

## THE RAPTURE IS SOON

Titus 2:11-14

- <sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,  
<sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,  
<sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,  
<sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

If you are a believer today and are trusting Christ, you are next on the program of God — as far as prophecy is concerned. There are no signs, no Tribulation, not *anything* to be fulfilled before Jesus takes the church out of the world. This does not mean we know *when* He is coming, because that is something that the Scriptures absolutely does not reveal. We cannot know the day, the hour, the minute, or the “*twinkling of an eye*” when this event will take place.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58:

- <sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.  
<sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,  
<sup>52</sup> 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 shall be changed.  
<sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.  
<sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”  
<sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”  
<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.  
<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.  
<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

But our attitude should be that of “*waiting for our blessed hope*”. The phrase “*waiting*” is from a Greek word meaning “*entertaining*”. It is a glorious and delightful future prospect to which one would look forward.

**What do I mean by Rapture?** To define the word very briefly, the Rapture is the moment when Christ takes believers, which I shall call “*the church*”, out of the world. And that fits into a time program that God has put down, because He moves in a very orderly manner. I believe that next on the program of God comes the Rapture when He will take the church out of the world. Then after that I believe there will be a time of Great Tribulation, which is concluded with the return of Christ to the earth to set up His kingdom. This has been labeled “*the Revelation*” — because the Book of Revelation deals with the Tribulation Period, 7 years according to the dating accurately of Daniel, and the coming of Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation to establish His kingdom.

There are those today who deny the Rapture because they say it is a term that is not used in the

Bible. Their argument is that the Bible, therefore, does not teach the Rapture. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 Paul says:

**Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

Now the phrase “**caught up**” is the Greek word *harpazo* meaning “*to lift, to snatch up, to draw up, to transport*”.

→ ἀρπάζω *harpazō*, to catch, steal, carry off: – caught up, snatch, attacks, carry off, force, raiding, snatched up, snatches away, snatching, suddenly took away, take by force.

I prefer the translation “**caught up**”, but let’s understand that the word “*rapture*” is in the Bible, and there is no ambiguity here. When one denies that the Bible teaches the Rapture, he is arguing semantics and not eschatology.

There is another fallacy that is exploited by those who like to dismiss the Rapture. They maintain that when we say Christ is coming to take the church out of the world and that He will not return to the earth until the end of the Tribulation Period, we are saying that we believe in a *second* and *third* coming of Christ. They accuse us of believing that the Rapture is a second coming and the Revelation is a third coming of Christ.

First, let me remind you that at the Rapture **Christ does not return to the earth**. Rather, He takes His own away from the earth. He does not come to it. However, at the Revelation Christ *does* come to the earth, which is the Second Coming. **We call this the Revelation**. He is coming at that time to set up His kingdom.

Jesus came first to establish His kingdom *in the hearts* of those who accept His sacrifice on the cross, then later He is coming to establish His kingdom *on the earth*.

There is a wide difference, though, between the Rapture and the Revelation. The difference is not only in time. At the Rapture, He comes as the Bridegroom to take His bride, His church, out of the world. Remember that **He does not come to the earth at that time at all**. But at the Revelation He comes to the earth as a King to establish His kingdom.

Three different aspects to the Rapture and the Revelation of Jesus Christ to help us better understand the significance and the difference.

- 1) The *action* of each is different.
- 2) The *attitude* toward each is different.
- 3) The *anticipation* of each is different.

The *action* of the Rapture and the Revelation are different. There are certain physical factors connected with both of these events that bear no similarity at all. They are antipodes apart. In the *attitude* toward these there is a difference. There are certain psychological factors involved which are altogether different. Then in the *anticipation* there are several spiritual factors involved, and they likewise are quite different.

### Action

At the Rapture Christ does not come to the earth. He does not touch down on the Mount of Olives. In fact, **He does not come to the earth proper**.

The Lord Jesus was the first one to say anything about the Rapture. He mentions it the first time in the John 14:2:

**In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?**

The “**Father’s house**” is this vast universe in which we live. The “**many rooms**” are abiding places, in the Greek, “*monē*”.

→ **μονή monē**, room; dwelling place, abode: – home, rooms.

Out yonder in space there are many abiding places. But Jesus said, “**I go to prepare a place for you**”, that is, for His own. It is quite obvious that the place He mentions is not on earth, because He left this earth when He ascended. Paul amplifies that statement, adding a great deal of detail in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17:

<sup>16</sup> **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.**

<sup>17</sup> **Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

The Lord Himself is coming and we (that is, those who are His own) are to meet Him in the air, “**so we will always be with the Lord**”. Now that is specific. There is no way that we can misunderstand that.

At the Revelation He will come to the earth and touch down on it. In Zechariah’s prophecy we read in 14:4:

**On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.**

This is so specific, dealing with geographic places, that we are to take it literally. That is, when Christ comes the second time, His feet are to touch down on the Mount of Olives.

There is another tremendous contrast. At the Rapture *believers* are removed from the earth.

This is something that is very important to observe. Concerning the Rapture, the Lord Jesus said in John 14:2-3:

<sup>2</sup> **In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?**

<sup>3</sup> **And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.**

In verse 3, *a place for you*.

→ **τόπος topos**, place, location; passage (in a book); position; possibility, opportunity: – place, places, everywhere, area, room, change, nearby, seat, spot .

In other words, “**I am going to come Myself, and I am going to take you out of this world to be with Me.**” This, I think, is quite clear. *Believers* are removed from the world at the Rapture.

The Olivet Discourse has nothing whatever to do with the Rapture of the church, because Jesus is not talking about the church. He simply is answering questions the apostles have put to Him. In Matthew’s account, He answers two of those questions:

- 1) **What is the sign of the end of the age?**
- 2) **What is the sign of His coming?**

In response to the first question, He states in Matthew 24:37-41:

<sup>37</sup> **For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.**

<sup>38</sup> **For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,**

<sup>39</sup> and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

<sup>40</sup> Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.

<sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

Many folk think this refers to the Rapture, but He is not talking about the Rapture in the Olivet Discourse. This discourse was not to Gentiles, it was exclusively to God's people, the Jews.

Notice the differences, the physical contrasts. **At the Rapture, there are no signs; at the Revelation, there are many signs.**

In fact, Matthew 24 answers the question as to the signs of His coming to the earth to establish His kingdom. For example, Matthew 24:15-19:

<sup>15</sup> "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),

<sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

<sup>17</sup> Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house,

<sup>18</sup> and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.

<sup>19</sup> And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days!"

We Gentiles don't have a holy place. The only people who ever had a holy place were and will be the nation Israel, God's people, the Jews. **We** are not looking for the "abomination of desolation". In fact, Gentiles do not understand this terminology. The Church is not looking for an, "abomination of desolation" we are looking for Christ. There is a lot of difference between looking for Him and looking for "abomination of desolation"!

There is another distinction that we should properly make. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:32-33 says:

<sup>32</sup> Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God,

<sup>33</sup> just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

This is the threefold division of the human family according to the Word of God: Jews, Gentiles, and the church.

Then in the Book of Revelation, there is a marvelous division given. Paul mentions three different groups of people. John mentions the division of the end times and the prophecies of the end in Revelation 1:19:

**Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.**

We are told in Revelation that before the great day of wrath comes, before the Great Tribulation breaks in all its fury on this earth, two companies are sealed. One is a company of 144,000 Israelites in Revelation 7:4:

**And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:**

This group that Scripture recognizes with "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God". Then there is a great company of Gentiles who are sealed in Revelation 7:9:

**After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,**

Two divisions of the human family are sealed: Jews and Gentiles. Revelation 7:2:

Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea,

But what about the third division, the church of God? We find no mention here that they are sealed, and it would be frightful indeed if the church went through the Great Tribulation without being sealed. It would be bad enough to go through it sealed, but it would be tragic to go through it without some sort of protection. Remember that Christ in the Tribulation is no longer in the place of intercession; **He is now the Judge of all the earth**. He is directing those events that will finally bring Him to the earth to assume power. The church — if it were in the world — is left out and would not be sealed during this period. Why wasn't the church sealed? Well, the church is already *with Him* in the New Jerusalem!

At the Rapture there is no angel ministry. This may seem like a very unimportant detail, but it is noticeable — 1 Thessalonians 4:16:

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

A common viewpoint is that we have a trio here who will join their voices together to bring in the Rapture — that the Lord will descend with a shout, but He will need a little help, so there is the voice of the archangel and Gabriel blowing a trumpet. The Lord's voice is the voice of the archangel in its majesty, dignity, and authority. He is not going to need any archangel to help Him raise the dead and call His church to be with Him! Do you think Jesus, the second person of the Godhead, the one who is God Himself, would need any help? Neither will He need the angel Gabriel to blow a horn. His voice is *like* that of an archangel and it is *like* the sound of a trumpet. The Greek text is very clear on this point. This is also illustrated for us in John's vision on the Isle of Patmos when he said in Revelation 1:10-13:

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

<sup>11</sup> saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

<sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the lampstands one like a Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around His chest.

Whom did John see? He did not see Gabriel blowing a trumpet. He saw the glorified Christ. What we have at the Rapture is the Lord Jesus coming Himself to get His church, His bride. He will not send an angel to get us; He will come for us Himself!

However, at the Revelation there *is* an angel ministry. It is mentioned in the Olivet Discourse where it belongs in Matthew 24:30-31:

<sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

<sup>31</sup> And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

When He returns to the earth to establish His kingdom, He sends out His angels. Angels had ministered in the Old Testament to the Israelites, and the Law was given by the ministry of angels according to Stephen in Acts 7:52-53:

<sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered,  
<sup>53</sup> you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

So here at the end, God sends His angels to gather those who will enter into the kingdom. It has nothing to do with the Rapture, you see. It is altogether different from that.

Now at the *Rapture* the church is raised, and those in Christ — whether they be the living or the dead in Christ — are changed, and they enter into the presence of the Lord, into Heaven. While at the *Revelation*, the Old Testament saints and the Great Tribulation saints are raised to enter the kingdom. The time is different. We are told in Matthew 25:34:

Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

They are to enter into the kingdom here upon this earth, and the Tribulation saints are going to be included. John records in Revelation 20:4:

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also, I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Where did they reign? Well, here on this earth. Revelation 20:5-6:

<sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with Him for a thousand years.

This is a very important passage of Scripture. It shows again that the Rapture and the Revelation is quite different.

Also, there is a symbol we need to note. When the Rapture is mentioned, when He is talking about His church, He depicts Himself not only as the offspring of David but also as the “*the Bright Morning Star*.” Revelation 22:16:

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the Bright Morning Star.”

Now when He is speaking to Israel, the symbol is altogether different. Malachi 4:2:

But for you who fear My Name, the Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

To the church He is “*the Bright Morning Star*”. To Israel and the Gentile world during the Great Tribulation, He will be the “*Sun of righteousness*”.

When He appears as the *Bright Morning Star*, signs will begin to take place that will bring the *Sun of Righteousness* to the new day that will be on this earth. That is the picture and figure He was giving when He mentioned the fact that the Old Testament saints are to be raised at the end of the Great Tribulation Period together with the Tribulation saints. This brings to an end the first resurrection — that is, the resurrection of the saved.

This concludes all of them: Christ the first fruits and those that are Christ’s at His coming. Then we are told that at the end of the Millennium the unsaved are to be raised for the Great White

Throne judgment. So, you see, the naive idea that there will be a general judgment day when all the dead will be raised — the good being put on one side and the bad on the other — does not fit Scripture. God does everything decently and in order. He has a system and program that He generally follows, and He is certainly following it here.

### Attitude

The attitude at the Rapture is different from that at the Revelation because there are certain psychological factors that are altogether opposite.

At the Rapture, there is deliverance. It is a time of great joy, which the believer anticipates. Revelation 4:1:

After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

He doesn't say, “*Come up here; I'm going to push you into the Great Tribulation — you need a little purifying.*” Of course, the church needs purifying, but the blood of Jesus Christ is what cleanses us from all sin. What the world needs is mercy. Jude 20-21:

<sup>20</sup> But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

<sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

One of the wonderful things we can do in this day of apostasy is to look for the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ — it is what saves us. At the Rapture we are going out with the rest of those who are watching and waiting for His appearing. Do you know why? Because of the mercy of God. He saved us by grace, He keeps us by His grace, and He is going to take us out at the Rapture by His grace. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10:

<sup>9</sup> For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

<sup>10</sup> and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the *wrath* to come.

→ ὀργή *orgē*, wrath, anger, the feeling and expression of strong displeasure and hostility; this can range from petty human anger to the righteous anger of God toward sinful disobedience: – wrath, anger, punishment.

The wrath to come described in the Old Testament is that great day of God's wrath, the Tribulation Period. Paul, writing to the Thessalonian believers, says God has delivered us from the wrath to come and that we are to wait for His Son.

There are those folk who say the church needs the Tribulation to purify it. The church needs purifying. I doubt that the Tribulation could purify us enough to enter into the presence of the Lord.

Also, these folk who say the church is to go through the Tribulation accuse us of looking for an escape mechanism. I thank God today that there is an escape mechanism from the Tribulation Period! I do not know about these brave ones who want to go through it. I think at the Rapture they will be going out with me — and they will be tickled to death that they missed the Tribulation. Let's not mind saying that. Paul said to a young preacher in Titus 2:13:

Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Paul, giving to the Roman believers the benefits of justification by faith, mentions eight of them. The seventh one is this in Romans 5:9:

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the **wrath** (ὀργή **orgē**) of God.

What kind of wrath? Well, the only wrath that is coming is the great day of His wrath. It is mentioned again and again in the Book of Revelation, and it is what the Old Testament prophets had talked about. Imagine, friend, the joy believers will experience at the time of the Rapture — delivered! **Delivered from wrath!**

But at the time of the Revelation of Christ, the attitude will be entirely different. Psalm 2:9:

You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

This describes the Lord Jesus coming to this earth to put down rebellion. He intends to take the scepter of this universe. This is God's plan and purpose.

Now notice the attitude on earth when He comes in that role in Revelation 1:7:

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him. Even so. Amen.

They are wailing because of His coming. You can see how different the attitude is from the attitude toward the Rapture in Matthew 24:30:

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

This is not speaking of the Rapture when He comes to take His church, His bride. Did you ever see a bride who went down to the altar crying? No, they go down smiling, my friend. If they do weep — and sometimes women do weep regardless of the way a situation goes — they are weeping for joy. But here folk are mourning! This is something altogether different from the Rapture of the church.

We are given the order of procedure in Daniel 12:1:

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of Your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time Your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

He tells us that there is first to be a time of trouble followed by the resurrection of the Old Testament saints.

For the Rapture we are told to **wait**. For the Revelation the emphasis is upon the word **watch**. There is a different way to wait and watch. There are seventeen words in the Old Testament translated by the English words "**watch**" and "**wait**". They don't mean the same things; though we may use the same word in English, it means something altogether different.

For the child of God, the Rapture is something for which we **wait** in happy anticipation. But the opposite awaits the unsaved — for them there is nothing but wrath ahead; nothing but judgment is coming. It is altogether different.

As we have looked at the Rapture and at the Revelation of Jesus Christ, we have seen many contrasts. We have seen that the **action** is different. We have seen that the **attitude** toward each is different. Now we shall see that in the **anticipation** of each event there is a vast difference.

### **Anticipation**

At the Revelation of Jesus Christ, Israel will be back in their land, having returned not for the



Millennium but for the Great Tribulation Period. Even today they could be put out of that land again. The signs will take place during the Tribulation, and the anticipation will be for the Great Tribulation to be over.

However, **for the Rapture there are no signs**. Yes, Scripture gives us different indications of how things will be just prior to this event. Some of the church will enter the apostasy. John did say that before the Antichrist would come, there would be many antichrists. Paul said to young Timothy that there would be a falling away in 1 Timothy 4:1-3:

- <sup>1</sup> Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,
- <sup>2</sup> through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,
- <sup>3</sup> who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

We are presently living in days of apostasy. One so-called theologian, who years ago espoused the “*God is dead*” movement, described himself as a *Christian atheist*! This is a contradiction of terms.

Our present hope is fixed on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, not on the church or anything here on earth. At the time of the Revelation of Christ, there will be signs and they are not good. They are signs of the coming of the terrible day of God’s wrath. It is an anticipation of dread.

Let’s take a look at the wrath of God as demonstrated in the entirety of Scripture, not exhaustive but conclusive.

**Wrath** is defined as “*the emotional response to perceived wrong and injustice*,” often translated as “*anger*,” “*indignation*,” “*vexation*,” or “*irritation*.” Both humans and God express wrath. But there is vast difference between the wrath of God and the wrath of man. **God’s wrath is holy and always justified**; man’s is never holy and rarely justified.

In the Old Testament, the wrath of God is a divine response to human sin and disobedience. Idolatry was most often the occasion for divine wrath. Psalm 78:56-66 describes Israel’s idolatry.

- <sup>56</sup> Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep His testimonies,
- <sup>57</sup> but turned away and acted treacherously like their fathers; they twisted like a deceitful bow.
- <sup>58</sup> For they provoked Him to **anger** with their high places; they moved Him to jealousy with their idols.
- <sup>59</sup> When God heard, He was full of **wrath**, and he utterly rejected Israel.
- <sup>60</sup> He forsook His dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where He dwelt among mankind,
- <sup>61</sup> and delivered His power to captivity, His glory to the hand of the foe.
- <sup>62</sup> He gave His people over to the sword and vented His **wrath** on His heritage.
- <sup>63</sup> Fire devoured their young men, and their young women had no marriage song.
- <sup>64</sup> Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation.
- <sup>65</sup> Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, like a strong man shouting because of wine.
- <sup>66</sup> And He put His adversaries to rout; He put them to everlasting shame.

In verse 58, God was **provoked to anger**.

→ **אָפּ קָא'אָס**, to be angry, be vexed, be incensed; to anger, provoke; to provoke to anger:– aroused anger, arouse anger, arousing anger, angered, aroused the anger, provoked,

angry, frustration, incensed, kept provoking, make angry, provoke, provoking, vexed.

In verse 59, God was full of **wrath**, also translated furious.

→ **'ābar**, to be very angry, show oneself angry: – furious.

In verse 62, **God vented His wrath** – same as in verse 59.

The wrath of God is consistently directed towards those who do not follow His will. The classic historical illustration of this is found in Deuteronomy 1:26-46:

<sup>26</sup> “Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God.

<sup>27</sup> And you murmured in your tents and said, ‘Because the LORD hated us He has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

<sup>28</sup> Where are we going up? Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, “The people are greater and taller than we. The cities are great and fortified up to heaven. And besides, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.”

<sup>29</sup> Then I said to you, ‘Do not be in dread or afraid of them.

<sup>30</sup> The LORD your God who goes before you will Himself fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,

<sup>31</sup> and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.’

<sup>32</sup> Yet in spite of this Word you did not believe the LORD your God,

<sup>33</sup> who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, to show you by what way you should go.

<sup>34</sup> “And the LORD heard your words and was **angered**, and He swore,

<sup>35</sup> ‘Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers,

<sup>36</sup> except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land on which he has trodden, because he has wholly followed the LORD!’

<sup>37</sup> Even with me the LORD was **angry** on your account and said, ‘You also shall not go in there.

<sup>38</sup> Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

<sup>39</sup> And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.

<sup>40</sup> But as for you, turn, and journey into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea.’

<sup>41</sup> “Then you answered me, ‘We have sinned against the LORD. We ourselves will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.’ And every one of you fastened on his weapons of war and thought it easy to go up into the hill country.

<sup>42</sup> And the LORD said to me, ‘Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not in your midst, lest you be defeated before your enemies.’

<sup>43</sup> So I spoke to you, and you would not listen; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD and presumptuously went up into the hill country.

<sup>44</sup> Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in Seir as far as Hormah.

<sup>45</sup> And you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD did not listen to your voice or give ear to you.

<sup>46</sup> So you remained at Kadesh many days, the days that you remained there.

In verse 34, God **was angered**.

→ **קצַף qāṣap**, to be angry; to provoke to anger; to be enraged: – angry, angered, enraged, aroused anger, aroused wrath, furious, made angry, very angry.

In verse 37, the **Lord was angry**.

→ **אָנַף 'ānap**, to be, become angry; to feel angry: – angry.

Joshua 7:1:

But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the **anger** of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.

→ **'ap**, nose (representing the face or some part of the face); “hot of nose” signifies anger; “long of nose” signifies patience; “high of nose” signifies arrogance: – anger, wrath, very angry, furious, great rage, hot-tempered, quick-tempered.

Psalms 2:1-6:

<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,

<sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

<sup>5</sup> Then He will speak to them in His **wrath**, and terrify them in His **fury**, saying,

<sup>6</sup> “As for Me, I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill.”

Notice verse 5, **in His wrath**.

This is identical to Joshua 7:1, **the anger of the Lord, 'ap**.

Again, in verse 5 **in His fury**.

→ **הָרֹן hārôn**, fierce (anger), burning (anger), wrath: – fierce, wrath, burning, burning anger.

The Old Testament prophets often wrote of a day in the future, the “day of wrath” – Zephaniah 1:14-18:

<sup>14</sup> The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.

<sup>15</sup> A day of **wrath** is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

<sup>16</sup> a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

<sup>17</sup> I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

<sup>18</sup> Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the **wrath** of the LORD. In the fire of His jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end He will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

In verses 15 and 18, **day of wrath**.

→ עִבְרָה 'ebrā, wrath, anger, fury, rage; insolence.

God's wrath against sin and disobedience is perfectly justified because His plan for mankind is holy and perfect, just as God Himself is holy and perfect. God provided a way to gain divine favor — repentance — which turns God's wrath away from the sinner. To reject that perfect plan is to reject God's love, mercy, grace and favor and incur His righteous wrath.

The New Testament also supports the concept of God as a God of wrath who judges sin. The story of the rich man and Lazarus speaks of the judgment of God and serious consequences for the unrepentant sinner in Luke 16:19–31:

<sup>19</sup> “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.

<sup>20</sup> And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,

<sup>21</sup> who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried,

<sup>23</sup> and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

<sup>24</sup> And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’

<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

<sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’

<sup>27</sup> And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—

<sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’

<sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’

<sup>30</sup> And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

<sup>31</sup> He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

John 3:36 says:

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the **wrath** of God remains on him.

→ ὀργή **orgē**, wrath, anger, the feeling and expression of strong displeasure and hostility; this can range from petty human anger to the righteous anger of God toward sinful disobedience: – wrath, anger, angry, punishment.

The one who believes in the Son will not suffer God's wrath for his sin, because the Son took God's wrath upon Himself when He died in our place on the cross – Romans 5:6–11:

<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

<sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—

<sup>8</sup> but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the **wrath** of God.

<sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.

<sup>11</sup> More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

In verse 9, the wrath of God is translated from the same as in John 3:36 – ὀργή **orgē**.

Those who do not believe in the Son, who do not receive Him as Savior, will be judged on the day of wrath – Romans 2:5-8:

<sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up **wrath** for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

<sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works:

<sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, He will give eternal life;

<sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be **wrath** and **fury**.

In verses 5 and 8, **wrath** is translated from ὀργή **orgē**. But also in verse 8, **fury** is new.

→ θυμός **thymos**, wrath, fury, anger, rage, a state of intense displeasure based in some real or perceived wrong. "The anger of God" is due to moral offense and has a focus on righteous punishment: – wrath, fury, anger, fits of rage, maddening, furious.

Conversely, human wrath is warned against in Romans 12:19:

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the **wrath** (ὀργή **orgē**) of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

And in Ephesians 4:26-27:

<sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your **anger**,

<sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil.

→ ὀργίζω **orgizō**, to be angry, enraged, to feel and express strong displeasure and hostility; this can range from petty human anger to the righteous anger of God toward sinful disobedience: – angry, anger, enraged, indignant.

As well as in Colossians 3:8:

<sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: **anger**, **wrath**, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

Notice that here, **anger** is ὀργή **orgē** and **wrath** is θυμός **thymos**.

God alone is able to avenge because His vengeance is perfect and holy, whereas man's wrath is sinful, opening him up to demonic influence. For the Christian, anger and wrath are inconsistent with our new nature, which is the nature of Christ Himself. To realize freedom from the domination of wrath, the believer needs the Holy Spirit to sanctify and cleanse his heart of feelings of wrath and anger. Romans 8 shows victory over sin in the life of one who is living in

the Spirit Romans 8:5-8:

<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

<sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

<sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The wrath of God is a fearsome and terrifying thing. Only those who have been covered by the blood of Christ, shed for us on the cross, can be assured that God's wrath will never fall on them. Romans 5:9:

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the **wrath** (ὀργή *orgē*) of God.

Today we are not looking for signs; we are looking for Him. This is the thing that Paul dealt with when he wrote to the believers in Thessalonica. You see, folk in the early church were looking for the Lord to come back in their lifetime. And when some of their loved ones died, they wondered if they had missed the Rapture. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, assured them that they had not missed the Rapture. In fact, they are going to be raised first.

<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

<sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

<sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

The early believers called their cemetery where they buried their loved ones the *koimeterion*. We get our word "*cemetery*" from this Greek word, but it didn't mean that then. A *koimeterion* was an inn where people came and spent the night. It was a *koimeterion* in Bethlehem that didn't have room for Mary and Joseph the night Jesus was born. The thought of the folk in the early church was, *We are just putting our loved ones up for the night — until the day breaks.*

Millions have already missed the Tribulation Period. They are already in the presence of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8:

Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Those who say that the church will go through the Tribulation Period are saying that God has one criterion for those who die in the Lord and another for those of us who are alive until the Rapture. What do we do with Acts 10:34-35:

<sup>34</sup> So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality,

<sup>35</sup> but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

Death today means something entirely different for a believer than what it means for the

unbeliever. For us, death means that the body is put in the grave, it is put to sleep — it is only the *body* that can be put to sleep. And that sleeping body is placed in the *koimeterion*. It is just a temporary resting place, because the day is coming when those bodies are going to be raised from the grave.

We are looking for a great event — the Rapture, when we are going to see Christ. It means He is going to take us to be with Himself — to that place He has prepared for us.

This is the hope of the believer today. What is our hope for the future? If we have no hope for the future, we can look back to the past, to an historical event that took place nearly two thousand years ago when Christ died on the cross for us who are sinners. And we can trust Him as our Savior. (Some adaptation from Dr. J Vernon McGee)

Your Notes: