

XIII. OUR FUTURE IS ANCHORED IN THE BLESSED HOPE

All Christians who have died will one day rise again from their graves and will meet the Lord in the air. Christians who are alive will be transformed in the twinkling of the eye (raptured) and caught up with them.

Believers of all times will be with the Lord forever. This scriptural truth of the Lords return for His church is the **BLESSED HOPE**:

1.Thessalonians 4:16-17 "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

Romans 8:23 "Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

Titus 2:13-14 "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DOCTRINE

This doctrine is very important because it provides a primary motivation for witnessing and living a holy life. For the believer, the return of Jesus Christ for his redeemed church is a **BLESSED HOPE** indeed. The translations (snatching away) of living Christians is commonly known as the rapture (to catch up). Will bring to suffering, pain, hardship, and difficulty. We as Christians will then be with the Lord forever Though the body is not alive during death and resurrection (Paradise, see Luke 23:43) the soul is concisely alive in the presence of the Lord: 1 Corinthians 5:8 "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

For the sinner, however, RAPTURE is anything but a **BLESSED HOPE**. To be left behind will involve indescribable suffering as God judges a disobedient and rebellious world. God's desire is: 2 Peter 3:8 "Not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

God places a burden for the lost on the hearts of believers who have come to the knowledge of His love and Salvation. It's for this reason that the primary mission of the church is evangelizing the world. Seeking to save as many as possible from the judgment to come, furthermore that as many as will came can be with the Lord forever.

XIII. MILLENNIUM REIGN OF JESUS

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of all Christians, which is our Blessed Hope, followed by the **VISIBLE** return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth a thousand years.

The second coming of Jesus will be at the Mount of Olives. (See Zacharias 14:5, Mathew 24:27, Revelation 1:7-8, Revelation 19:11-14, Revelation 20:4-6) It will occur at the end of the great tribulation. It will occur during the war of Armageddon in The Valley of Megiddo. The devil will be chained and imprisoned by Michael the Arch Angel for 1000 years. Jesus' saints who are the church and the saints of the Old Testament, will come with Him and reign with Him.

This millennial reign will bring the Salvation of Israel, as a nation.

Ezekiel 37:21-22, Zephaniah 3:20, Romans 11:25-27

There will be an establishment of UNIVERSAL PEACE with the wild animals and among all people.

- ⊙ **Peace with wild animals:** Isaiah 11:6-9 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

- ⊙ **Peace among all people:** Micah 4:3-4 "He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DOCTRINE

It sometimes seems like the devil has the world so insulated in his grip that there is no chance of improvement, but God is not dead or done, as some skeptics believe. He has declared in His word that this world will get worse before He comes for His church and He begins the sequence of end-time events.

Knowing this, we do not lose hope as we see sin, evil, violence, crime, and disasters get worse. God's word has predicted what we are seeing now. His word also tells us that in the end He is victorious. The millennial reign will demonstrate that God's reign and governing is perfect. It will replace all the failed systems of human government as king Jesus reigns. The bible teaches us that Israel as a nation has a continuous place in God's plan for the end-times. We believe that at some point in the future the hearts of Jews will in large numbers turn to the Messiah Jesus Christ who died for them and for all people.