The Rapture – Looking Into the Future of Those Left Behind

*By Stephen Phinney*

In the past four articles, we have been examining the details and revelations of the greatest Church event of all times – the Rapture. As we have stated repetitively, the Rapture can happen at any time, night or day; for nobody knows the moment this glorious event will occur. We also have learned that once an individual becomes a born-again indwelt Christian, the Lord encourages him to look to the eastern skies with anticipation. Hebrews 9:27-28 sheds light on this gesture of encouragement:

*“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him”* (Hebrews 9:27-28).

I don’t know about you, but I oftentimes think and wonder what life will be like for those who truly are left behind after the Rapture. It is important to understand that once the Bride of Christ has been safely transposed to the literal side of her Husband, Jesus Christ, the great Tribulation will begin. This Tribulation will last seven years, with the first 3 ½ years being fake global peace to cover up for the unexplainable phenomenon of the Rapture. The Antichrist will use every ounce of his deception to convince the people that now that these “born-again types” are out of the way, the world can finally have peace. It is likely he will convince the people that the world couldn’t experience peace because “they”were here. The explanation of the suddenness of our removal will most likely be accredited to *his* removal of us. Since we are not here to figure out the method of madness of the enemy – we will leave that alone. The second half of the seven years will be death and violence. Who is behind this madness is a highly debated topic.

*“Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’ "* (Revelation 6:15-17).

This portion of the Tribulation is this great day of wrath. All global leaders, money holders, lowly world changers, and followers of the Antichrist will be compelled to run and hide. Why? Because the Lord Himself will shake the earth with every form of distress, such as earthquakes and natural disasters. The unique thing is they actually make the connection that it is God waging discipline on the entire world. These people will not be hiding so much from the fear of being hit by a falling rock or slip into a crack in the earth, but will be running to hide themselves from the presence of God Himself. During the first half of the Tribulation, for some reason, God allows the entire world to experience the presence of the Antichrist and even feel safe under his ruling. The Scriptures show us that during the second half, the Lord actually makes His presence known, AND this is why they are fleeing. The Scriptures also reveal to us that those left behind will somehow know that He is very angry and know there is no way to stand before Him. In fact, any being (demonic or human), who comes in contact with the presence of the Lord, will be forced to fall on his knees and confess Jesus truly is the Lord. Well – since that won’t happen until Judgment Day, they run. They quickly realize they have been left behind and God is about to unfold His wrath.

One of the most debated topics in the world of theologians is – “Will the Bride of Christ go through the great Tribulation?” Churches have been divided, believers have fought one another, and schools of theology have been at war over this one single controversy. This war has not shown any favoritism. There have been well respected and admired Christian leaders who have chosen to believe that the Body of Christ will indeed go through this horrid event. Christ made it clear that true indwelt believers will escape all the things that shall come to pass when God’s wrath is turned loose on those who harmed the Bride of His Son. Every soul that showed hatred of God and choose not to become born-again, will be faced with going through this day of wrath.

*" ‘But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man’ "* (Luke 1:36).

Christians are not appointed to go through this kind of wrath, although God does tell us that most Christians will go through persecution. The difference is the day of wrath is from God and persecution is from the Antichrist. Why would the Father punish His Son’s bride when He went through the sacrificial act of sending his Son to take our place for sins’ penalty? Plus, once we are saved, God doesn’t punish – He disciplines. Punishment, in the Hebrew, means “to pay for (embrace) the consequences for one’s own sins.” Discipline means to “make one a disciple through the means of correction.” Punishment is Old Testament and Discipline is New Testament/Covenant. Those who do not become born-again bridal members are subject to the Old Testament style of payment – punishment (read Rev. 6).

It is a fact - Jesus has already paid the cost and taken the punishment for the sins committed by Christians. Do you really think He would put the believer back into the position of paying for his sins again? No, certainly not.

The Father makes it clear that each and every indwelt Christian WILL be raptured out of this world *before* He begins the process of His judgments of Tribulation. When we look back on the catastrophic events noted in the Bible, the Father consistently delivers His own people. Examples are the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, bondage to Egypt, and now, the Tribulation. **The bottom line is this: God will not permit the Tribulation to begin until He come and gathers up His children.**

Don’t get me wrong; it is clear that all indwelt believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. This event is *not* during the Tribulation.

*“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God”* (Romans 14:10).

And . . .

*“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).

It is only a liberal/emergent view that attempts to spout the dogma of believers not facing the Judgment Seat. The difference between an indwelt believer and an unsaved soul standing before the Judgment Seat is that indwelt Christians will not be punished for their deeds, but unbelievers will. Bridal members of Christ will be given rewards according to their level of Christ as Life deeds while on the earth. Yes, rewards; while non-Christians will be given punishments according to their measurement of sins (Rev. 22:12).

This Judgment Seat experience will be a time of revelatory exposure. The Lord God will for certain shine the light of holiness on every phase of our life, from the day He saved us to the day of our departure. If you’re expecting to be punished for the sins you have committed while you have been a Christian, then you are wrong. These sins are simply brought into the light for the purpose of the measurement of rewards clearly stated in the Word.

* Matt 6:1 – deeds to be noticed, no rewards
* Matt 6:4 – giving done in secret has rewards
* Matt 6:6 – praying done in secret carries rewards
* Matt 6:16 – fasting in secret and you will be rewarded
* Matt 10:41 – receive a prophet and you shall be reward
* Matt 10:42 – giving a cup of water to a little one shall not lose his reward

I think you get the point. If our works pass the test of fire (I Cor. 3:13), it is those works that will be rewarded – not the drummed up “good flesh” that is popular in the church today. You see, once the Rapture occurs, the Christ as Life deeds (works) will cease. This is the hour the Bride of Christ says, “It is finished.” Once the opportunity of Christ as Life deeds has ended, the Judgment Seat of Christ will conclude this period of the Church with the dishing out of the rewards, which have been stored up through the believer’s time on earth – but only during his Christian experience. Once we become indwelt Christians, the past (before Salvation) is never to be spoken of again. Whatever we did before we were saved is sealed in the pit of hell. On the other hand, whatever we did after we were saved becomes available for the spotlight of the Judgment Seat; not for punishment, but rather for receiving our measurement of rewards.

Most indwelt Christians I have met are not comfortable talking about the reward system God has in place in heaven. It seems to provoke in them thoughts of “working to get.” Well, that is the point. All works done, through the motive of getting, will be burned up in this test mentioned in Corinthians.

*“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”* (1 Corinthians 3:13).

God’s Word tells us that the fire will test all of the works of man, both saved and unsaved. What is this fire of testing? I doubt it is a fire pit in front of the Judgment Seat. Rather, it is most likely the fiery eyes of our Savior piercing into our souls at this Judgment Seat. It does sound a bit odd that there is some kind of record of all of our motives, words, and deeds; but it is true.

*" ‘But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment’ ”* (Matthew 12:36).

I need to be honest with you – this is a bit startling to me! If this really is true, and it is, the Lord is going to have a very long talk with me. Being a prophet, many words have come out of my mouth which have been careless and unfeeling. No question about it. This adds a new perspective to: *“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”* (I Cor. 10:31).

Even though the Judgment Seat will not be all fun, I still look forward to it. For I know that the GRACE of God is like an oil of gladness that will cover my soul as I look into my Husband’s eyes. Will I feel guilty? I don’t believe I will, because all that self-condemnation stuff was taken care of on the Cross. Will it be a sobering moment? Will there be tears? Yes, without question (Rev. 21:4). I truly believe it will be the most sobering moment of my entire existence. Will I be glad when it is over? Ah – yes!

I leave you with this question: Why do you do what you do? What is your motive behind your good deeds? What do you do with the glory when it is given to you by others? These are the questions we can embrace today to protect the day of our standing before the Judgment Seat.

In conclusion, the Rapture is certain to happen. Who will go and who will stay is up to the Lord. My job while here on earth is to make sure I tell as many as possible the way to Salvation (justification) and the pathway of the Exchanged Life (sanctification). Who embraces these messages of Truth is not up to me; that is the role of the Holy Spirit. My part in the end-times is to assist in preparing others for our great day of departure – the Rapture.

Scripture taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, *©* Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.