

RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH (Part Three)

The Thessalonians believers wanted to know if there was a calendar of “times and epochs” for the Parousia (2nd Coming) of Christ and the Rapture (snatched up) of the Church?

- **They wondered about those Church Age Believers who died prior to the Parousia of Christ.**
 - “what would be their role?”
- **They wondered if the Second Coming would be known beforehand like His First Coming with John the Baptist.**
 - (John 1:23) “He (JB) said, ‘I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of Lord, as Isaiah the prophet said.’” (Isa.40:3) [Old Covenant prophecy]
 - The First and the Second Coming of Christ are both connected with Old Covenant prophesies.
 - But the Rapture of the Church is part of the mystery (mysterion) doctrine of the Church

This lesson will study <u>five aspects</u> of the Mystery of Rapture of Church.
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1. God’s great dispensational mystery was the formation of the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Church was established by spiritually gifted ministries (1 Cor.12:1,12-27), functioning upon the earth during the mystery of the Church Age, beginning at Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Advent of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:7-8).

The “Rapture” is a mystery doctrine while “the Day of the Lord” is used with Old Covenant prophecy for the Second Coming of Christ.

(Rom.16:25-27) “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now** is manifested, and by Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.” (Eph.3:2-11/ read)

2. The Rapture is the first in a series of Parousia events of the Second Coming of Christ.

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| • Rapture | Church Age Believers caught up | (Into the sky) |
| • Tribulation | The last 7 years of the Jewish Age | |
| • Day of Lord | Christ stands on the Mount of Olives | (Zech.14:4-0; Acts 1:11-12) |
| • Millennium | A thousand-year period | (The Millennial Age) |

(1Thess.5:2) “For you yourselves know full that the **Day of the Lord** will come just like a thief in the night. **While they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ the destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you , brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief. For you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness.”**

3. In our lesson text, Paul distinguished between the Rapture and the Day of Lord.

(1 Thess.5:1-2) “**Now as** to the times (ton chromos/ gplm) and (adjunctive conjunction) epochs (ton kairos/ gplm), brethren (Church Age Believers), you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves **know** (oida/ perf.a.ind.2pl) full (akrios/ adverb **full well**) that (hoti/ declarative conjunction) the **Day of the Lord** will come just like a thief in the night.”

The Disciples of Jesus were confused over the distinction between the time gap between the First and Second Coming of Christ (Acts 1:6-12) at the ascension. (read)

(Matt.24:36-37) “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of man will be just like the days of the Noah.”

(Matt.24:39) “For **they did not understand until** the flood came and took them all away, so will the coming or the Son of Man be.”

4. The term “Day of the Lord” was an Old Covenant Scriptural term for the Second Coming of Christ.

The mystery doctrine of the church dispensation separated the First Coming from the Second Coming of Christ.

This led to confusion about Elijah with John Baptist and Jesus Christ (Matt.11:14; Luke 1:16-27; Mal.4:5-6; Isa.11:4).

(Matt.27:47) “About the ninth hour Jesus cried **out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? Why have You forsaken Me?’** (Matt.27:46) (Ps.22:1) “And some of those who were standing there, when they heard it, began saying, ‘This man is calling for **Elijah?**’”

It was believed that Elijah would be one of the two witnesses of the Second Coming of Christ (Matt.17:3, 11) the transfiguration and two witnesses of (Rev.11:3; Mal.4:4-6) [Moses and Elijah].

5. Paul describes the Day of the Lord using two metaphors: “destructive thief” and “pain of childbirth”.

(1 Thess.5:3) “**While** they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ **Then** destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor **pains** upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.”

(1 Thess.5:4-5) “**But** (de/ adversative conjunction) [contrast] **you, brethren** (Church Age Believers), are **not** in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; **for you are** sons of light and sons of day. We are **not** of the night nor darkness.” [The Rapture generation]

The “Day of Lord” or the “Second Coming” will be a time of severe Divine Judgment upon unbelievers like the “Days of Noah” (the flood) was.

The Tribulation will conclude with six bowls of the wrath of God and end with the War of Armageddon (Rev.19:11-20:10)

(Rev.16:15) “**Behold, I am coming like a thief.**”

(1 Thess.5:4-5a) “**For you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day.**”