

## NCC Roots Spring 2020...7 Churches and the Rapture...led by Terry Cooper

### The Rapture Session #1...3/18/2020

- We've spent 5 sessions covering the 7 Churches of Revelation and then Revelation chapter 4 opens with this statement from the Apostle John.

#### **Revelation 4:1-3 (NLT2)**

<sup>1</sup> Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, "**Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this.**" <sup>2</sup> And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it.

<sup>3</sup> The one sitting on the throne was as brilliant as gemstones—like jasper and carnelian. And the glow of an emerald circled his throne like a rainbow.

- Did you notice what follows the 7 churches revelation...come up here!
- ***Come up here and I will show you what must happen after this***...after what?
- Is this a description of the Church Rapture?
- The church isn't mentioned again in Revelation until chapter 21 and she's referred to then as the bride of Christ.
- The first three chapters are all about the church and then nothing until she's the bride and Jesus has returned.
- Is this the church rapture?
- Let me begin this session by talking to the skeptics of the Rapture itself.
- If you believe in the Bible you believe in a coming Rapture of the Church.

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 (NLT2)**

<sup>15</sup> We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. <sup>17</sup> Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth **will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** Then we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> So encourage each other with these words.

- If you believe the Bible, you believe in a coming Rapture...where people will be caught up or snatched up into the clouds to meet the Lord.
- The question is not about the Rapture or Caught Up event...the question is whether or not people will be left behind after the Rapture.
- We will deal with that as we go through these sessions.
- Let's start with the first part...do you believe in the imminent return of Christ, which means it can happen at any moment, even during this session?
- What happens when a person, a believer, takes on this world view?
- They will purify their lives of sin (confess and repent).
- They will tell others about the coming of our Lord.
- A sense of urgency always comes to those who accept the reality of Jesus' soon return.
- Urgent to purify your life of sin and urgent to share the good news with others so they won't be lost or left behind.

## 1 John 3:1-3 (NLT2)

<sup>1</sup> See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the **people who belong to this world** don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. <sup>2</sup> Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has **not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears**. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.

<sup>3</sup> And **all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure**, just as he is pure.

- I'm convinced that the true church has always lived with a sense of **eager expectation** regarding the return of Christ.
- Jesus' return has been the ultimate goal of every generation of believers since the cross.
- I went to a church leadership conference recently and the speakers never specifically mentioned the return of Christ one time...alarming!
- Let's begin this first Rapture session by using our imagination...what do you think the world will be like if every Christian is suddenly taken from this earth?
- How will people explain the sudden disappearances?
- Will everyone suddenly turn to Christ because the church has departed, or will the world turn to absolute darkness instead?
- Will the people who are left behind be able to **think clearly** in the midst of the chaos of so many missing people?

## 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12 (NLT2)

<sup>5</sup> Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? [Paul's first letter reveals the Rapture event]

<sup>6</sup> And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.

<sup>7</sup> For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. <sup>8</sup> Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming. <sup>9</sup> This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. <sup>10</sup> He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because **they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them**. <sup>11</sup> **So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies**. <sup>12</sup> Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.

- Paul tells us that a powerful spirit of deception will come upon the earth after the Rapture.
- The arrival of the antichrist will bring this spirit of deception to those who remain on the earth.
- If you currently have a "wait and see" attitude about the Rapture...you are truly foolish.
- When people are faced with chaos, they will always choose tyranny over freedom...setting the stage for the coming antichrist...one world government.
- The current Coronavirus is a great example of this.
- The chaos and lawlessness will create a political vacuum that will be filled by the antichrist.

## Revelation 13:2 (NLT2)

<sup>2</sup> This beast [antichrist/man of lawlessness] looked like a leopard, but it had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion! And **the dragon gave the beast his own power and throne and great authority**.

- Jesus himself declares that Satan currently has worldwide authority and the Revelation reveals that Satan will give that power and authority to the beast.

### John 12:30-31 (NLT2)

<sup>30</sup> Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine. <sup>31</sup> The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, **the ruler of this world**, will be cast out.

### John 14:29-31 (NLT2)

<sup>29</sup> I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

<sup>30</sup> “I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because **the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me**,<sup>31</sup> but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let’s be going.

### Revelation 13:7-8 (NLT2)

<sup>7</sup> And **the beast was allowed to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation.**<sup>8</sup> And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones **whose names were not written in the Book of Life** before the world was made—the Book that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered.

- Notice this beastly authority is worldwide, not localized.
- His focus won’t be the church because the church is gone, so he goes after the unbelieving Jews and anyone who might come to faith in Christ during the tribulation.

### Daniel 8:23-25 (NLT2) 500 years BC

<sup>23</sup> “At the end of their rule [Gentile kingdoms of men], when their sin is at its height, a fierce king, a master of intrigue, will rise to power. <sup>24</sup> He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause a shocking amount of destruction and succeed in everything he does. He will destroy powerful leaders and devastate the holy people. <sup>25</sup> He will be a master of deception and will become arrogant; he will destroy many without warning. He will even take on the Prince of princes in battle, but he will be broken, though not by human power.

- How should the current church-in-waiting look at this session so far?

### 2 Peter 3:8-13 (NLT2)

<sup>8</sup> But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. <sup>11</sup> Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, **what holy and godly lives you should live,**<sup>12</sup> **looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along.** On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. <sup>13</sup> But **we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness.**

### Matthew 24:11-14 (NLT2)

<sup>11</sup> And many **false prophets** will appear and will deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> **Sin will be rampant** everywhere, and the **love of many will grow cold**. <sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

- The Apostasy...false prophets, sin everywhere-tolerance, no real love.
- The Gospel will be preached worldwide, but not necessarily until after the Rapture.
- Let's get into some detail now...let's focus on the Rapture itself.
- The word is rapture, caught up, taken out, snatched away.
- The word is specifically found in:

### 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NLT2)

<sup>17</sup> Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be **caught up** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.

- This English phrase comes from the Greek word, "harpadzo" and is used in other New Testament applications.

### John 10:27-28 (NLT2)

<sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

<sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can **snatch them** away from me,

### Acts 8:38-39 (NLT2)

<sup>38</sup> He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

<sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord **snatched** Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing.

### 2 Corinthians 12:2 (NLT2)

<sup>2</sup> I was **caught up** to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows.

- Now, lets see who is getting caught up/raptured/snatched by Jesus into the clouds.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NLT2)

<sup>13</sup> And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the **believers who have died** so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.

- The NLT says, "believers who have died", but NASB and NIV refers to these people as sleeping.
- Same in the next verse...who is Paul talking about specifically?

### 1 Thessalonians 4:14 (NLT2)

<sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him **the believers who have died**.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:14 (NASB)

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

- **Big Point**...all of these sleeping people, dead people are IN CHRIST BELIEVERS!
- The not in Christ, unbelievers are going to stay asleep until later and miss **this** graveyard Rapture event.
- Sleeping believers' "bodies" are buried in the ground, but their souls have gone to be with the Lord. That's how verse 14 makes sense...the souls of all believers who have previously died before the Rapture are coming back with Jesus when He comes for the Church.
- The decayed and buried bodies of **believers** will rise to meet the Lord in the air and Jesus will put the soul of the believer into a recreated/resurrected eternal body.
- It will happen in an instant, in a flash.
- Some will ask...what kind of body do the souls of believers have in heaven now, while they await the resurrection of the last day?
- It looks like there is an intermediate body, a temporary body given to these souls while they await the resurrection or the rapture to take place on earth at Jesus' return.
- There is another interesting point here...it looks like this Rapture event to meet Jesus in the air is for the church age saints only (excludes the Old Testament saints).
- It looks like the Old Testament saints will experience their resurrected bodies **at the end of the 7-year tribulation** when Jesus steps onto the Mount of Olives as King of kings and begins his 1000-year reign on the earth.

## Daniel 12:1-4 (NLT2)

<sup>1</sup> "At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over **your nation** [Israel], will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued. <sup>2</sup> **Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.**

<sup>3</sup> Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever. <sup>4</sup> **But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal up the book until the time of the end, when many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase.**"

- This would be a good time to put that entire 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonian section together and connect some other dots.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NLT2)

<sup>13</sup> And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that **when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.** <sup>15</sup> We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven **with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God.** First, **the Christians who have died will rise from their graves.** <sup>17</sup> Then, **together with them,**

**we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** Then we will be **with the Lord forever.**<sup>18</sup> So encourage each other with these words.

- If that Scripture terrifies you...you are not ready...it was designed to encourage, not terrify.
- What is the shout, can we know what the Lord says to the church...shouts to the church?
- I believe this shout is revealed in Jesus' words in Matthew 25 and I also believe this same Matthew text answers the question....will there be people "**left behind**" at the Rapture of the church.

### **Matthew 25:1-13 (NLT2)**

<sup>1</sup> "The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of **ten bridesmaids** who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, <sup>4</sup> but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. <sup>5</sup> When the bridegroom was delayed, they **all** became drowsy and fell asleep. <sup>6</sup> **"At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'**

<sup>7</sup> "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. <sup>8</sup> Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. **Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.** <sup>11</sup> Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!' <sup>12</sup> "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!' <sup>13</sup> "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

- You must ask this question every time you read one of Jesus' parables...why is He telling this story?
- **You must keep watch**...can you see all these dots connected with a wonderful and horrible story.
- Some will be ready and some will not....some will be taken, raptured, snatched away, caught up and some will be left behind to face an unparalleled time of trouble and chaos on the earth.
- The Apostle Peter and Jesus himself tells us that this **oil in your lamp readiness** will be hard and filled with opposition from the world.
- Peter also reveals that God's judgment will begin with the church...can you see it in the 10 Bridesmaids...they all had some oil...do you see it?

### **1 Peter 4:16-19 (NLT2)**

<sup>16</sup> But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name! <sup>17</sup> **For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household.** And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News?

<sup>18</sup> And also, "If the righteous are barely saved, what will happen to godless sinners?"

<sup>19</sup> So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you.

- Can you see it...Judgment will begin in God's household, the family of God, the church!
- You must be ready...these are the words of Jesus.

**Matthew 24:40-44 (NLT2)**

<sup>40</sup> “Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left.

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

<sup>42</sup> “**So you, too, must keep watch!** For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming.

<sup>43</sup> Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into.

<sup>44</sup> **You also must be ready all the time,** for the Son of Man will come when least expected.

- Next session...Rapture Session #2