “Beggar, give me more of your rice.” Very angry, the beggar once more gave him a single grain. A third time, the raja asked for more rice, and the beggar gave him one more grain and then walked away, absolutely furious.

Later on, the beggar looked into his bowl of rice and he saw something glitter. It was a grain of gold the size of a grain of rice. He found only two more. And he began to cry, saying, “Oh, if only I had given him my whole bowl of rice.

Likewise, I believe there are going to be tears in Heaven when people realize, “Why did I keep parts of myself to myself? Lord, why didn’t I just give the You all of myself and say the only thing that really matters is to honor You and give You glory”.

In the end, I don’t care what the cost is. Because Jesus is so generous, for every grain of our meager rice, He will give us a grain of gold.

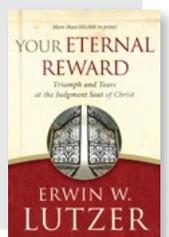


Erwin Lutzer will be featured on an upcoming episode of *Christ in Prophecy*, where he will expand on the paramount call to live faithfully—especially in days like these as we look ahead to the heavenly rewards God has promised.

Pastor Lutzer’s insightful book, *Your Eternal Reward*, offers a thoughtful exploration of what Scripture teaches about the judgment and rewards awaiting every Christian.

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THE GLORIOUS HOPE OF THE CHURCH

Skip Heitzig

Of all the End Time events, the Rapture of the Church generates the most interest and the most controversy. I have a friend who wrote that the Rapture is third in the list of top 10 topics that have most divided the Church—right after COVID-19 vaccinations and the Harry Potter books!

There has been disagreement about both the promise and the timing of the Rapture. When I was a new believer, I thought the Rapture was nonsense. I had never heard of it before in the church I'd grown up in and it simply did not compute. Then I read texts like 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, and John 14. I came to believe in the Rapture and got pretty excited about the prospect that Jesus could come at any moment to take His Church with Him.

So, What is It?

So what is the Rapture of the Church? Where did that idea come from? Is it a new idea as some purport? Is it something we should seriously consider; and if so, why? And when will it happen exactly?

Some challenge the idea of the Rapture by saying, “It’s too new to be true.” Well, to that, I have two responses. Number one, just because a belief is early or long-held doesn’t mean it’s true. Heresies like Gnosticism appeared early in the Church and had to be countered by John and others.

Number two, the early Church did believe that Christians would be rescued before the Tribulation. You could say that the early Church fathers were strongly premillennial. That includes men like the Shepherd of Hermas, Irenaeus, Ephrem of Syria, Clement of Rome, Tertullian, and Cyril of Jerusalem. I could go on and on. All of them believed that Jesus could come back at any moment and we should be ready.

John 14 is a passage that some people might think has nothing to do with the Rapture. But the more I’ve studied it, the more I have come to realize that it is one of the first mentions or intimations of the glorious Blessed Hope of the Church—Jesus’ *promise* of the imminent, signless rapture of the Church—in the New Testament.



Imminent = impending, forthcoming, close, near, at hand, could happen at any moment.

Known as the “Upper Room discourse,” it is the second-longest sermon Jesus ever preached (behind the Sermon on the Mount). It was delivered to His disciples in private, just before His crucifixion. The first six verses of this sermon are seminal:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.

Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:1-6, NKJV)

There are four distinctive features about this Rapture—this coming—that He refers to:

Comfort

The first feature of the Rapture is its comfort. Why on Earth would Jesus say to His disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled”? Because they were troubled. In fact, the anxiety among that group was rising minute by minute, because in this setting, at this last supper, He had just announced that He was leaving.

Just a few verses earlier, in John 13:33, Jesus said, “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek me, and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’” Simon Peter spoke up with the question all of them had: “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him and said again, “Where I go, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow me later.” In his own anguish and confusion, Peter responded, “Why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for You.”

Later in the same sermon, Jesus recognized, “...because I have said these things to you, sorrow fills your heart” (John 16:6). The disciples were confused and filled with sorrow because they had given up everything to follow Him for three years nonstop—and now He was leaving. That is not what they wanted or expected to hear, so their hearts are troubled and filled with anxiety.

Jesus’ command to “Let not your heart be troubled” was given in a present passive imperative, meaning to stop an action already going on. They were already worried, already freaking out. So, Jesus said, “Stop it.” The words He offered to comfort them are simply this: “Believe in God; believe also in Me.” Then He said, “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places [and] I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:2-3).

Similarly, right after he described the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul wrote, “Therefore, comfort one another with these words.” There is nothing more comforting to those of us alive right now than the assurance that Jesus could come back at any moment for us.

Notice that Jesus described the place He is preparing (Heaven) in four ways:

First, Heaven is a real place. It isn't a figment of your imagination or a wishful thought to get yourself through this present life. It's an actual, real place.

Second, Heaven is a relational place. Notice that Jesus calls Heaven “My Father's house.” Why? Because, when you're there, you'll be with your Heavenly Father and your Savior, the Lord, Jesus Christ. You'll also be reunited with those believers who have died before you.

Third, Heaven is a diverse place. Some translations use the word “mansions,” but the Jewish context suggests that Jesus is referring to many rooms. This conveys the idea of a bridegroom adding a

room onto his father's house prior to bringing his bride home to live. The picture of New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband in Revelation 21, conveys a huge, beautiful, diverse city brimming with people.

Fourth, Heaven is a personal place. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” Think of it this way: there's a space and place in Heaven prepared for you. Jesus the Master Carpenter is custom building something just with you in mind!

So that's the comfort of it. Let not your heart be troubled.

Chronology

The second feature of the Rapture is its chronology. Jesus said that He would go and prepare a place, and then “I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3). Some people try to soften the meaning of this promise by saying, “Well, He's just talking about when you die, He's going to receive you to where He is.”

But Jesus was speaking literally. He spoke of departing literally, and then He left. So, I expect that when He speaks of returning, He intends to literally return somehow to receive believers to Himself and take them to His Father's house in Heaven.

The coming to “take you to the place I have prepared for you” cannot refer to the Second Coming of Revelation 19 either, because at that event, He comes to the Earth with His saints to set up His kingdom. It must, therefore, refer to something else. I believe it refers to the Rapture—Jesus' coming for His Church.

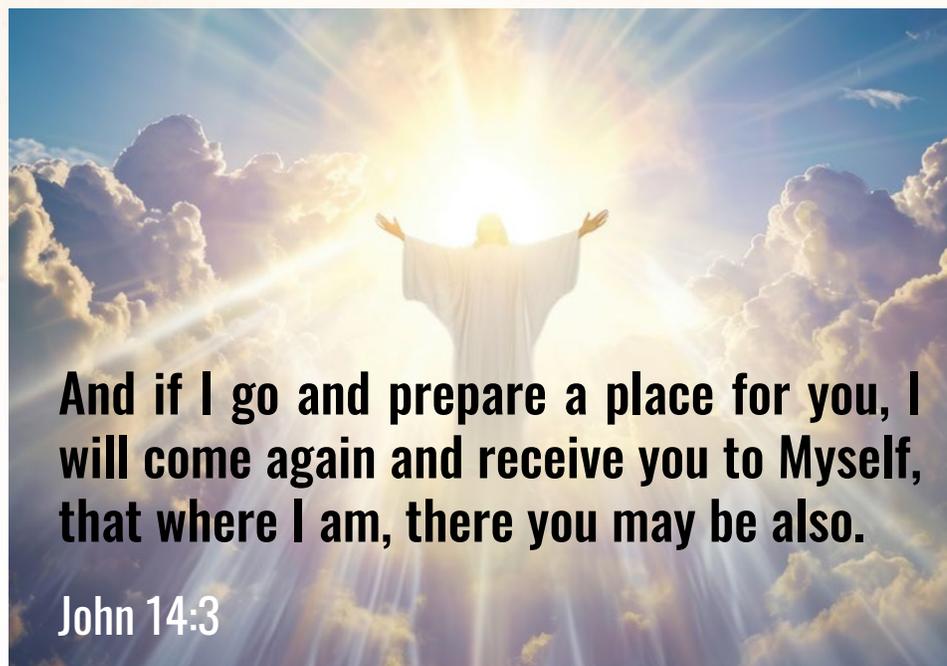
The disciples clearly did not understand everything He was telling them at that moment. They were like deer in the headlights. And here's why: they were in no condition for an eschatology lesson. Jesus saying, “I'm leaving,” was not what they wanted or expected to hear. But later on, they will get it, as Paul explained quite clearly in 1 Thessalonians 4.

But Jesus' first intimation of the Rapture would by no means end the controversy surrounding the promise.

Controversy

The initial controversy is related to Thomas' response to Jesus' statement, “Where I go, you know, and the way you know.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Why did he say this? Because he was honest.

The first controversy was due to their Jewish mindset 2,000 years ago. Jews, including the disciples, expected that just before the Mes-



And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

John 14:3



siah comes there would be a time of terrible turmoil. They saw the Roman invasion and occupation of their land as a fulfillment of that. Then, they expected that an Elijah-like forerunner would come amidst that turmoil to point the way to the Messiah. That's why people were so interested in John the Baptist and even asked him, "Are you Elijah? Are you that prophet?"

Finally, after the forerunner came, the Messiah would appear, establish His kingdom, defeat His enemies, and restore Jerusalem and Israel physically and spiritually. It's safe to say that Jesus' disciples believed that they were in phase three. Turmoil had happened. The forerunner had come. Jesus was the Messiah. So, they expected Him to establish His kingdom, not be told that He is leaving. Their confusion and anxiety based on those expectations were evident even after the Resurrection. In Acts 1, the disciples were still asking, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6, NKJV).

Much of the controversy surrounding the Rapture today has to do with confusion, anxiety,

and misguided expectations—even among believers.

Choice

"Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?"

I really appreciate Thomas. If he hadn't asked this question, we would not have had Jesus' answer. And His answer is precious: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me."

Now, in that answer, Jesus speaks of a tragedy: not everyone gets to go to the Father's house. "No one comes to the Father, but by Me." That tells me that the Rapture is a selective event. Not everybody goes. It is reserved for family members only because it is the Father's house.

I know the Bible says God is not willing that any should perish. And that is true. He doesn't want anybody to die and go to Hell. He does not wish that any should perish. The tragedy is that many people are, themselves, willing to perish. Many people say, "I don't want to hear. Tell me no more. I don't care. I'm not going to accept Christ."

Well, I just want you to know, God will honor your choice. He doesn't force people to come. He invites everyone to come, but He will honor whatever choice you make.

You could be wrong in your eschatology, but you cannot be wrong about the way to Heaven. I didn't believe in a Rapture at first, but I let the Bible speak to me and form my understanding of the End Times. But Jesus is dogmatic—even narrow-minded—about one thing: "I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me."

The good news is Jesus Christ is coming back. Believers will be ready and Jesus will take them to Heaven. The bad news is that Jesus Christ is coming back and many will not be ready. Unbelievers will be left behind. The good news is that anyone can go to Heaven. The bad news is that many people will go to Hell because God will honor their choice.

Now that you know the way to Heaven, will you choose to follow Christ? ☁️



Skip Heitzig serves as the senior pastor of Calvary Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His teaching reaches a global audience through the Connect radio program. He is the author of several books, including *You Can Understand Revelation and The Bible from 30,000 Feet*. This article draws from his timeless sermons on the Rapture.

THE BEAUTIFUL SIMPLICITY OF THE RAPTURE

Paul Wilkinson

Paul Wilkinson has written another book that will bless anyone who loves the Lord and longs to be with Him forevermore. Like his previous book, Israel: The Inheritance of God, this new work makes the deep mystery of the Rapture clear and understandable. As the title implies, this Blessed Hope is beautiful and simple in its plain sense promise to Church Age followers of Christ.

We recently had the opportunity to ask Paul about The Beautiful Simplicity of the Rapture. This is what he had to say:



People make the Rapture complicated—because Satan is trying to make it complicated for people. But the doctrine of the Rapture is our blessed hope as believers. It’s beautiful because it’s a beautiful promise from our Lord Jesus. Our Lord Jesus refers to Himself as the heavenly Bridegroom and we (the Church) are referred to as the Bride. So, our Heavenly Bridegroom is coming for His Bride.

But the Rapture is not just beautiful, it is also simple—as every truth in God’s Word is. It’s simple because the Lord does not reveal His truth to an elite group. He wants every one of His children to understand Him and His purposes and His plans—for their lives, for us as a Church, for Israel, for the world. That means that we should all be able to understand what the Rapture is and, therefore, what our Blessed Hope is. And since there are multi-

ple layers to this beautiful doctrine, we can dig as deep as we want.

Of course, Satan is going to be all over it. He’s going to try to confuse us, put us in fear, and create division and infighting among us. He seeks to convince Christians that the Rapture is unclear or too complicated to understand.

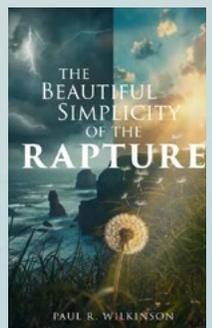
We know that the Cross—the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus—is THE Good News. But for the believer who has already come to the foot of the Cross and surrendered his or her life to Jesus, the Rapture is also good news. Jesus isn’t leaving us as we are now. He’s coming to catch us away because He loves us that much and He wants us to be with Him.

In His high priestly prayer in John 17, the Lord prayed, “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me”

(John 17:24). That is our Lord, Savior, and Bridegroom *longing* for us and saying to the Father, “It is My desire and will that My Bride be with Me.”

Often we approach the Rapture from our perspective, but this book draws out God’s perspective—how He feels—about this glorious event. ☁️

We would encourage you to get a copy of *The Beautiful Simplicity of the Rapture*. Even more, we encourage you to be excited that the Bridegroom will soon come to gather His Bride to Himself!



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or call **972-736-3567**.

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JUST THE FACTS

Tim Moore

The Rapture is an event that quickly devolves into wild speculation if we do not adhere to the plain-sense of meaning of Scripture. Indeed, there are details that elude our understanding—often because there are aspects too wonderful for our minds to comprehend.

Still, God’s Word offers enough prophetic foreshadowing to outline what He has in store for followers of Christ at the end of the Church Age. With that in mind, here are the facts of the Rapture, presented in a “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” format that would please Joe Friday:

Who

Jesus promised to gather His Church Age followers—collectively referred to as the Church or “Bride”—rescuing them from the wrath to come and bringing them to the place He is preparing in His Father’s House.

- ▶ John 14:1-4, 18
- ▶ Romans 5:8-9
- ▶ 1 Thessalonians 1:10

What

In a singular event, the dead in Christ will rise to meet Him in the air. A split second later, His living followers will be rescued from the wrath to come as well.

- ▶ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

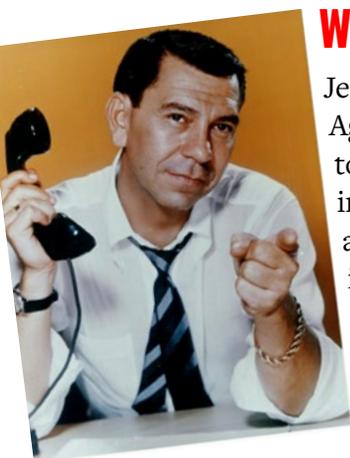
When

This event has no precursors per se, making it an imminent event since Jesus’ ascension into Heaven in Acts 1. While Signs of the Times will precede the Second Coming of Jesus to reign upon the Earth, no prophesied sign or occurrence has to happen before Jesus comes to gather His Bride.

- ▶ 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Where

Jesus said that He would bring us to a place He is preparing for us. We generically refer to that place as “Heaven”—whether it is a physical location, an unknown dimension, or a spiritual state. Scripture describes it as a place where the angels and saints engage in perpetual worship of God.



- ▶ 2 Corinthians 5:8
- ▶ Philippians 1:21-23

Why

Scoffers dismiss any excitement about the hope of the Rapture as escapism or avoidance of a worsening reality. I suppose both of those charges are accurate on their face, but they are based not on wishful thinking but the promise of God.

There are a few distinct reasons why the Lord elected to reveal the Rapture to us—and recipients of the Blessed Hope of that promise. (Ephesians 5:23-25; 2 Corinthians 4:14, 11:2; Revelation 19:7-8)

1. The first beneficiary of the Rapture is Jesus Christ. He referred to Himself as the Bridegroom and to Church Age saints collectively as the Bride. The analogy speaks to Jesus' own eagerness to gather His Bride to Himself because He loves her, gave Himself to the point of death on her behalf, and does not want to see His Bride suffer the consequences of God's outpouring of wrath during the Tribulation.
2. The second beneficiary is the Bride itself—the Church. Knowing in our heart that Jesus has made a provision for us, is readying a place for us, and will soon call us heavenward to be with Him offers us tremendous encouragement as we see the world spiraling out of control.

Clearly, there is the promised benefit of being rescued before the wrath of God falls on the Earth.

3. The final chapter of God's plan for the ages will not commence

until that which restrains is removed from the world. Right now, the Holy Spirit indwells millions upon millions of Christians scattered all around the world. When the Church is removed, although the Holy Spirit will still be drawing individual hearts to God, He will no longer work through the Church to restrain the rapid multiplication of wickedness, violence, and ungodliness on the Earth. In short order, once Christians are removed, the world will descend into chaos, the Antichrist will emerge, and the outpouring of God's wrath known as the Tribulation will ensue.

How

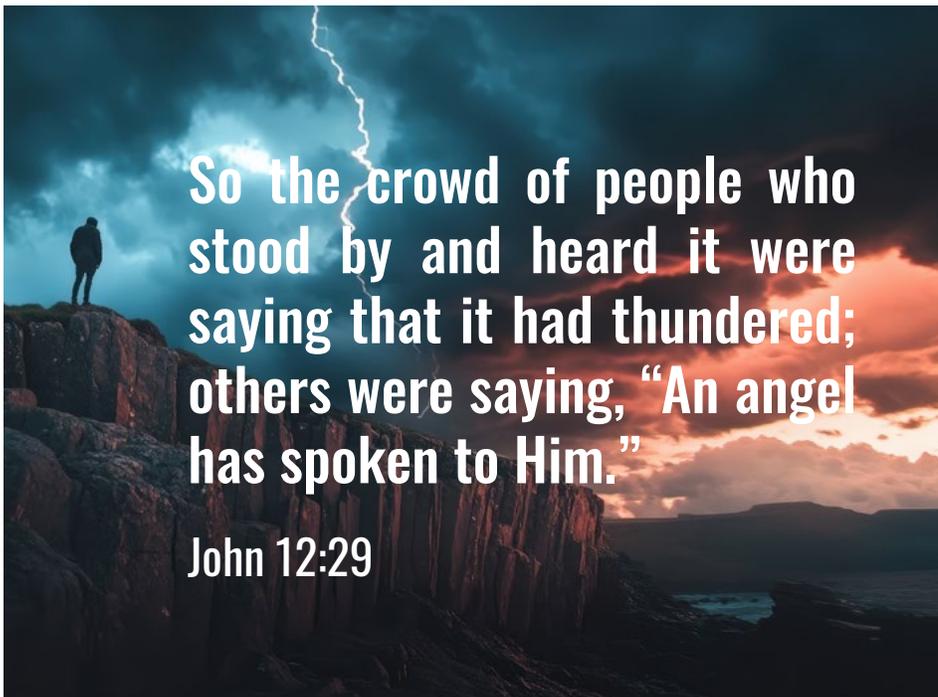
Scripture is unclear regarding the exact means by which God intends to fulfill this promise. Given Jesus' reference to a Jewish wedding and

His own consistent submission to the will of the Father (and His revelation that even “the Son does not know the day or the hour”), we can envision God the Father telling Jesus, “It's time. Go and get Your Bride.”

When that occurs, Jesus will burst forth from Heaven. Based on His call to John in Revelation 4:1 (“Come up here”), the call to the two Prophets of Revelation 11 (“Come up here” 11:12), and Lazarus in John 11:43 (“Lazarus, come out” or “Come forth”), it is possible that He will simply say, “Come up here!”

Jesus said in John 10:27 that His sheep hear His voice. Just as His followers heard the voice of God in John 12:28—reminiscent of the Father's voice at Jesus' baptism (“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” Matthew 3:17) and Transfiguration (“This is My





So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.”

John 12:29

Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him” Luke 9:35 and Mark 9:7)—His followers will hear that booming command. It is quite possible that the unsaved will merely hear the sound of thunder (John 12:29).

In an instant (many times quicker than the blink of an eye), Paul told the Corinthian church that

“the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52). The obvious context of that passage clarifies that only the dead in Christ (to use his language from 1 Thessalonians 4:16) will be raised imperishable, and only the still living followers of Christ will likewise be changed. It takes the

average person 0.1 to 0.4 seconds to blink. But the words Paul used (*atomos* and *rhipē* in Greek) point to something even faster. They denote an “indivisible moment” or a “twinkling” of the eye.

Modern science has measured a “zeptosecond”—a trillionth of a billionth of a second. That is the time it takes for a photon of light to cross a hydrogen molecule. By contrast, that same photon of light would travel over 18,000 miles in 0.1 second.

The point is that the Rapture will happen so fast that anyone not already hearing Jesus’ voice and ready for His upward call will be left behind.

Those are the facts. Are you ready? ☁️

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WHAT COMES NEXT

Tim Moore

Most people envision this life as a series of choices. What should I wear in the morning? What will I have for breakfast, let alone lunch and dinner? Which book will I read today? Who will I marry? What will I name my children?

In some situations, the choices seem unlimited. In fact, there is a psychological condition where people lose the ability to make a decision because they simply have too many choices.

Scripture simplifies our choices down to an either/or, A or B, black or white option: either accept Christ as Savior and Lord OR reject God's gracious offer of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. The choice is yours, but the ramifications are everlasting.

When it comes to the Rapture, "What comes next?" depends on the decision you have made leading up to that instant in time.

For Those Who Choose...Wisely

The Rapture is the Blessed Hope of those who have trusted in Christ during the Church Age. In an instant, the dead in Christ will rise and those who remain here on Earth will rise to meet Him in the air. We will all be transformed in the twinkling of an eye.

In our newly glorified bodies, we will follow Jesus to the place He has been preparing for us. We will undergo the Bema Seat judgment to be rewarded with varying degrees of crowns, and we will rejoice with the heavenly host as we gather around the throne of God. At some point, we will participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb—enjoying the sumptuous feast Jesus spoke of in parable (Luke 14:16-24).

Some Christians like to imagine what Heaven will be like. As Shakespeare said, " 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished." Hamlet recognized that our

“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.”

But to us God revealed them through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

speculations are just that; but Scripture says the Spirit reveals glimpses of the unimaginable glory that awaits us (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Sadly, some Christians have not given much thought to what comes next. Others are frankly ignorant about the Rapture and some are even dismissive of that great promise. While I cannot imagine pooh-poohing Jesus' own promise to gather His beloved to Himself, I realize that our salvation is not dependent on the fullness of our knowledge or the perfection of our attitude but only on our faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our constant plea to believers, however, is to be alert and be watchful—working in the day while there is still time, even as we await His imminent coming. Our mission field is all around us—and growing more “target-rich” every day.

Those “targets” represent the other side of the equation: those who have chosen...poorly.

Destined for Doom

John 3:36 tells us that “...he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” How do we obey the Son? By taking Him at His Word and *believing in* Him unto salvation. This is consistent with the working of the Holy Spirit, which explains why anyone who denies the veracity of the Holy Spirit's testimony commits the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29).

The wrath of God is not something that is imparted on an unbeliever at some point in their life or when they pass from life into death. It is a sentence that *abides* on them. King David understood the inherent condition of every mortal man and woman: “Behold, I was

brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). We don't become sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners.

Abide – *menō* in Greek, meaning to remain in place, to be present/held/kept continually, to last/endure/continue without ceasing.

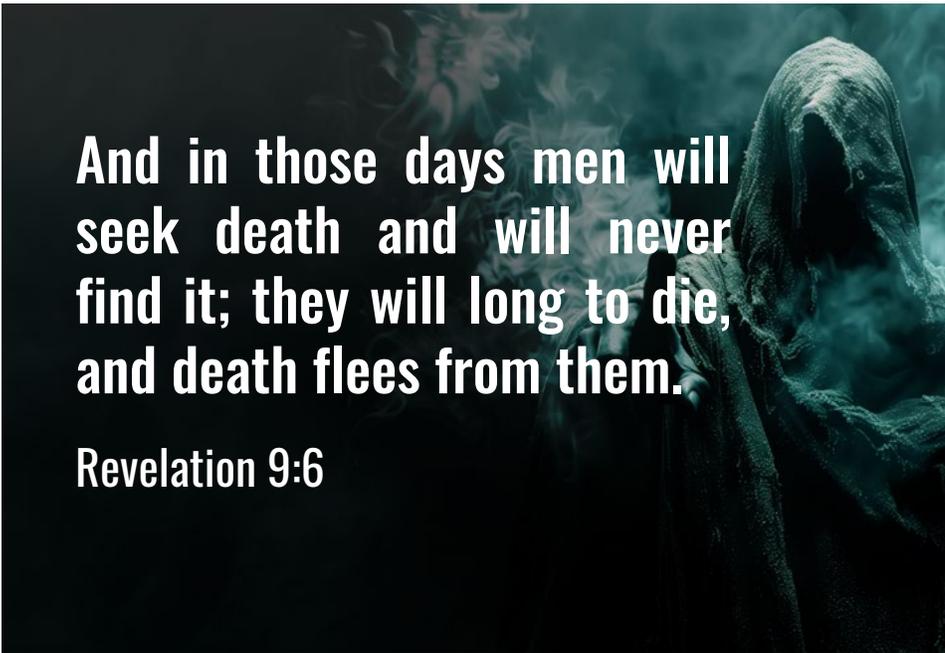
It is “only by grace [we] have been saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). Even that is a gift of God. But those who reject that gift have already chosen their eternal fate. As one of my favorite song lyrics related to this topic points out: “If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice” (“Free Will” by Rush). Rejecting the grace, mercy, and love of God relegates a person inevitably to Door #2—eternal damnation and separation from God.

Post-Rapture Peril

In the short term, following the Rapture, those who rejected Christ in the Church Age will soon be overwhelmed by a world thrown into chaos. With the restraining influence of the Church removed, humanistic, pagan, and ungodly policies will proliferate at every level of government. It is likely that the global economy will collapse and wars will break out as nations jockey for position. Wickedness and violence will multiply on the Earth. And then it will get even worse.

In the midst of that turmoil, the Antichrist will arise and God's wrath will be poured out on the Earth for seven years. Even those suffering through this period will realize that they are being inflicted by “the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:16). In short order, a quar-

Target-rich (as in environment) - A situation with many identifiable enemies or numerous high-value targets. Such an environment makes it easy to achieve objectives and implies an ease of success due to quantity and quality (i.e. – winnable souls).



And in those days men will seek death and will never find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

Revelation 9:6

ter of the world's population will be killed. Then, another third will perish. By just the mid-point of the Tribulation one-half of mankind will be dead—including many who chose to “wait and see” instead of embracing Christ in the Church Age. Then, life on Earth will go from bad to worse.

As awful as the suffering on Earth will be—and make no mistake, it is awful enough that at one point “men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death [will] flee from them” (Revelation 9:6)—death will merely subject a person to a greater, more lasting torment, to put it mildly.

Far from the “snuffing out” some humanists imagine death to represent, the Bible explains that the spirit of every person who dies awaits final judgment in one of two places (here again with the Door #1 or Door #2 motif)—either Paradise or Torments. Paradise is also described as the “bosom of Abraham.” It was a place where the “righteous” awaited the adjudication of their sins throughout the Old Testament era. Between Paradise and

Torments a great chasm existed—signifying that there could be NO transition from one destination to the other.

As affirmed in the Apostles' Creed (dating to the fourth century), I believe that when Jesus Christ died, He descended into Hell. *More specifically*, He went to Paradise, that compartment of Hades where those who had been *credited* with righteousness awaited release. Think men like Noah and Abraham and women like Rahab and

Ruth—declared righteous in their generation, but whose inevitable sins were not yet covered by saving blood. When He resurrected, many of those newly freed “saints” (Matthew's description) were raised from their graves and seen by many (Matthew 27:52-53). Those Old Testament saints are now in the true Paradise (Heaven) but will not receive their glorified bodies until the Great White Throne judgment at the end of the Millennium.

For those in Torments, however, there was no reprieve. Like the rich man of Luke 16:19-31, they long for even a drop of water to cool their tongue. But there is no relief, no escape, no hope. That is where those who have rejected Christ go upon their death. Yet, again, as bad as that is, it will get even worse.

We'll address the Great White Throne judgment in greater detail in coming months. For now, suffice it to say that when “the dead, the great, and the small” are brought before the Righteous Judge at the end of the Millennium, those whose names are NOT found written in the Book of Life will be thrown into



the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:11-15). There, Jesus says, “their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:46).

A future none but a psychopath would wish on their worst enemy. A fate worse than death.

One More Chance?

Many people have heard the options laid before them and delude themselves into thinking that they can put off a decision. I can wait until tomorrow, or the next day, or next year. If worse comes to worst (literally), they think, I’ll come to my senses when the Rapture occurs and the Tribulation begins.

Here is why that is a fool’s choice.

One – You are not promised another day or hour of life. Like the rich man of Luke 12:16-21, the Lord may say, “You fool! This very night your soul is required of you.”

Two – You may be deluded and deceived even after the Rapture. Scripture says that at the beginning of the Tribulation, God will send a deluding influence upon those who have rejected Christ. He will do this to essentially lock in the fate of those who “did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). God is patient right now, not wanting any to perish, but at some point, your fate will be sealed.

Three – If you are fortunate enough to slide into Heaven by the skin of your teeth—waiting until the last moment and then confessing faith in Christ—I believe you will still have many regrets as you stand before the righteous judge and realize how much time and how many opportunities you wast-

ed. As Erwin Lutzer described, you might be saved “as through fire,” but you’ll have very little gold, silver, or precious stones to present back to the Lord as an offering of worship.

The stakes—and the eternal consequences—of the choice you make are far greater than I can convey in this short article. I pray that this discussion has pricked your heart and provided an opening for you to invite the Holy Spirit to press into and produce real and lasting fruit.

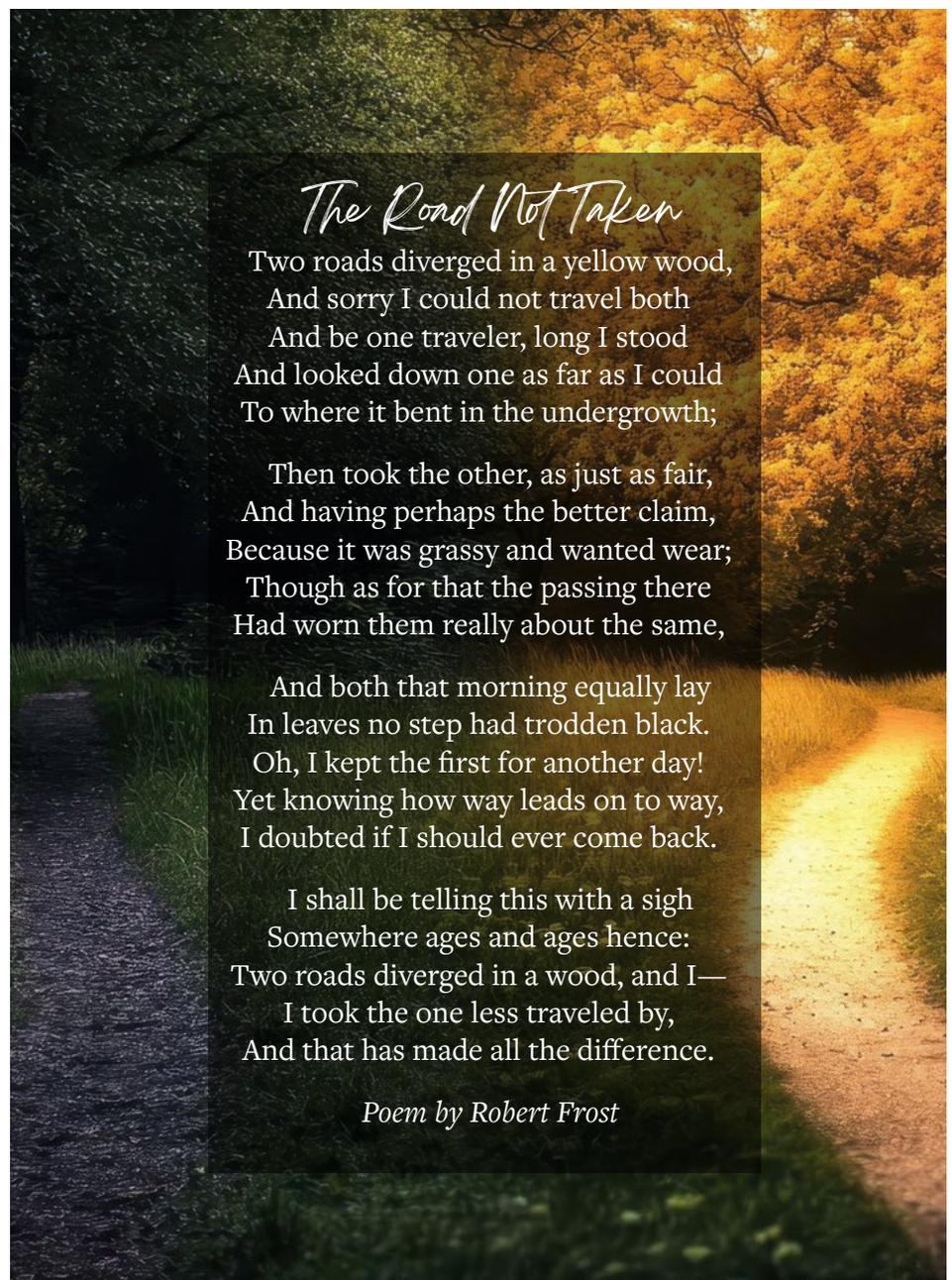
What’s In Your Future?

Will you choose wisely, or have you already chosen...poorly?

American poet Robert Frost captured the ramifications of making the right choice when presented with two options.

I hope to see you soon in that great mass of people thrilled to be streaming to Heaven in their new glorified bodies.

The choice is yours... ☁️



The Road Not Taken

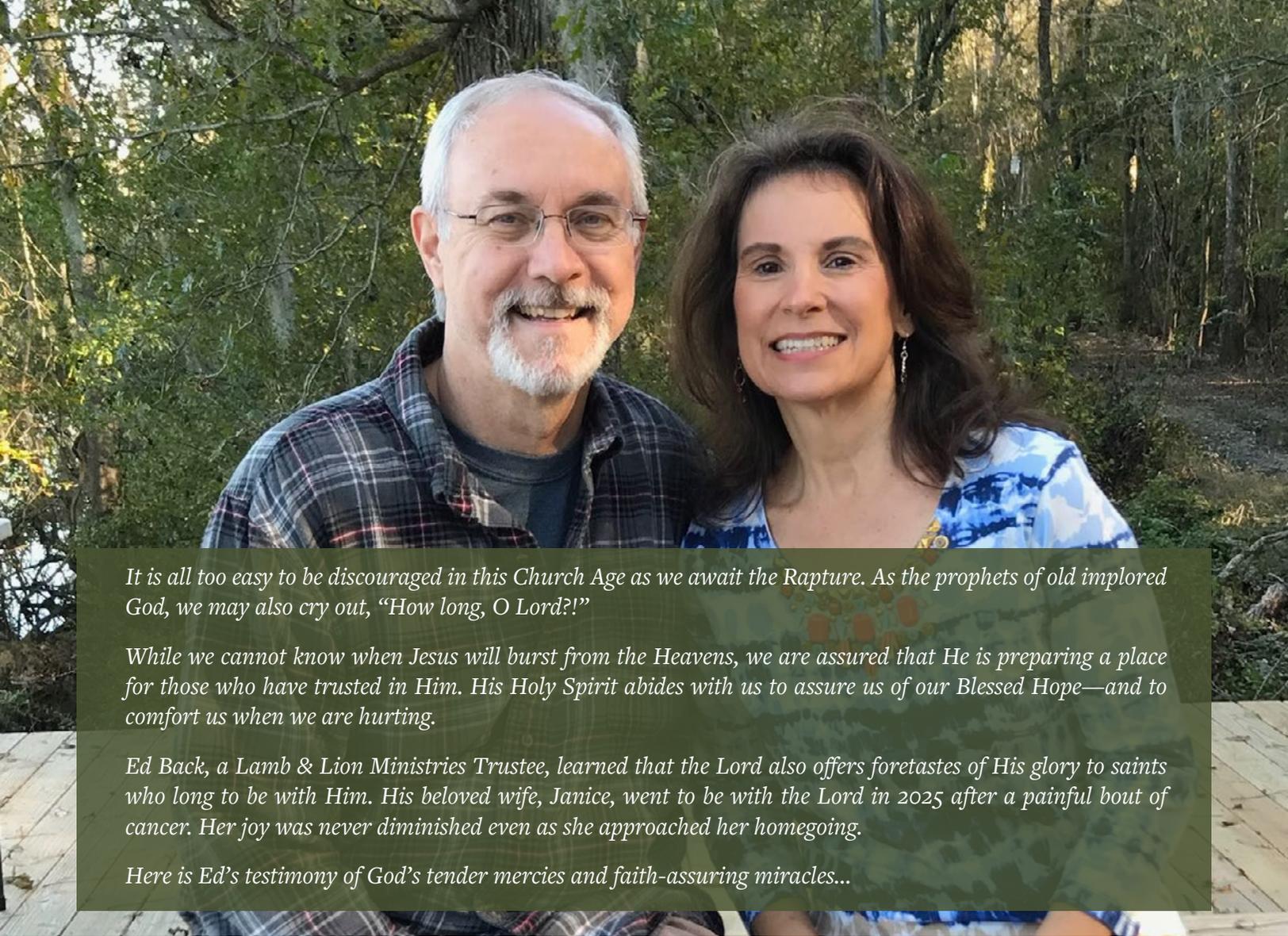
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Poem by Robert Frost



It is all too easy to be discouraged in this Church Age as we await the Rapture. As the prophets of old implored God, we may also cry out, “How long, O Lord?!”

While we cannot know when Jesus will burst from the Heavens, we are assured that He is preparing a place for those who have trusted in Him. His Holy Spirit abides with us to assure us of our Blessed Hope—and to comfort us when we are hurting.

Ed Back, a Lamb & Lion Ministries Trustee, learned that the Lord also offers foretastes of His glory to saints who long to be with Him. His beloved wife, Janice, went to be with the Lord in 2025 after a painful bout of cancer. Her joy was never diminished even as she approached her homegoing.

Here is Ed’s testimony of God’s tender mercies and faith-assuring miracles...

PERSEVERING HOPE

The Testimony of Ed Back

As my beautiful wife, Janice, began to physically decline, we prayed earnestly and expectantly. We knew God could heal her miraculously because He had done so before. Family and friends, and even complete strangers, lifted her up in prayer, but in the end God called her to be with Him at just the right time.

I do not say it was the right time from my own perspective. I would have preferred that she remain here with me, and that we go to be with the Lord together—or at least in close proximity. But I have come to believe that it was the right time in God’s great plan. And He has allowed me to recognize the blessing He bestowed on us just over 40 years before she stepped into Eternity.

In the mid-1980s, we lived in Illinois while I worked with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Just before the winter holidays, we decided to take a “special” vacation trip and hike in Mt. Rainier National Park. Sadly, Janice suffered an injury on the trip, resulting in a cast on her knee and strict medical instructions for her to stay homebound to avoid the risk of further injury. Our home was what would be called a fixer-upper, with me as the intended fixer. For weeks on end, however, I would be at work or on the road while Janice stayed home. During that time, she suddenly began to suffer from an unknown malady that sapped her strength and gave her frequent and worsening headaches. As the Illinois winter set in, Janice became increasingly debilitated.



Eventually, it became painfully clear that Janice was dying. We went to doctors and even specialists, but no one could determine what was wrong with her. Her doctors recommended that our extended family members be notified that time was short and all should gather to say goodbye. There seemed to be no hope, and the doctors had no words of encouragement. Until that winter season, she had been a vibrant and perfectly healthy young woman, active professionally, and a leader in our church's praise and worship team. What had happened to her?! In a twist of God's grace, I began to suspect that our gas furnace was leaking. When the technicians arrived, their sensors immediately alerted them to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide that had built up in our home.

With that unexpected diagnosis, I rushed Janice to the emergency room just as she seemed to be taking a significant, if not final, turn for the worse. The hospital immediately ran tests, only to conclude that their equipment must be giving them false readings. Shockingly, the test showed Janice's CO levels to be three times the lethal

level. The doctors explained that it was "medically impossible" for her to be alive. She was immediately rushed to another hospital for re-testing and once again her CO levels were confirmed to be three times the lethal level. The doctors could not understand how she was still alive.

Ultimately, the medical professionals released her to go home and begin what was expected to be a long recovery, full of skepticism that recovery was actually possible at all. As we drove home that afternoon, she asked what day it was. I told her it was Wednesday,

and she emphatically stated we needed to go to church. She wanted the church to pray for her. I practically carried my wife into the sanctuary and laid her in a pew as the service was about to begin. As our brothers and sisters in Christ prayed that evening, Janice suddenly sat up, then stood up, then began to sing, dance, and worship in the aisle. She was immediately and completely healed—without a single negative effect from the CO poisoning. Her health was immediately and completely restored.

Happy years passed, but we never forgot the miracle we experienced. When she became ill with cancer in 2024, I became consumed with caring for her, praying for her, and hoping on her behalf. We repeatedly and consistently testified to the miraculous healing we experienced so many years earlier. When God's answer to our prayers seemed to be unfolding differently than I had hoped, I struggled to understand His plan. Then, as a divine blessing, two godly men independently reminded me of King Hezekiah's experience. Hezekiah had been granted 15 years of extra life, after another three days of waiting. I



began to realize that perhaps God had granted Janice a remarkable “life-extension.” Psalm 40 had become “my prayer”. I repeatedly asked others to read and pray that Scripture over my wife and family. Telling us all that she was seeing angels, my wife went to be with the Lord early in 2025.

As I reflected on Janice’s life and God’s gracious extension of her life so many years ago, I kept pondering the significance of Psalm 40. I finally realized that her life had been extended just over 40 years. In fact, she was miraculously healed of carbon monoxide poisoning on the last Wednesday in January (the 30th) of 1985. Exactly 40 years *and 3 days* later, she passed away on February 2nd, 2025. God had given her far more than the 15 years Hezekiah had been granted. On top of the 3 days the king had to wait, He gave Janice and me 40 more years together! I now understand completely that God always had a plan for us, perfect in every way. The Bible is not just a collection of “historical” stories; rather, it communicates God’s sovereignty and grace that His children still experience today. Janice and I are yet another example, giving me a personal life-changing testimony to share with others.

I’ve learned that many others have testimonies of miraculous “life extensions”—where God graciously

extends the life of someone with a terminal diagnosis. Although Scripture clearly tells us that “it is appointed for all men to die” (Heb. 9:27), these unexpected extensions can both invigorate and challenge our faith. A close personal friend recently shared with me how a younger associate was given a seven-year reprieve from death. His heart,



which had been declared malformed and non-functioning, was miraculously healed and became seemingly brand new. He enjoyed happy years with his family until the Lord called him home suddenly.

In a very real sense, every person who puts their trust in Jesus Christ is given a new heart and a “life extension.” Although our physical heart will eventually wear down and we may pass from this life, Christians are promised life that will extend through all eternity.

There are things I still do not understand about God’s timing and ways. But I do understand that He affirmed to me His grace and mercy through the years and days I had with my beloved wife. I rejoice at the visions of angels she had as we sang and worshipped together during her last months on Earth. And, I will never forget the smile on her face as she caught a glimpse of the glory that awaited her.

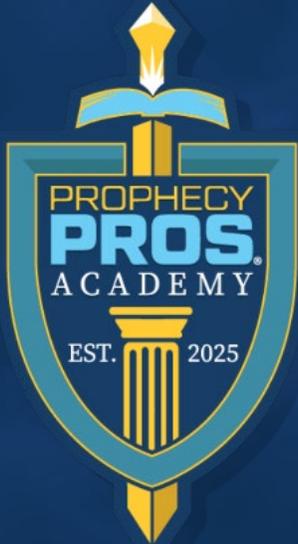
At some point I will go to be with Janice. But as much as I long for that day, I look forward to being with my Savior and Lord forever and ever.

I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. He put a

new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear and will trust in the LORD.

(Psalm 40:1-3) ☁️

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Lamb & Lion Ministries is excited to announce the rollout of a new **Prophecy Pros Academy**. Offering a deep dive into theology and eschatology, this 12-module course is designed to be completed sequentially over a three-year period.

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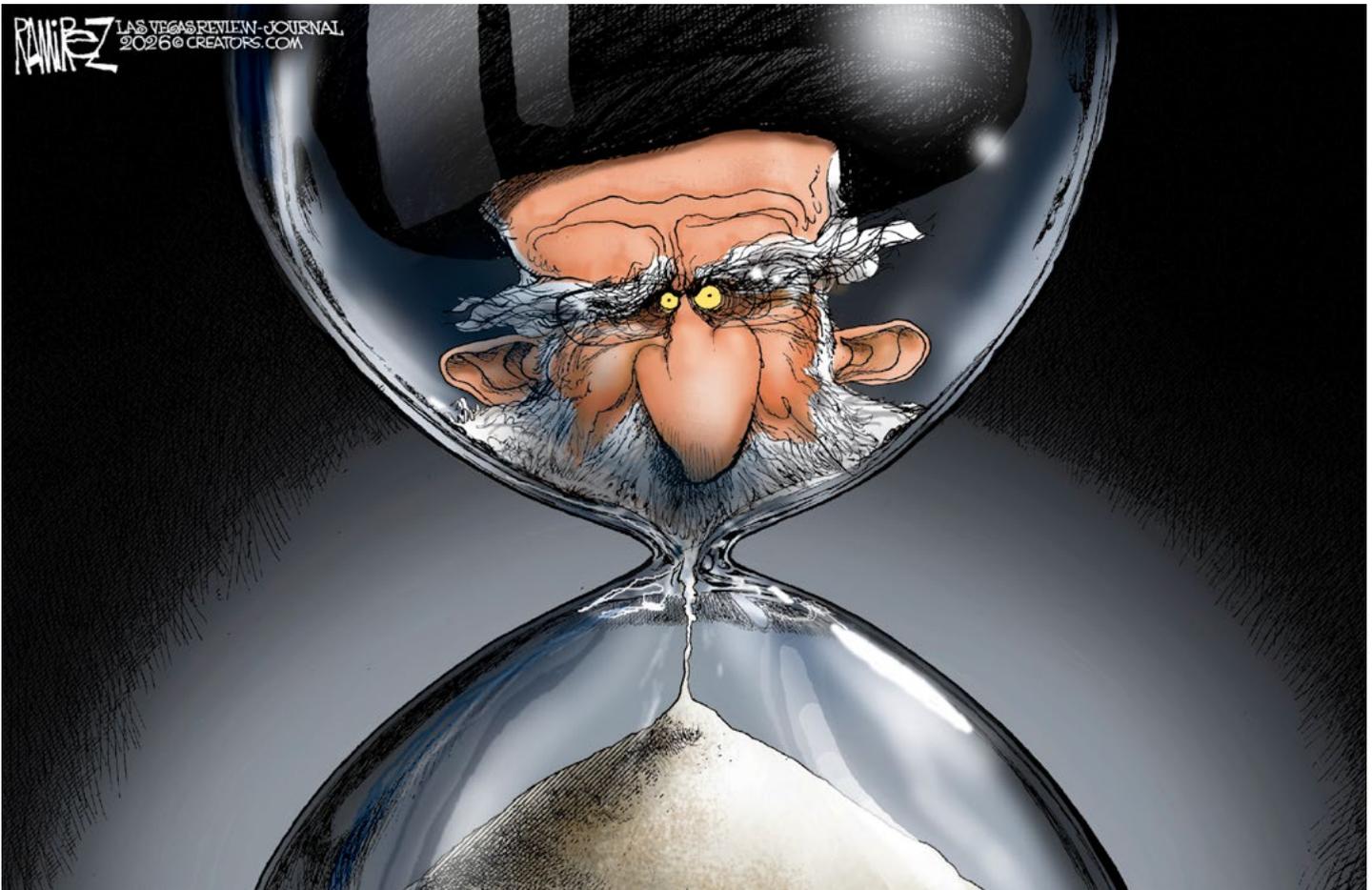
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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

MAR/APR 2026

NATURE

After a warmer-than-usual start to winter, much of the US was plunged into a deep freeze at the turn of the New Year. The long-trusted Farmer's Almanac predicted a "wild ride" of rapidly changing weather in the months to come.



Another freak winter storm impacted a large swath of the US in late January, leaving thousands without power and forcing schools to close for days on end. Other regions (like the North and South Poles) are experiencing record warmth.



SOCIETY

Unfettered and unchecked immigration of masses with no regard for the rule of law is bearing the foul fruit of fraud as discovered in Minnesota to the tune of many billions of dollars. Leftist politicians shun accountability for the outrage.



In formerly peaceful cities, rational people are engaging in lawlessness as they become radicalized with Leftist ideology. Whether in New York City, Minneapolis, Portland, or scores of other American cities, the divide is growing by the day.



SPIRITUAL

Antisemitism—tamped down globally following the Holocaust—has surged again. It is rampant on college campuses throughout the Western world and is insidiously growing in the most unlikely place of all—the Evangelical Church. Churches that are silent on the subject are likely subtly antisemitic.



Sociologists warn of a rise in what they call an "assassination culture," especially among young women, who openly cheer suspected killers and excuse the murders of conservatives like Charlie Kirk or capitalists such as health insurance CEO Brian Thompson.



"What news from the North?" Aragorn famously inquired before delivering a poetic lament for fallen Boromir in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. The news today testifies to lamentable misfortune from every point of the compass. But just as Tolkien allowed suspense to be built before Darkness was finally defeated. Like the folk of Middle-earth, we too are awaiting the return of our King. Shadow is creeping over our land, but the Light of the world will overcome the Darkness.

WORLD POLITICS

With the clock ticking on its own population implosion, China is threatening to act against Taiwan while it has the manpower. Given China's pilfering of American technology, military strategists warn that an Allied victory would be very costly, if not difficult to attain.



Although Western Europe was prepared to move forward with the seizure of significant Russian financial assets to apply leverage toward peace in Ukraine, Belgian officials are now balking—citing a fear of Russian repercussions. The dithering continues.



TECHNOLOGY

It has been widely reported that AI technology has become adept at mimicking the style and even the humor of individual users and that it has been programmed to encourage technological addiction (with some claiming a deep and emotional bond with their electronic muse).



Technology experts are racing to develop robots that will threaten many repetitive and low-skilled jobs. From cooks to cashiers to factory workers, the future economy may find mankind displaced by machines that never rest or call in sick.



ISRAEL

Credible reports indicate that while world leaders proclaim peace in the Middle East, Hamas is quickly reconstituting its military command structure, amassing funding from malign nations, and recruiting thousands of desperate young Palestinians stoked to seek vengeance.



Despite national economic collapse and widespread unrest against the authoritarian regime, Iranian leaders claim they are re-arming with even more devastating weapons to pursue their "all-out war" against Israel, the United States, and the West in general (with help from China).



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