

THE RAPTURE

“Escape all these things [taken together] that will take place”...Luke 21:36

Part 4

Pastor Grant Williams

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

John 1:1 KJV

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1 AMPC

1 In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.

Malachi 3:6 KJV

6 For I am the Lord, I change not;

Hebrews 13:8 KJV

8 Jesus Christ (the Word) the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Matthew 5:17 KJV

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Matthew 5:17 GNT

17 “Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true.

Matthew 5:18 KJV

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle** shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Tittle defined: a tiny amount or part of something; the rules have not been altered one jot or tittle since, a small written or printed stroke or dot; indicating omitted letters in a word.

Matthew 5:18 GNT

18 Remember that as long as heaven and earth last, not the least point nor **the smallest detail** of the Law will be done away with—not until the end of all **things**.

Revelation 22:18-19 KJV

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these **things**, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the **things which are written in this book**.

Revelation 22:18-19 AMPC

18 I [personally solemnly] warn everyone who listens to the statements of the prophecy [the [a]predictions and the consolations and admonitions pertaining to them] in this book: If anyone shall add anything to them, God will add and lay upon him the plagues (the afflictions and the calamities) that are recorded and described in this book.

19 And if anyone cancels or takes away from the statements of the book of this prophecy [these [b]predictions relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph, together with the consolations and admonitions or warnings pertaining to them], God will cancel and take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the city of holiness (purity and hallowedness), which are described and promised in this book.

In this series by studying God's Word we are finding the origins and the evidence for a pre-Tribulation Rapture. In part 3 we finished learning about the *general assembly* and how it ties into the *great assembly* which was organized by the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 12:22-23 KJV

*22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
23 To the **general assembly** and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*

The Key Word in this passage is *general assembly*, which comes from the Greek word *panéguris*. It means: a festival assembly or to assemble all, universal meeting. The *great assembly* or *general assembly* was the group of 120 members consisting of elders and prophets and this is what today's Jewish Knesset is based on, which is pictured below.



In the Jewish culture, every seven years there was a *great assembly* that would take place at the Temple. We know from the historical writings that every seventh year was a jubilee cycle (Leviticus Chapter 25) where the land rested. It was a time of freedom from oppression, and the silver trumpets of Jubilee (Numbers Chapter 10) would blow on the Day of Atonement which, on the Hebrew calendar, was the 10th day of the seventh month.

On the seventh year, all the people would assemble in front of the platform at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. When the crowd arrived, the King of Israel would ascend to what was called the Bema, which is a large platform.

Judgment Seat (Bema) of Christ

The Judgment Seat (Bema) of Christ in Revelation Chapter 11 is where the rewards will be given by Christ and the 24 elders. The 24 elders is comprised of the 12 sons of Jacob in the Old Testament and the 12 Apostles from the New Testament. Jacob's sons from the first covenant will help judge the rewards given out to the Old Testament saints. The apostles will help judge the new covenant or New Testament saints for their rewards. This is not a salvation judgment but one based on rewards.



Once the king ascended to the Bema seat, he handed the Torah scroll, which is the first 5 books of Moses, to the synagogue president. The president would then hand it to the high priest, the High Priest would then bless the Word of God and then pass it back to the king who would then read from the Torah scrolls.

This is the only occasion where gold trumpets were used. Normally a shofar or silver trumpets were used during the other feast days but, on the 7th year, the gold trumpets were used and we know from studying God's Word that gold represents deity. It represents divinity all throughout God's Word, especially in the Old Testament. That is what happened at the beginning of every 7th year when the Temple existed, this was called a *great assembly*.

Remember, the Apostle Paul in Hebrews chapter 12:23 talks about the *general assembly* and that word *panéguris* means to *gather all* or *assemble all together in one location* with the emphasis being the place and the location.

Now, let's look at the parallels that we see in the book of Revelation when the saints gather together with the angels in heaven the way the Apostle Paul reveals to us in Hebrews Chapter 12. The book of Revelation is the Apostle John's vision of the apocalypse of **those things which were hidden**.

From chapter 4 in the book of Revelation through chapter 19, it deals with a 7 year time period known as the Tribulation. The book of Revelation and the Book of Daniel, along with several other books in the Bible, are called apocalyptic or apocalyptic books, meaning they are "revealing" or "to be revealed".

So, let's go through the *great assembly* parallels in the Book of Revelation. First, we see the Lion of the Tribe of Judah with a 7 sealed book that He is going to open and begin to read from that book.

Revelation 5:1-7 AMPC

1 And I saw lying on the open hand of Him Who was seated on the throne **a scroll (book)** written within and on the back, closed and sealed with seven seals;

2 And I saw a strong angel announcing in a loud voice, Who is worthy to open **the scroll**? And [who is entitled and deserves and is morally fit] to break its seals?

3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth [in the realm of the dead, Hades] was able to open the scroll or to take a [single] look at its contents.

4 And I wept audibly and bitterly because no one was found fit to open the scroll or to inspect it.

5 Then one of the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] said to me, Stop weeping! See, **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root (Source) of David**, has won (has overcome and conquered)! He can open the scroll and break its seven seals!

6 And there between the throne and the four living creatures (beings) and among the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] **I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain**, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God [the sevenfold Holy Spirit] Who have been sent [on duty far and wide] into all the earth.

7 He then went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne.

Revelation 5:1-7 KJV

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a **book written** within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open **the book**, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David**, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

12 His eyes [blaze] like a flame of fire, and on His head are many kingly crowns (diadems); and He has a title (name) inscribed which He alone knows or can understand.

13 He is dressed in a robe dyed by dipping in blood, and the title by which He is called is **The Word of God**

14 And the troops of heaven, clothed in fine linen, dazzling and clean, followed Him on white horses.

15 From His mouth goes forth a sharp sword with which He can smite (afflict, strike) the nations; and He will shepherd and control them with a staff (scepter, rod) of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath and indignation of God the All-Ruler (the Almighty, the Omnipotent).

16 And on His garment (robe) and on His thigh He has a name (title) inscribed, **king of kings and lord of lords.**

The 3 Stages/Battles of the Return of The Lord

The first stage is the Judah Stage and that is found in Zechariah 12:7-9 and is fought at the end of the 7 year Tribulation.

Zechariah 12:7-9 KJV

7 The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

The Lord shall save the tents of Judah first because that is His tribe and where He is from. He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5)

Revelation 7:14 AMPC

14 I replied, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they who have come out of the great tribulation (persecution), and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

We can see in Revelation Chapter 5:11-12 that ten thousands upon ten thousands singing, worthy is the Lamb who has redeemed us unto God....

Revelation 5:11-12 KJV

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Once again in Revelation 7:14 we see a multitude coming out of the Tribulation...

Revelation 7:14 AMPC

14 I replied, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they who have come out of the great tribulation (persecution), and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

In Revelation 4-5 the great assembly is at the Bema Seat or platform in heaven which is at the crystal sea of glass where His throne is....

Revelation 4:6 KJV

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne,

So, we see this **great assembly** of people out of every nation, kindred, tongue and peoples all **gathered together in one**, just like it was in the Old Testament.

This is also just like the Apostle Paul said it would happen in Hebrews 12:22-23. This is both the dead in Christ and the living in Christ, ***gathering together as one*** in the heavenly Temple before the Throne of God in heaven.

Hebrews 12:22-23 KJV

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

*23 To the **general assembly** and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*

When you start talking about the coming of the Lord, especially the Rapture of the Church, there are three types of people that you will hear from. First, you have what is called a preterist. A preterist is an individual that believes that all the prophecies relating to the antichrist and the Tribulation have already occurred. They try to make it all fit into the year 70 A.D. saying that the book of Revelation was written before the destruction of the Temple (70 A.D.) because of what John wrote in Rev.11:1-2.

Revelation 11:1-2 KJV

11 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Here, God is telling John to measure the temple of God and those that worship in it and the outer courts would be trampled down by the Gentiles.

Notes: _____

The Bible tells us who the Roman Emperor was when John was banished to the Isle of Patmos. That Emperor died in 95 A.D. and most scholars will tell you that the book of Revelation was written 25 years after the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. That alone, destroyed all preterism. Preterism is thrown out when you find the facts that the book of Revelation was not written in 68 A.D. which is what they teach to make it work for false doctrine.

There is another group called the amillennist, or Amillennialism. This involves the rejection of the belief that Jesus will have a literal, thousand-year-long, physical reign on the earth. They believe there is no Millennium Reign of Christ. They do not believe in the Rapture or the thousand year reign of Christ in the book of Revelation.

There is another group that say the word *rapture* is not in the Bible. Since the word *rapture* is not in today's translation, they believe that it is a false doctrine and heresy that some would call it the Rapture. Many younger pastors have been taught in seminary and in many so called "Christian colleges" that there is no such thing as a Rapture.

Since many pastors do not believe that there is a Rapture they do not teach on it which throws out not only a promise in God's Word but hope, rewards, the truth and the blessing in Revelation 1. Many pastors don't want to preach on sin or judgment and this is what the Rapture is.

So, if the word rapture is not in today's English translation of the Bible why do so many people call it that? The phrase *the Second Coming of Christ* is not found in the English translation of the Bible, so are people heretics if they teach about the Second Coming? What about the phrase, *millennial reign*? I can take you to Revelation Chapter 20 and show you six places where the phrase *one thousand years* is mentioned.

Revelation 20:1-7 KJV

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a **thousand years**,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the **thousand years** should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a **thousand years**.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the **thousand years** were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a **thousand years**.

7 And when the **thousand years** are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Is a person a heretic for saying millennium reign but not a heretic for saying one thousand years? Of course not. A millennium is one thousand years and it is a Latin word used to describe one thousand years. We use the word ***decade*** and ***century*** to describe time frames as well.

The word ***demons*** is not found in the English translation of the Bible. The word ***demons*** comes from the Greek word ***possessed*** which the root word is ***daimon***. It means: exercised by an unclean spirit, to have one, to be under the power or influence of one, or to be vexed with a devil. This is where we get the phrase possessed with an evil spirit. A person is not a heretic if they use the word demon to describe something that is in the Bible.

What about the ***Second Coming***? The Apostle Paul talks about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 3:13, 5:23... so why do we call it the ***Second Coming of Christ***?

Because the first time He came He was the Lamb and the second time He is coming back as the Lion of Judah. So, there is a *second coming* of Christ and you are not a heretic if you say the phrase *second coming* to identify His return.

This situation is the same as the word Trinity. Are you a heretic if you use the word Trinity? Trinity means triune and the tri-unity of God is seen in the Bible in 1 John.

1 John 5:7 KJV

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

When a person uses the word *rapture*, there is a historical reason that word was selected in Paul's writing in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. The New Testament was written in the Koine Greek language which was considered the common Greek of the day. The Koine Greek or common Greek was understood all around the Mediterranean Sea and even in Israel so it could be read in the synagogues and everyone could understand it.

Because of the Roman influence, the language went from Greek to Latin which is when the Roman Catholic Church began to become organized during the time of Constantine and afterwards. As a result, the liturgy of the Church changed from Greek to Latin in the Western branch.



Saint Jerome was asked to translate the Bible and in particular the New Testament from Koine Greek to the Latin language. When you go to the Church of the Nativity in Jerusalem the guides will show you where Saint Jerome translated the Bible from Greek to Latin.

Remember, all translations of the Bible are translations of the Bible. To understand the Bible as it is written you have to read the New Testament in Greek and portions of Ezra and Daniel which are written in Aramaic and the other 96% of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew. That is the language that the Torah and the books of the prophets were written in.

Any time you take one language and translate back into another language you have to select a word that runs parallel to that Hebrew or Greek word. For example, in the New Testament there's the word *power* in the English Bible that is simply translated *power*. However, one of those words means an *inward anointing* or *dynamo inward* and one means *spiritual authority*.

Bible translations will take the word *power* and do a direct translation into English but, understanding what type of power needs to be studied to accurately define what type of power is meant. For example, there is a *power* that is referred to in the book of Acts 1:8 which is an inward anointing.

Acts 1:8 KJV

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 1:8 AMPC

8 But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.

In the book of Luke, the word *power* is used but in some translations it is changed to *authority* - which is the correct interpretation of the translated word of *power* in Luke 10 based on the Latin and Greek words.

Luke 10:19 KJV

*19 Behold, I give unto you **power** to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

Luke 10:19 AMPC

*19 Behold! I have given you **authority** and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you.*

They did not change the Bible, but took the meaning of that particular Greek word that in English is translated as one word and correctly translated it into the word **authority**.

We could do an entire series on a word study showing how different words translate the same in English but in the Greek there could be up to five different meanings.

For instance, in the New Testament there are five different Greek words for **judgment**. The **judgment** hall that Pilot put Jesus in, the bema or **judgment** seat, **judgment** that comes on an unbeliever, **judgment** that happens at the great white throne **judgment**. So you have five different words just with that one translated English word.

Regarding **harpazó** or **caught up**, St. Jerome looked at that Greek word **caught up** and he took a Latin word to parallel it and the translation is **raptus**.

So he took the word **raptus** and translated it in English as rapture. So when we say the Latin word **raptus** it is taken from the Greek word for **caught up** which is translated to English as **rapture**.

The Latin Word *Raptus*

The Latin word *raptus* means, “seized and taken by force, snatched hold of and then carried off or away.” There is a Latin word that is used to describe a specific class of birds of prey, such as eagles or hawks, that word they are known is “raptors,” because of their method of hunting. Their method is to “seize,” live prey with their sharp, powerful talons, grasping rodents or fish *unaware* and then they “carry it away.”

Note: William Shakespeare used the word *raptus* in his writings which was translated into the English language as the word *rapture*.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 AMPC

13 Now also we would not have you ignorant, brethren, about those who fall asleep [[a]in death], that you may not grieve [for them] as the rest do who have no hope [beyond the grave].

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will also bring with Him through Jesus those who have fallen asleep [[b]in death].

15 For this we declare to you by the Lord's [own] word, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall in no way precede [into His presence] or have any advantage at all over those who have previously fallen asleep [in Him [c]in death].

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord!

18 Therefore comfort and encourage one another with these word