

All throughout the Bible, God is revealing His character, His plan, and our role in His plan. From Genesis to Malachi, God continuously revealed prophecy about His Son so there could be no mistake when Jesus came as a human. In order to save us from our sins, Jesus came to earth, died in our place, but rose again the third day and then later ascended into heaven where now He is seated at the right hand of God. But the Bible says that someday soon, Jesus will return for all believers.

- In **Titus 2:12-13**, Paul calls this **the blessed HOPE**—the glorious reappearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus.
- The Old Testament prophesied about it (see **Daniel 7** and **Zechariah 14**) and Jesus even predicted it (see **John 14:1-3**).
- **John 14:1-3** (NIV) <sup>1</sup> "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**
- If we live in anticipation of this day, it will be a day of great JOY not sorrow.
- **We don't need to live in FEAR of death, but in the hope of his glorious reappearing!**

Though not all Christians believe that the Rapture will take place at the beginning of the Tribulation, this is pre-tribulation belief is the common belief in the A/G because this view best satisfies the biblical teaching that **the Rapture is always IMMINENT**, meaning it could happen at any time and will have no immediate warning or announcement.

- For years, people have been trying to GUESS when Jesus is coming back.
  - All we can do is read the **SIGNS**. (see **Matthew 24**, **2 Thessalonians 3** and **Revelation 13** for a few)
  - And this is important because Paul tells us that one day soon "we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup> It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow and tongue will confess Jesus as Lord.' <sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. (see **Romans 14:10b-12**)
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18** (NIV) <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage each other with these words.
- Ironically, in Jesus' first coming, He came in humility and weakness, but in His second coming, He will be coming as a KING with full glory.
  - When Christ comes again, it will be the UNMISTAKABLE coming of the God the Son because of three unique sounds that are involved in this event: #1 "with a loud command" or "a shout" (KJV), #2 "with the voice of the archangel" and #3 "with the trumpet call of God" (see **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**).
  - **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** (NIV) <sup>51</sup> Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— <sup>52</sup> in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
  - There will not be opportunity for people to get ready when Jesus returns. It will happen suddenly and it's going to be LOUD.

<sup>16</sup> "...and the dead in Christ will rise first."

- From the Old Testament days to the present, mankind has tried to solve the riddle of death and the afterlife. Yet, the Bible is clear that **we will all die**, but when a Christian dies, it's not the END. The body is laid to rest in the grave, but spiritually, the soul and

spirit go to be with Jesus when we die and we will receive new bodies! (see **1 Corinthians 2:9**)

<sup>17</sup> "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

- Those who have trusted Jesus and are still alive and remain, **will join** those who have been resurrected, and their bodies too will be transformed.
  - It is the day we are **REUNITED** with our loves one who have passed away.
- <sup>18</sup> "Therefore encourage each other with these words."
- We look forward to the Day of the Lord, but some won't care like in the days of Noah (see **Matthew 24:37-46**)
  - **Matthew 24:37-46** (NIV) <sup>37</sup> "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>40</sup> "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>42</sup> "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.
  - But the biggest issue, is that some don't even know about it.
  - God desires that no one would die without a chance to **HEAR** about Jesus, but wishes all will accept Him and be saved. (see **2 Peter 3:9-12**)
  - **2 Peter 3:9-12** (NIV) <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. <sup>11</sup> Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup> as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.
  - God, in His mercy, has been patient, allowing mankind to do what they want **when they want** for a very long time now. But Paul says that this will change soon as he used the illustration of a **thief in the night**, saying Jesus' second coming will come unexpectedly and may catch all of us off guard.
  - The way we look at our future powerfully **INFLUENCES** the way we live in present —the way we invest our time and energy—the way we conduct our lives. That's why our attitude concerning the coming of the Lord is so very important.
- We are called upon to live our daily lives **READY** for our Lord's return.
- Our present task is to work for the kingdom of God as if the return of Jesus will be delayed until the next century but be ready if He should return **TONIGHT!**
- So what? How does this apply to my life today?
- #1 Don't be worried about when it will happen, just be ready FOR it when it WILL happen.** (see **Matthew 24:42**)
- #2 Have a BOARDING pass.** (see **Matthew 7:21-23**)
- #3 Be FOCUSED on the right things.** (see **Matthew 16:24-28**)
- #4 Bring SOMEONE with you.**
- The question is not "Will I go to heaven?", but it's "Will I take others with me?"
- #5 STAND firm until the end.** (see **Matthew 10:22** and **Matthew 24:12-13**)
- We, as Christians in America, don't really know what persecution is, but someday soon, we will.