

THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST



He has visited us previously. We are now awaiting the second advent of God the Son, Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus the Christ – and His return to earth.

What did our LORD mean when He said in Matthew 24: 29-31:

“Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days ... they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather His elect ...” ?

I earnestly appeal to you to consider this and read on. I pray that all believers will fill their lamps with the oil of the Spirit by “rightly dividing” God’s word and be fully prepared by the grace of our LORD for our LORD has told us that we “must be ready” (Matthew 24:44). May we by the LORD’s grace be “one who conquers” mentioned in The Revelation.

The LORD knows those who take refuge in Him. We see this throughout God's word. So, as Zephaniah appealed to Judah in his day regarding the LORD (for the LORD has not changed – He is the same towards us, and Scripture often has double fulfillments) :

"Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who do His just commands, seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the LORD." – Zephaniah 2:2

"Hidden" Hidden indeed from the wrath of God when we are "hidden in the rock that is higher than I" – that rock being Christ!

"Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!" – Psalm 61: 1-4

" ... and the Rock was Christ." – 1 Corinthians 10: 4

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" – Romans 8:1

During the evil times we live in, I firmly believe that we need to be found strong in our devotion and faith in the Lord, by His Spirit, by His word, now more than ever, having fullness of joy and peace in knowing that the Prince of Peace is our Lord and is ever and always with us regardless of what may come our way – He our refuge.

Our risen and living Lord will surely return as complete victor over all powers that oppose Him. You may read about it for yourself in His word given to us. These dark days seem like a very fitting time to dwell on the glorious return of our Savior.

Our Lord told His disciples (and by extension, us) that He will come again – “... I will come again and will take you to myself ...” (John 14:3).

Jesus has promised that He will return. I want to show you from the New Testament that Jesus will return once, providing at the same time a final rescue for those who are trusting Him and a judgment to those who are not believing in Him. I don't believe that there are two comings of Christ in the future, but only one, and this is in keeping with Scripture and also with teachings from early church leaders including Polycarp (disciple of the apostle John), Augustine and others. This is also in keeping with the teachings of Reformation leaders such as

Martin Luther, John Calvin, and many living today in traditional reformed church denominations. However, I don't believe there is only one return of Christ because these giants of the faith have believed this, but because I believe God's word teaches us this and here is why...

There are dear brothers and sisters in the Lord in the modern church who believe that Christ will return twice more in the future, and that His first return will be His coming to snatch away the Church out of the world (a sort of secret Rapture, leaving the world to wonder: where have they gone?) back to heaven for seven years, usually while the Great Tribulation happens on earth, and then comes a final (kind of a second stage) return of the Lord to establish His millennial kingdom.

I grew up attending churches that believed that view. I did as well. I remember at a very tender age (pre-school) what seemed like complicated charts being presented to my parents and others (I was with them and at that time first heard of the Rapture) at a church conference, and ended up determining my strategy regarding the Rapture. It seemed like a good idea at the time. I reasoned: "I know my mom will go up, so I'll stay near her just in case and be ready to grab ahold when she goes up!" Ha... Not a very good strategy! But it

was the best that my pre-school, yet fallen, pathetic view could come up with.

Later, as a young adult and thankfully, a born-again believer, I graduated from a Bible college that held to this view of the end times. I had some questions and some doubt, but not enough conviction otherwise to justify a strong challenge. It is called the "Pre-tribulation" rapture view because there is a coming of Christ "Pre" or before the Great Tribulation, so believers are taken out and spared that time of great suffering at the end of the age.

It is a very modern view, not coming down to us from early church history as some surmise, but has only been around for just over 100 years – originating with an ex Anglican Pastor, John Nelson Darby, who founded the Plymouth Brethren. Darby's most vociferous critic was Charles Spurgeon, the legendary Reformed Baptist pastor. Darby's teachings were picked up and widely distributed to modern day America by Cyrus Scofield in his Scofield Reference Bible in the early 1900s. I had a copy, and much to my chagrin now, rather than depending on promised guidance from the Holy Spirit, praying and seeking to "rightly divide" matters, I largely accepted Scofield's notes as the gospel truth to make sense of puzzling Scripture, (and Bible teachers in my church who were also following Scofield's explanations) rather than seeking the Lord's guidance as offered by our Lord.

But the more I searched God's Word and looked into this topic for myself, asking the LORD for guidance, and with a growing dependence on the Holy Spirit, I just could not find two returns of the Lord – two comings in the future, though I knew the charts espousing the "Pre-tribulation, Pre-Millennial, Dispensational" view of eschatology.

Rather, I was seeing God's word teach a much simpler message regarding our Lord's plan for the ages. And, I was getting confirmation from others who were also looking to the Lord for answers.

For me, it all began with what Jesus said in Matthew 24: 29-31:
"Immediately after the tribulation of those days ... then will appear in heaven...
the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory. And He will
send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect ..."

I had been taught that Jesus was referring to an even additional Coming subsequent to the Rapture ...

YET, notice that in Matthew 24, Jesus refers to same elements that the Rapture text in 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17 speaks of: appearing from heaven, on the clouds, the sound of a trumpet, and gathering His elect ...

Our LORD speaks purposefully.

I have earnestly sought the LORD regarding this and I can report to you that my heart and mind is only at peace when I understand that our LORD was describing events involving our Rapture when He spoke of His Second Coming in Matt. 24: 29-31 – His coming being, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days.”

Some present day teachers when asked: What is the most important text that persuades you that before Christ comes in judgement He will come earlier to take the Church out of the world and then only return in judgement years later (seven years or 3 ½ maybe)? - Often will answer, “Revelation 3:10”. There, Jesus is speaking to the church and says this: “Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.” In other words, there are those who believe this verse teaches Believers will be taken out of the world before God brings about, allows, the hour of trial, or tribulation on the world.

But, does it? I believe with many others that God’s promise to “keep” us from the hour of trial means just this: just as Noah and his family was “kept” from the flood water, they still went through the flood.

This does not need to mean that we are taken out of the world but rather that God will keep us from the faith destroying effects of the hour of trial – just as Noah, and then later, the LORD kept the children of Israel from the plagues, though they went through the plagues and experienced that time. They did not suffer from the plagues as the people of Egypt did, and the Lord brought them through. Egypt placed burdens on Israel, but not the Lord. Indeed, in Exodus we see the Lord's promise to Moses "I will be with you" (Ex. 3:12); "I will bring you out" (Ex. 3:17); "I will...strike Egypt" (Ex. 3:20); Israel had "no swarms of flies" (Ex. 8:22); "Not one of the livestock of Israel died" (Ex. 9:6); "where the people of Israel were, there was no hail" (Ex. 9:26); The Egyptians suffered darkness but "all the people of Israel had light" (Ex. 10:23); And of course though all the firstborn of Egypt was struck down, because Israel was under the blood in obedience, they were spared (Ex. 12). The Lord grew the faith of Israel.

We also need to remember Revelation 2:10 vis a vis Revelation 3:10 - that when speaking to the churches in Revelation, Jesus also said (to the church in Smyrna, Rev. 2:8-11): "Do not fear what you are about to suffer...you will have tribulation... be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life...."

Our Lord will keep us - guard us, He will protect our faith. Yes, the Lord allows His people, His servants, His "Bride" to be grieved by trials though He is with us to guard us and to protect genuine faith, and to even in such times give us joy in Him for our strengthening and purification. As 1 Peter 1:6,7 puts it: "... though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

It has always been so with the Lord and His people has it not? Dear Reader, you may care to review how the Lord refines His people (and we too belong to Him, having been grafted in). There is a long list of stories and references to consider, but Isaiah 48:10 and Zechariah 13:9 speak to the issue plainly enough. Our Lord admonished us to count the cost of following Him in Luke 14:27-28.

I have come to believe that this will be the case for believers alive when the tribulation begins and they will not be an exception. I have met some who seem to confuse the wrath of the enemy of our souls during the tribulation and the wrath of God. Those of us who belong to the Lord, have been purchased by

Him, and are sealed by His Holy Spirit "for the day of redemption" (Eph.4:30) as the Scripture teaches, will not suffer the wrath of God! And, "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1). Rather, the Lord's favor will be with us, just as His favor was with His people in the time of Moses during the plagues in Egypt. However, we may expect that the enemy's wrath will fall on us. Jesus has told us: "... A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you..." (John 15:20). The body of Christ, His bride, in Syria and North Korea can testify to this. Are we in the U.S. greater than them that we will always be immune?

In Jesus' Revelation to us He speaks through images and symbols throughout the book of the spiritual battles we face in life, and how by Him, we will overcome – "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." (Rev. 12:11).

In the letters to the churches in the Revelation, we see much need for growth and repentance. In the letters we are continually called to conquer, there is an endurance called for – "to the one who conquers ..." (Rev. 2:7; 2:11; 2:17;

2:26; 3:5; 3:12; 3:21) until we finally arrive at Rev. 21:7 – “the one who conquers will have this heritage ...”.

Do you not see that our LORD, as always, has a purpose full of steadfast love towards us who belong to Him, in allowing us the privilege and glory of passing through the time of great tribulation with Him at the end of all things? Has He not told us: “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”? Where is our faith in our LORD as our refuge? He knows what is best for us ...

Do you not know how we are shown throughout God’s word that our LORD uses trials and afflictions to refine those who belong to Him?

By means of the trials shown in The Revelation, we are brought from a stumbling Church in Revelation 2-3, in need of repentance, to a resplendent beautiful Church, Body of Christ, and Bride – as revealed in Rev. 21:9 and onwards - perfected to reign with Christ in His Kingdom. We are kept, purified and perfected as His bride revealed in Rev. 21 (you may care to consider an article posted at: <https://www.freshacclaim.org/letsbereal.htm> entitled: “New Jerusalem”).

God’s judgment on Ninevah as revealed in NAHUM, in the Old Testament, is a type of God’s judgment on the kingdom of Satan, “Babylon” as revealed in

The Revelation. What do we learn about our LORD in Nahum? Right up front, from chapter one: "The LORD is a jealous and avenging God" ... the LORD "keeps wrath for His enemies" ... "the LORD will by no means clear the guilty" ... and, "Who can stand before His indignation?" A picture of God's wrath poured out onto His enemies.

YET, for those of us who belong to Him, we also have this from Nahum (and He is the same God today and in The Revelation), : "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who take refuge in Him." –

Nahum 1:7

There is no cause for alarm on our part, for the same LORD who called Joshua and all of Israel to courage (Joshua 1:9) on entering the promised land, call to us to conquer and endure.

Our Lord, speaking about the time of the great tribulation in Luke chapter 21, made it clear that "some of you they will put to death" (Lk. 21:16) but "you will gain your lives" (Lk. 21:19). Revelation 7:13-17 speaks of those coming out of the great tribulation into the presence of the Lord, rewarded with white robes where "He who sits on the throne... will shelter them ...and wipe away every tear." "...gain your lives" indeed!

It is fitting that we expect our LORD to keep us and be with us for it is He who promised, "I am with you always to the end of the age" (Matthew 28: 20). And, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The LORD speaks to us in Isaiah 41: 17-18:

"When the poor and needy seek water,
and there is none,
and their tongue is parched with thirst,

I the Lord will answer them;

I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

¹⁸ I will open rivers on the bare heights,
and fountains in the midst of the valleys.

I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
and the dry land springs of water."

The prophet Isaiah further spoke to this as well when he prophesied thus says the LORD: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;" (Isa. 43:2).

In Mark 13:20 and Matthew 24:22 the Lord tells us that "for the sake of the elect" present, He will shorten the days of the Tribulation.

Regarding the elect present in the great Tribulation we can see this as well:

1 Peter chapter 4 which speaks to suffering for Christ and our attitude: "The end of all things is at hand; ..." (1 Peter 4:7) ... "Beloved do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you." (1 Peter 4:12) ... "But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed." (1 Peter 4:13).

I don't see Scripture as teaching that God rescues His people from trials. But rather, "keeps" them through trials (by strengthening us with His presence even when we must endure to the end, but protecting our souls, and our faith in all). Have you not seen throughout all of Scripture, dear brother, dear sister, how our LORD uses tribulation and trials to refine us for His good purpose, for His glory and for ours?

Hear Isaiah 48:10 : "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction."

Hezekiah recognized this dynamic after his illness in Isaiah 38:17: "Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love You have delivered ..."

Much of the Old Testament bears witness to all of this.

Isaiah 24 is especially compelling regarding the presence of those who belong to the LORD during the Tribulation.

Have you ever noticed how the LORD gave Isaiah a symphony? Isaiah was given visions to see down at his feet in his immediate situation (Babylon, Assyria and the nations around him) – and then, immediately his eyes rising up to see the far future – the arrival of the Messiah, His birth and mission(Isa. 7-9; Isa. 61), His sacrifice for us (Isa. 53), and later His forever Kingdom (Isa. 65) ... (or, as the LORD says, "declaring the end from the beginning" – Isa. 46:10) ... The lows and highs of the symphony the LORD gave Isaiah.

And just as Isaiah was given to see forward into the future to the time of Christ and of His Kingdom on earth, so it is not surprising that Isaiah was shown the time of the great tribulation as well. In Isaiah 24 we see a prophecy of the Lord's judgment on the whole earth – echoing the description of the Tribulation as found in Matthew 24 and The Revelation.

Hear some phrases from Isaiah 24: "Behold, the LORD will empty the earth" ... "utterly empty, utterly plundered; for the LORD has spoken this word" ... "The earth mourns and withers" ... "The earth lies defiled" ... "Therefore a curse devours the earth" ... "all joy has grown dark" ... "He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit ... caught in the snare" ... the earth staggers like a drunken man" ... "and it falls, and will not rise again"

And, at the end of this tribulation, as it wraps up, notice how Matthew 25: 31-46 when the LORD returns in judgment so closely follows Isaiah 24: 21-23:

On that day the LORD will punish
the host of heaven, in heaven,
and the kings of the earth, on the earth.

They will be gathered together
as prisoners in a pit;
they will be shut up in a prison,
and after many days they will be punished.

Then the moon will be confounded
and the sun ashamed,
for the LORD of hosts reigns

on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
and his glory will be before his elders.”

YET in the middle of Isaiah 24, in the middle of the tribulation on the earth
as seen in Isaiah’s vision ... there is **joy, singing and songs of praise** in the earth!

Yes, for those who belong to the LORD are exempt from the LORD’s wrath
and kept, strengthened, and given peace. And, though the enemy rages, and
there are those who are martyred – they are kept in the joy of the LORD and His
perfection, His good purposes.

In ISAIAH 24: 14-16, this is what we hear and see:

“They lift up their voices, they sing for joy;

over the majesty of the Lord they shout from the west.

Therefore in the east give glory to the Lord;

in the coastlands of the sea, give glory to the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.

From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise,

of glory to the Righteous One. – **Isaiah 24: 14-16**

We can expect to see worldwide persecution of Christians leading up to the
great tribulation before our LORD’s second coming. Sadly, this is a prophecy
which is being fulfilled right now across the globe, in both life-threatening and

subtle ways. Jesus warned us about this in Mathew 24:9 where He says:

“ Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.”

But let me encourage you with some good news: Regardless of what the enemy of our souls tries to do to oppose, stand against, silence, kill Christians and attack the Church, the Bride and Body of Christ, as Jesus said would happen, the Body of Christ is still growing, lives are being renewed and saved, and the Word of Christ is shown to be true because Jesus said in Matthew 16: “... I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Hear the word of the LORD to us in Isaiah 43:2:

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.”

Remember that the LORD: “gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength... they who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength ...” - Isaiah 40: 29-31.

2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and chapter 2 are very compelling. Both of these chapters speak to the coming of the Lord, His glorious appearance and second coming, in a way that makes two comings – one to rescue us and then a subsequent coming to judge unbelievers, nearly impossible to my heart and mind.

Isaiah 40:10 also tells us:

“Behold, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.”

Listen to how Paul treats the coming to give relief to believers and the coming to give affliction to unbelievers as one coming in **2 Thessalonians 1:6-8**... Both relief for us and affliction at the same time. Here is what Paul says: “God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you”... (So, here are the two things that are going to happen. God regards it as just: to repay with affliction, i.e. judgment on unbelievers (cf. 1 Thess. 1:9 as well) and to grant relief, i.e. rescue believers in the Rapture.) Paul continues: “... to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is

revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” (See also Isaiah 66: 15-16) I see these words clearly teach that Christ is coming again and that when He comes He will repay unbelievers with affliction and He will grant relief to believers. And, he says these two things happen “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven.” So this is one coming and not two. This is the first text that persuaded me. But there is more just ahead...

2 Thessalonians 2: 1-8 also compels me. Let’s begin with 2 Thess. 2: 1-2: “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to Him (i.e. the Rapture) we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.” So, after Paul had written to the Thessalonians concerning the Lord’s coming and our Rapture in 1 Thessalonians, someone had said to these Christians that the day of the Lord had already come. Paul responded by replying in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the day of us “being gathered together to Him” (verse 1, i.e. the Rapture that he had previously written about) “that day will not come, unless...first...the man of lawlessness is revealed” (verse 3, i.e., the day including us being gathered together to Him – the Rapture, will not come until the Antichrist first comes.) Paul also identifies that

day as “the day of the Lord” in verse 2. This is why we can rightly associate the events of Scripture associated with the “Day of the Lord” as happening at this time. Paul in effect argues: “That can’t be!” How easy and natural it would have been for Paul to say, it can’t be because I’m still here. And that would be a persuasive argument for that early community of Thessalonians, but no benefit to us who are alive today, because now Paul is no longer with us. So, instead the Lord inspired Paul to say something beneficial to both the Thessalonian community of believers and to us as well. Paul continued (2 Thess. 2:3) “Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction...”

I believe that 2 Thess. 2:6-7, rightly refers to God, through the Holy Spirit, restraining Antichrist, “the man of lawlessness” until his time, and until the Holy Spirit is “out of the way”. Some believe that this refers to the Holy Spirit retracting to heaven and the removal of believers, the body of Christ in the rapture. However, this verse does not refer back to “the day of the Lord” in verse 2 (as verse 3 does), lending support to this idea. That is, we have clearly seen in verses 1 – 3 that we will not be gathered together with our Lord unless the rebellion and the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist) is first revealed.

So, IF we associate "he is out of the way" and the subsequent revealing of the lawless one in verses 7-8 with the event of our being gathered together with the Lord in the rapture, then that would place the rapture before the lawless one is revealed. And that cannot be the case, because it would contradict verses 1-3, where we have seen the assurance that the rapture comes after the man of lawlessness is revealed. It would be placing the cart before the horse.

Rather, the statement "He who now restrains it (the lawlessness) will do so until He is out of the way" which we see in verse 7, appears to be in reference to the same dynamic we see provided to us in the Book of Job (Job 1:6-12), where God exercised restraint until withdrawing His restraint in a limited manner. I believe it is likely that we see the same thing here, when the Holy Spirit once again sovereignly shows restraint, to "get out of the way" for a limited time, allowing Antichrist to be revealed. Then, after the revealing of the Antichrist, the Lord in His timing will gather us together with Him, as 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-3 teaches us.

So, we arrive at 2 Thess. 2:8 now, "...whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of His coming." (In keeping with Revelation 19). So just like chapter 1, there is one coming, and Paul

says it hasn't happened yet because the "man of lawlessness", that is the Antichrist, has not yet been revealed. And, when that happens, then Paul said the second coming will happen in the Lord's time, and it won't be to simply snatch believers away, but to kill the lawless one with the breath of His mouth and the appearance of His coming.

I absolutely cannot reconcile the text of 2 Thessalonians chapters 1 and 2 with the concept that our Lord will come back to earth twice in the future. 2 Thessalonians speaks to one return of our Lord in a very compelling manner to me.

Consider also the familiar text in 1 Thessalonians 4 about our Lord's coming and our Rapture to be with Him. Hear 1 Thess. 4:16-17: "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. 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."

Indeed we will rise to meet the Lord in the air! It is what God's word tells us. Many people are surprised to learn that the word translated "meet" – to

"meet" the Lord in the air is used two other times in the New Testament – Matthew 25:6 and Acts 28:15, and in both of these places it is a group of people going out to meet someone and accompanying them back - to the place they just came out from. So, it is not the intention of that verse that we rise to meet the Lord in the air and then return to Heaven for seven years. That's just not the intention of that verse. It is indeed a Rapture – we rise to meet the Lord in the air. But, we will be like a great welcoming crowd. And then we will descend with Him in His triumphant arrival – in keeping with the proper use of the word translated "meet"! We will ever be with the Lord, invited to the marriage feast of Revelation 19: 6-10, (fulfilling the "grant relief" of 2 Thess. 1:7) and I believe that Psalm 23 speaks prophetically to this in: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies"; we will witness our Lord's judgment ('repay with affliction') and the establishment of His kingdom.

Scripture speaks to our Lord accomplishing all of His purposes in what seems to us a brief time in that day. For me, that is not a problem. Our Lord's arm is not shortened, nor His mouth muted that He cannot accomplish all He wants in an instant if He chooses. Just as the Lord spoke and accomplished so much on any given day of Creation, so shall it be in the Day of the Lord, His second coming, that much will happen which will seem from our perspective to

be happening almost simultaneously. (In the old Gospel Hymn "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder" there is a line: "When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more..." We don't know how the Lord will time out everything, but I think as the hymn alludes to, that time as we have experienced it will be no more and not be so important when eternity is ushered in.) It will be a day, a season of much: The Rapture, enemies vanquished, the resurrection of the remaining dead, some to life and some to eternal destruction as the Scripture declares, a judgment, time for the marriage of the lamb, the Lord will establish His Kingdom.

From the mouth of our Lord (Rev. 19:15) His enemies will be vanquished, and we will be rescued (the Rapture) as Scripture informs us. In the description of the "marriage of the Lamb" in Revelation 19:7 we find these words: "His Bride has made herself ready" (by faith in our Savior and His blood, and refined during trials on earth, and the Tribulation for some). There will be judgment for some as the LORD speaks to in Matthew 25: 31-46. There will be a recognized King for a Kingdom, or as Daniel 7:13-14 puts it: "...with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man...and to Him was given...a Kingdom..." The "Day of the Lord" will be a day, a season of the Lord to accomplish all these His righteous purposes in His timing.

All who belong to the LORD, believers, will be resurrected – to everlasting life, while others will face shame and everlasting contempt. (cf. Dan. 7: 9-14; Dan. 12: 1-2; Matt. 25: 31-46; 1 Cor. 15: 22-23; Revelation 20:1-6). In keeping with Revelation 19: 6-10 there will be a marriage supper and the Bride of the Lamb will be made ready. What a day! What a season! (After an initial reign on the earth by our LORD for a thousand years, and in keeping with Revelation 20: 7-15 there will be a final judgment and the Lord will establish His Forever Kingdom at that time.)

I have wanted to show you in this article that our Rapture is included in one great, glorious second coming of the Lord in our future. He will come once more to give relief to His afflicted Bride, the Church, and judgment to His adversaries at one time in keeping with 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. In that "Day of the Lord" the Antichrist will be dealt with (2 Thess. 2:8) after the Rapture. And of course, because it is the end of the Antichrist, it is the end of the Tribulation.

There is a very pressing and practical reason for us to be aware of these end time events. The return of our Lord will bring relief to those of us who belong to Him, but will be a time of judgment for our neighbors who do not know the Lord. Prayerfully, this will motivate us to warn, and plead and entreat,

impacting our culture for the Lord, and making disciples (cf. Matthew 28: 18-20) as our Lord has commanded us to do. May the Lord prepare hearts! And may we be faithful – the Lord has told us days are coming when we will have special opportunity to bear witness (Lk. 21:13). By His grace, and Spirit, may we walk in a manner acceptable and pleasing to our Lord (Gal. 5:25).

As He intended for us in these dark times, by His Spirit may we always have our Lord's words and light in our hearts and minds:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." – Jesus, as recorded by His disciple John in the Gospel of John (John 10:27-29 ESV).

And, from the letter to the Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor

powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:35-39 ESV)

And so the LORD will establish His Kingdom on earth. For now...

I look forward to proclaiming "to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" and I look forward to the river of blessing and delight and the fullness of the Spirit flowing from His throne to those of us who belong to Him, and I look forward to saying "Come let us go up to the mountain of the LORD" as Micah 4:2 and Isaiah 2:3 have proclaimed, in the new earth, in His Kingdom which will have no end – His eternal kingdom (Lk. 1:33; Isa. 9:6-7)

So with a full heart I call out with all my brothers and sisters in Christ:

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20)

Your brother in the LORD,

So thankful for our Savior,

Jim B.

(YustJim@Outlook.com)