

2014-03-29

When Rapture?, Body, Bride #1

Hi all,

When people ask me if I believe in the 'rapture', I ask them, "Which one? There are 7."

That shakes them up a bit, and I'll explain below, but usually the next question if they believe in a rapture, is something like: "Will we all go, because I'm doing my best to live for the Lord but my friends live like the world. Why should they get raptured?"

Before I can answer that question, I need to share about the 7 raptures...

Which rapture? There are 7

I can state right from the start, going in chronological order I can prove raptures 1 thru 3 and raptures 5 & 6 with just 1 verse per rapture. And bad news - 1 thru 3 have already happened and 5 & 6 aren't for us. :(

The 4th rapture, speaking chronologically, is what I will prove to you in this series.

Here are the 3 we missed

- 1) Enoch - Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him."
- 2) Elijah - II Kings 2:11: "And it came to pass as they went on and talked that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."
- 3) Jesus - Acts 1:9: "And when He had spoken these things, while they looked on, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

Here are raptures 5 & 6 that don't include us

- 5) The 2 witnesses - Revelation 11:12: ("And after 3 1/2 days the Spirit of life from God entered into them)...and they heard a voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here', and they ascended to heaven."
- 6) The 144,000 male Jewish evangelists seen in Revelation 7:1-8, then raptured in 14:3: "And they sung a new song before the throne, and before the 4 beasts, and before the elders..."

In my mind, honestly, I'm not convinced the 144,000 are raptured - they could be martyred and find themselves suddenly before the throne. But I'll give the benefit of the doubt to a rapture.

- 7) U-turn rapture of the saints at Jesus' return. Some believe we go up at His return, meet Him in the air, reverse course to return to earth. I understand some would believe this if they don't understand rapture #4, but all I've read of those who believe #7 is simply a misunderstanding of #4, so I don't see a U-turn rapture.

But since I can't explain what I don't know, I'll stick to the grace given to me and share what I do know. And let me say doctrinal differences should not divide us - we should celebrate Jesus whom we have in common - but I need to share what I know in scripture and by revelation, and when we all get to heaven Jesus can straighten us all out on any part of our understanding that needs rearranged. :)

That leaves us with rapture #4

The 4th rapture in chronological order is the one that concerns us today. It is not based on a 19th century preacher nor a sick girl's mystic vision nor a best selling book, nor "I want out of here" theology. It is based on a feast given by the Lord to Moses in Leviticus 23.

My purpose in this series is to explain the feast that teaches there is a rapture, when it will happen, then who can expect to be raptured. So buckle your seat belts boys and girls 'cause here we go.

Leviticus 23 lists 7 festivals given by the Lord: The 4 spring feasts were fulfilled on their day. They are Passover (cross), Unleavened Bread (cross/sinless life), First Fruits (resurrected) and Pentecost (Acts 2:1). The 3 fall festivals are: Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles.

Zechariah 14:16 says the whole earth will celebrate Tabernacles, God living with man, in the Millennial reign of Jesus. So we know 5 of the 7 festivals were or will be fulfilled on their exact day as outlined in

Leviticus 23. It is reasonable to assume the remaining 2; Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement will be as well. The Day of Atonement is a type of the return of Christ, while the Feast of Trumpets is a type of...

Rosh haShanah

The Feast of Trumpets is also called Rosh haShanah (Head of the Year), Yom Teruah (Day of Awakening Blast), Yom haDin (Day of Judgement), and Yom haZikkaron (Day of Remembrance).

Why these different names for the same feast? Because of what happens at this time: The New Year, the coronation and wedding of Messiah, the resurrection of the dead, the opening of the books of remembrance, the rewards of the court, the gathering of the royalty of the kingdom.

Before we get into detail about all these events occurring at Feast of Trumpets, know that this feast is the only one of the 7 that starts on the New Moon - the phase where the moon is not seen, hidden from view in the shadow of the earth. Psalm 81:3 references this: "Blow the trumpet in the New Moon, the time appointed on our solemn feast day." The other festivals are on the Full Moon phase when it is full and bright- so why did God start the Feast of Trumpets on the New Moon phase when the moon can't be seen on earth?

The New Moon

Paul wrote in Colossians 2:16-17: "Therefore let no man judge you about food or drink, or holy days, or of the New Moon, or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come..."

We can understand how food and drink are a shadow of the marriage supper of the Lamb yet to come, and how holy days and Sabbath days are fulfilled in Christ who is also our rest, and when He reigns the earth will have a time of rest. But why is the New Moon a shadow of something to come?

In Judaism the sun stands for the Lord, and the moon is a type of believers, the accompanying stars represent the angels. The moon has no light of its own but reflects light from the sun, it was made to rule the darkness assisted by the stars. So a new moon is a type of believers hidden from view, and the Feast of Trumpets begins at the new moon.

According to Rabbi Gaon who lists 10 things that will happen at the Feast of Trumpets, the horn blown is the right horn of the ram caught in the bush when Abraham offered Isaac. God provided a Substitute, and to commemorate the resurrection of his son in type*, Abraham blew the ram's horn - (shofar). (*Hebrews 11:19)

The Talmud therefore, the collection of Rabbinic writings which along with the Mishnah provide teachings and oral traditions of Judaism, says the resurrection of the dead will occur at the Feast of Trumpets at the new moon. (Rosh haShanah 3:3, 16a, 16b)

This horn which is only blown at the Feast of Trumpets, is called 'The Last Trump'. It is the 'last' because it resurrects the righteous dead, transforms the living, and hides them away with Messiah. (*The High Holy Days*, Herman Kieval, pg120)

The Last Trump

Paul taught the Feast of Trumpets: "Behold, I show you a mystery: We will not all die, but we will all be changed. In a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the Last Trump, for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible and we who are alive will be changed." I Corinthians 15:51-53

By using the term 'last trump' Paul ties the 'rapture' to the Feast of Trumpets which is the feast that occurs at the new moon phase, when believers will be hidden from earth with Messiah. If your spirit is rejoicing right now as mine is it is because the Spirit of Truth within bears witness to these truths...and we've only just begun...

Until next week, blessings,

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2014-04-05

Rapture, body or bride? #2

Hi all,

Last week I shared about the 'Feast of Trumpets' that celebrates the resurrection of the righteous dead and the changing of the righteous living at the sound of the 'last trump'. This feast occurs at the new moon which is a type of the hiding away of the righteous with Messiah. I will get into more detail, but first...

What if we could get inside the head of the apostle Paul? What if we could go back to the first century, understand his Jewish upbringing, his vast knowledge in the Jewish Oral Law and Rabbinical teaching, to understand what he believed? That is what I'm trying to do here. Paul was chosen by the Lord to write most of the New Testament, so his perspective is now scripture.

How was Paul trained?

Besides learning the Word, our Old Testament, Paul was trained in the oral history & traditions of his faith passed down through the generations, which is called the Talmud. Part of the Talmud is called the Mishnah, which is the oral word (oral Torah). This is the oral history of the Jewish people and teachings of Rabbi's through the centuries. Paul was educated in all these things.

You may not realize it, but the Oral History/word is woven throughout our New Testament, so at least some of it but not all, is taken to be as solid as scripture. I'll give you 2 examples here and 1 later:

1) Genesis 12:1 says: "Now the Lord had said to Abram, Get out of your country, and from your family, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you."

That is all the scripture says - the Lord told him. But Steven in Acts 7:2-3 said this: "The God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him: Get out of your country, and from your family, and come to the land that I will show you."

How did Steven and his listeners know the Lord appeared to Abraham when He told him to leave his country? They knew through the oral history, the Mishnah - which had been passed down since Abraham concerning the events of his life, and that part of the oral history became scripture.

2) Matthew 2:23 says of Joseph moving his family: "And he came and lived in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

Here is the trouble - there is no prophecy in our Old Testament about Messiah being from Nazareth. But it was part of the oral history that Messiah would be known as a Nazarene, and became scripture.

What Paul understood happens during the Feast of Trumpets

All Paul had learned from the Old Testament scriptures, the Oral Word, and revelations from the Lord after his salvation made the man who became the apostle Paul. Knowing all these elements to his brilliant mind, let us look at the Word and Oral Word to gain the understanding Paul had about the Feast of Trumpets.

In Judaism as shared in part last week, there are 3 shofars: The First Trump, the Last Trump, and the Great Trump (Shofar). According to a Rabbinic writing called Pirke deR-Eliezer among others, the left horn of the ram caught in the bush when Abraham was set to offer Isaac is the First Trump, and was blown at Mt. Sinai. The right horn, the Last Trump, will be blown at the new moon at Rosh haShanah to awaken the righteous dead and transform the righteous living.

The Great Trump, or Great Shofar, will be blown at the conclusion of Yom Kippur to welcome the in-gathering of people whose sins were forgiven as the gates of Jerusalem swing shut and the time for repentance ends: This is a type of the return of Christ.

Here again are the names of the feast called the Feast of Trumpets: Rosh haShanah (Head of the Year), Yom Teruah (Day of Awakening Blast), Yom haDin (Day of Judgement), and Yom haZikkaron (Day of Remembrance).

The Awakening Blast - Yom Teruah

I shared last week Paul taught Rosh haShanah or the Feast of Trumpets, when he said the dead in Christ will rise and the living changed at the Last Trump - his use of 'last trump' forever links the 'rapture' with Rosh haShanah. But I Corinthians 15:51-53 isn't the only place he teaches this.

Here is the Temple exhortation spoken for centuries at Rosh haShanah to the people, and you can see the reference to the righteous dead in the opening words and spiritually asleep as well.

"Awake you sleepers from your sleep, and you slumberers arise from your slumber. Examine your lives, repent and remember your Creator. Those of you who forget the truth in the vanities of the times and live all year with vanity and emptiness, look into your souls, change your ways and lives, let each of you forsake his evil path and his thoughts which are not good..." (Rambam, Hilchot Teshuvah)

Paul in Ephesians 5:14-17: "Therefore it says; Awake you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Messiah shall give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understanding in what the will of the Lord is."

Clearly Paul referenced and paraphrased this Rosh haShanah exhortation when he told the Ephesian believers to live uprightly because a future awakening blast was coming...This means as we look at his letters to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Thessalonians - we understand Paul taught Rosh haShanah and the Last Trump to the first century believers, and his teaching became our New Testament scripture.

What he told the Thessalonians

Paul told them in I Thessalonians 1:10: "And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who has delivered us from the wrath to come."

Notice his reference to Rosh haShanah and the Last Trump in 4:14-18, which is what he told Corinth:

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those who have died in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord will not come before those who have already died. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them** in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; So we will forever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

And look at what he wrote immediately after this

"But of the times and seasons brethren, you don't need me to write you. For you know perfectly well the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. For when they will be saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come upon them, as birth pangs, and they will not escape.

But you brethren are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief. You are children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness....For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that whether we wake from death or are alive, we will live together with Him. Therefore comfort yourselves and edify one another with these words..." (5:1-11)

Notice for the 2nd time in this letter he tells them God has not appointed us to the wrath to come. He also says the day will come as a thief in the night to unbelievers, but not to us. Consider the word picture of a thief in the night. It is a picture of someone asleep in their home, and a thief breaks in to take what doesn't belong to him.

THAT is how the world will view this catching away. They will understand Jesus as a thief taking what doesn't belong to Him - their child, their spouse - but in fact He is coming for those He bought and paid for.

And this brings us to what happens on earth during Rosh haShanah - what is the 'wrath to come'? And to Paul's 2nd letter to the Thessalonians and Anti-Christ...until next week then, blessings,

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2014-04-12

Rapture, body or bride? #3

Hi all,

Last week I showed the consistency of Paul's teaching of the Feast of Trumpets throughout the scripture, as well as some oral history of the Jewish faith which contributes to our understanding of the Feast of Trumpets.

After telling the Thessalonians twice in his first letter we are to be delivered from the wrath to come by the trumpet call from heaven, and to the world Jesus would come for His disciples like a thief in the night, but TO US He would not come as a thief, they wanted more detail. Paul provided that detail in II Thessalonians.

Paul continues his teaching about the Feast of Trumpets

"But relative to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together with Him, we beg you brethren, not to allow your minds to be quickly unsettled or disturbed or kept excited or alarmed, whether by some pretended revelation by the Spirit or by letter...to the effect that the day of Christ has arrived.

Let no one deceive you, for that day won't come except there come the **"falling away" (Greek; apostia)** first, and then the man of sin will be revealed, the son of doom (perdition), who exalts himself so proudly and insolently against and over all that is called God and worshiped, even to the point of taking his seat in the temple of God and proclaiming himself that he is God.

Don't you remember when I was with you I told you these things? So now you know what withholds and restrains him from being revealed, so that he may be revealed at his appointed time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work, until He who restrains him is taken out of the way, and then he will be revealed."

II Thessalonians 2:1-7

What is the falling away?

Paul is building on his first letter, where he said the archangel would sound the trump (shofar) and the dead in Christ would rise and those alive would also join them with the Lord in the air. With that understanding he says anti-Christ can't be revealed until there is a 'falling away' first.

Paul used the word 'apostia', which does in fact mean falling away. But not falling away from the faith. In ancient times this word was used to describe the visual effect of ships leaving port and 'falling away' out of view as they passed over the horizon. It came to mean any **departure**, a falling away from view as a traveler walked, rode, or sailed away out of sight. (The Amplified Bible notes this meaning in the margin, though not with full historical usage explained).

So Paul is saying there is a 'departure', a 'falling away from view' that must take place before anti-Christ can be revealed.

Consistency proven

Now read it as they would have understood it in Paul's time, putting what he said to Corinth and I & II Thessalonians together, and you will see the consistency of thought in what he taught the churches:

"Behold! I show you a mystery. We will not all die, but we will all be changed. In a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the Last Trump; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead in Christ will rise first, and we who are alive will be changed...

...and we wait for His Son from heaven, who has delivered us from the wrath to come...For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the Trump of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; so shall we ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words...

Now brothers and sisters, we beg you by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be shaken in mind nor troubled as if the day is at hand...the day will not come until

the departure comes first, and then the man of sin will be revealed....now you know what is restraining him from being revealed. Then, when he is taken out of the way, the man of sin will be revealed." (I Corinthians 15:51, I Thessalonians 4:16-18, II Thessalonians 2:1-7)

Doesn't that make sense? The question is, what or who is the "He/he" who is removed?

The Holy Spirit has always been on earth

Some would say the Holy Spirit, but that isn't correct because the Holy Spirit is the agent of salvation and it is by the Holy Spirit that God is everywhere. To remove Him from the planet not only removes any chance of salvation during the Tribulation, and we know millions get saved during that time, but it would also mean God vacates the planet and is no longer everywhere. So it isn't the Holy Spirit who is preventing anti-Christ from being revealed.

The body of Christ however is portrayed as masculine - the body of Christ. We are also the bride of Christ -Ephesians 5:25-32 and Revelation 19: 6-9, but everywhere else we are the body of Christ - masculine. Also, Jesus said in Matthew 5:13 we are the salt of the earth, meaning we are seasoning and preservative for the planet. Once the preservative is removed, the earth goes rotten.

We could say it is he, the body of Christ, which is 'taken out of the way that the man of sin may be revealed' and I believe that is what Paul is saying. But for the sake of discussion, let us draw a line between the two and say it this way: The Holy Spirit in believers will depart with them, closing His work in the body of Christ at that time while opening His work to the rest of the people of earth in the closing years of man's government on the planet.

The 2 sets of believers

In our untrained minds we think all believers across the centuries are the same, but in God's mind He makes a distinction between the believers from the cross until the departure, and the believers who come to Him after the departure.

Jesus said in Luke 21:24 of the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70: "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive to all nations, and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles is completed."

So in Jesus' mind, there is a 'time of the Gentiles'. Paul echoed this in Romans 11:25-26: "For I don't want you to be ignorant of this mystery brethren; that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has been fulfilled. Then all Israel will be saved."

In the Lord's mind there is a distinction between the times of the Gentiles, where the gospel will be preached in all nations and all peoples will be given the chance to partake in the covenant given to Israel, and the final focus on Israel after the fullness of the ingathering of Gentiles has happened.

Why 1967 is so important

The times of the Gentiles according to Jesus, draws to a close when Jerusalem is no longer 'trodden down by Gentiles'. Jerusalem was controlled by Gentiles from the year 70 when Rome destroyed the city, until 1967 when Israel took control of the city.

This is why the blindness on the Jews concerning Jesus as Messiah has started to lift ever since the mid-1960's and continues to gain momentum. As the time of the Gentiles winds down, correspondingly, the blindness on Israel lifts. So in the Lord's mind, He makes a distinction between people from all nations coming to Him between the cross and rapture, and those who come to him between the rapture and His return.

We - the Gentile believers that come from all nations - are the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the salt of the earth. Those saved in the Tribulation are not. They aren't invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. They are saved, but those saved from the cross to the catching away hold a special place in the heart of the Lord, for we were the wild olive branches grafted into the covenant of Israel by faith.

(If you've listened to my series on the 10 virgins of Matthew 25, you'll remember the 10 virgins/bridesmaids are not the Bride and it is incorrect to assign that parable to mean the body/bride of

Christ - the bride is not found in the parable, it is about bridesmaids, the bride already being with the Groom in the marriage feast)

Now we must ask 2 questions: What happens in heaven with the body of Christ and who is going in the departure (what does the Feast of Trumpets have to say about that?) and what happens on earth after the 'departure' and revealing of anti-Christ (and what does the Feast of Trumpets have to say about that?).

One of the themes of Rosh haShanah, the Feast of Trumpets, is the wedding of Messiah, so I will answer the first question next week. Until then, blessings,

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2014-04-19

Rapture, body or bride? #4

Hi all,

I hope my series on the Feast of Trumpets is pulling verses together that before had been pieces of a puzzle that didn't seem to fit, but now do. Today we'll continue putting the pieces together, for within the Feast of Trumpets is the coronation and wedding of Messiah...

The wedding of Messiah

Revelation 19:1-14 shows us the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven and the return of Jesus:

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters....saying, Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted to wear fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said to me, Write 'Blessed are they who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb...'"

"And I saw heaven opened and behold, a white horse; And He that sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war....and the armies in heaven who followed Him on white horses were clothed in fine linen, clean and white..."

The key to notice is the fine linen, clean and white which is given to those in heaven participating in the Marriage Supper AND worn by those accompanying Jesus at His return - they are the same people.

We who participate in the Marriage Supper return with Him because Jesus is returning to set up His government on the earth, and I Corinthians 6:3, Hebrews 2:5 and 6:5, and Revelation 20:6 tell us those who take part in the first resurrection (Feast of Trumpets) will reign with Christ for 1000 years on the earth in a forced righteousness age, governing by the gifts of the Spirit.

The coronation and wedding of Messiah in the Feast of Trumpets

The concept of 'Ha Melech' which means 'the King', and the coronation and wedding of Messiah are wrapped up together in the Feast of Trumpets. The dead in Messiah and those alive who are changed, are changed and hidden with Messiah for a reason. That reason is those in Messiah have been His betrothed and now the Groom is coming for His bride for the wedding which takes place in heaven.

The Marriage of Messiah - Understand the betrothal

A marriage supper then lasted 7 days as it does sometimes today in Jewish weddings. The 7 day celebration is a prophetic type of a future Marriage Supper, with each day standing for a year, therefore a 7 year celebration in heaven. So we shouldn't read Revelation 19 which is right before Christ returns, as if it had just happened and we were all getting a quick snack before accompanying Him at His return.

Revelation 19 is informational, a view of what has been happening in heaven while other things have happened on earth, and understood in the context of the Feast of Trumpets, we know it to be a 7 year celebration that has been going on, not a box lunch eaten quickly right before His return.

We are right now in the time of betrothal. We aren't yet 'married' to God. The consummation of the marriage will occur when we depart and celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven when the Groom comes to get His bride.

When a prospective groom wanted to propose to a young lady he would go to her home and talk to her father. He carried 3 things to her home: A large amount of money in order to pay the price for the bride, the 'bride price', a betrothal contract called the *Shitre Erusin*, and wine.

IF the father agreed, the young lady was called out, and if she agreed, she drank the cup of wine. The contract was signed, the price of the bride was paid, and they were now betrothed, requiring a divorce to break off the engagement - but they didn't consummate the marriage until the 7 day wedding celebration.

What Jesus said

The groom would then say this to the bride: "In my father's house are many rooms, and I am going to prepare a place for us, that where I am you may be also."

Jesus used the betrothal ceremony words in John 14:1-2 to his disciples. "In my Father's house are many places to live*", and I go to prepare a place for you that where I am, you may be also." (*The word 'mansion' is not in the Greek and was inserted by King James translators so King James would think he would have a mansion in heaven. It is the Greek word 'abode' or 'places' used also in 14:23)

In the regions even today where homes are made of mud-brick, they are easily added on to, and this is what the groom would do until the day his father declared enough preparation had been made, the rooms for the bride and groom were complete, and then he would give the order for the groom to go get his bride.

In ancient days the groom's response to when he thought the father would give permission would be: "No man knows the day nor hour but my father", which Jesus again pulled from the context of betrothal in Matthew 24:36 (*Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, Edersheim)

Once under contract as the betrothed, she would spend her time getting to know her groom and how to become a wife. This is a beautiful type of our discipleship in Christ, knowing Him better each day and preparing ourselves to one day be with Him at the Marriage Supper celebration. All these things are part of the Feast of Trumpets, so every reference in the gospels and epistles reference this feast.

Now I see it

The disciples would have understood Jesus' use of the betrothal ceremony in John 14 when He said He is going to prepare a place for us, they would have understood the 'no man knows but my Father' in Matthew 24, but we miss it because we don't know the Feast of Trumpets.

And when Paul said in I Corinthians 6:20, "You have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's", and repeated it in 7:23. They would have understood his references to the betrothed being bought with the bride price, and her expected faithfulness to the groom.

This is also addressed in the betrothed context in James 4:4: "You are like unfaithful wives, flirting with the glamour of this world, and never realizing that to be the world's lover means becoming the enemy of God!" A betrothed woman was considered married as a divorce was required to break the engagement as you'll recall with Joseph and Mary in Matthew 1:19 (Phillips translation)

All these references to being betrothed, to being bought with a price, to being faithful, all tie back to the Feast of Trumpets and the Groom coming for His faithful and pure bride. And like an infomercial on TV, 'But wait, there's more...'

The Lord's Supper therefore...

And now we understand the double meaning of the Lord's Supper as well because of the cup of the covenant drunk by the bride at the betrothal ceremony.

Drinking the cup of covenant meant she not only accepted his proposal of marriage, but she would eagerly look for and prepare herself, looking towards the day he came to get her for the marriage

celebration. Paul said when we receive the Lord's Supper we do so in remembrance 'until he comes', which is a reference to the Feast of Trumpets as Messiah comes for His bride. (I Corinthians 11:26)

Therefore we not only celebrate the Last Supper as a Passover event, marking His death, but we do so also looking for His return, and we do so as the betrothed bought with the price of His blood, committing each time we partake of the Lord's Supper to forsake all others, saving ourselves in faithfulness to Him alone, until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!

It all ties together with the Feast of Trumpets

Now we see the many references to this amazing Feast of Trumpets in scripture. From Jesus using words from the betrothal ceremony about preparing a place, to His reference to no man knowing the day, to Paul's references of being bought with a price, to the cup of covenant, to the Last Supper, the Last Trump, to John seeing the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven that has been going on for 7 years ever since the bride was changed...wow...but what is happening on the earth while the Marriage Supper is happening in heaven?

The Feast of Trumpets begins what is called 'The Days of Awe' on the earth. And that is what we'll cover next week - Until then, Blessings,

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2014-04-26

Rapture, body or bride? #5

Hi all,

Today I continue studying Rosh haShanah by looking at what happens on earth while the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is happening in heaven, but also answer a couple questions.

What happens on earth when the Marriage Supper is going on?

Once you understand the Feast of Trumpets other references in scripture to this hiding away in Messiah become obvious. For the sake of space here are just 2 passages about the Feast of Trumpets and being hidden away, and note while the righteous are hidden in Him, the earth is going through a time of His anger:

"Neither their silver nor gold will be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; the whole land will be devoured by the fire of His jealousy...Gather yourselves together O nation not desired before His wrath come upon you...seek the Lord all the meek of the earth who have heeded His judgement, seek righteousness, seek meekness that you may be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger." Zephaniah 1:18, 2:1-3

"For in the time of trouble He will hide me in His shelter; in the secret place of His tent He will hide me. He will set me high upon a rock. (Rock)" Psalm 27:5

These are read during the celebration of the Feast of Trumpets because they mention being hidden from the day of wrath and hidden in 'His tent' during the days of trouble. This is why Paul twice told the Thessalonians in his teaching of the Feast of Trumpets to comfort themselves, for He has not called us to the wrath to come, rather we have been delivered from wrath to receive our salvation. (I Thess 1:10, 5:9-11)

Mid tribulation or pre-tribulation?

When I shared last week that Paul stated the anti-Christ can't be revealed until the 'departure' happens first, then the man of sin will be revealed, we might think this indicates a mid-tribulation 'rapture'.

The reasoning is that Daniel 9:26-27 says 'The prince of the people who will come will make a treaty for one week (1 week of years, or 7 years)...and in the middle of the treaty (3 1/2 years) he will come into the temple and cause the sacrifices to stop...'

This is what Jesus refers to in Matthew 24:15 when He says; "When you therefore see the abomination of desolations spoken of by Daniel the prophet, whoever reads this let him understand, then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those on the rooftop not stop to gather his things on the way out..."

Because anti-Christ comes into the temple at the mid-point of the 7 year treaty, and Paul says the anti-Christ won't be revealed until after the departure, some believe the departure happens mid-tribulation.

When is anti-Christ revealed?

I don't believe that and here is why. Paul never states it as a 'this will happen and then immediately this will happen.' He just says the man of sin can't be revealed until the departure happens first.

Daniel identifies him as the one who makes a 7 year treaty with Israel, so that treaty reveals of who he is. The fact he comes into the temple 3 1/2 years later is merely a marker telling everyone to get out of town, as taught by Jesus in Matthew 24:16-20: 'When you see...flee to the mountains', indicating not a first ever revealing of anti-Christ, but rather seeing him in the temple is the signal to get out of town.

Remember, those first 3 1/2 years will be horrible years of economic and political turmoil, persecution, and hardship as seen also in The Revelation - anyone alive who knows scripture will know who he is from the start.

Paul said he can't be revealed until the departure comes first, so the departure and revelation of him is shortly before the signing of the 7 year treaty. The only thing the Father has ever told me about that time came years ago when I was teaching a class about the war of Ezekiel 38 and 39 and end times.

I asked Him why and when the need for a treaty would arise in the first place, and He simply said this: "It will be signed after, and as a result of, the war of Ezekiel 38 and 39." (I have a series on WW3 and the Feast of Trumpets if you want more detail)

The Days of Awe

Rosh HaShanah starts 'The Days of Awe' which are from the start of Rosh HaShanah, the blowing of the ram's horn, until the end of Yom Kippur when the Great Shofar is blown signaling the opportunity for repentance has come to a close. But here is an amazing thing if you read God's instructions in Leviticus 23:24-32: From the end of the Feast of Trumpets to the start of the fast of Yom Kippur, are 7 days. Those 7 days are a time for people to repent of people trespassed against and God who has been sinned against.

The first day of Rosh haShanah, which begins the 1st of the month, is a Sabbath, concluding on day 2 of the month. The fast for Yom Kippur begins the 9th, making a full 7 days between the end of one and start of the other (2nd-8th). This corresponds to the 7 year time of 'the Days of Awe' or what we call the Tribulation.

On Rosh HaShanah it says God judges mankind and 3 books are opened: The Righteous, the Unrighteous, and **the Intermediates**. People will get saved by the millions in the day of His wrath and many will die martyr's deaths. The Intermediates or Undecided's will have this time to make their decision. The Days of Awe start the time of "Jacob's Trouble" leading up to 'the day of the Lord', or what we know as the Tribulation and 2nd coming. (Rosh HaShanah 16:b-17a)

Besides giving the Intermediates an opportunity to repent, the end result is the closing of the time of man's government on earth. This is why Revelation 12:12 observers Satan is angry because he knows he has just a short time left, and 11:18 says the nations are angry because the time has arrived for them to be judged.

Here is just one example from Isaiah 13:9-13: " Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in His going forth, and the moon will not shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease and will lay low the haughtiness of the evil. I will make a man more precious than fine gold...therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the day of the wrath of the Lord of the armies, in the day of His fierce anger."

We recognize the same signs that Joel prophesies about, Jesus mentions in Matthew 24, and Peter quotes at Pentecost: During the time of the day of the Lord, the sun, moon and stars will be darkened and a great earthquake(s) will move the earth out of place. (I have a series about The Natural Disasters of The Revelation, with a handout/PDF if interested in learning more about the double meteor strike during this time, etc)

Also note He said in that day He will put the value of a single person above that of fine gold. This indicates in that time human life will be cheap - we see this spirit in the world today where abortion is legal and even children have bombs strapped to them and human life is not valued as divine. So this is an end-times 'benchmark' to watch for - things like euthanasia, abortion, wanton killings - all indicate society not valuing human life as God-given and therefore highly valued - that is one thing the King will restore.

While the righteous dead have been raised and the living righteous have been changed and are hidden with Messiah, the earth will be in the Days of Awe. The Intermediates will have yet a little more time to repent through all the judgments coming on the earth.

Next week we will look at who is qualified to go 'up' in the 'rapture', the whole body or just some, and how exactly it happens. Blessings,

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2014-05-03

Rapture, body or bride? #6

Hi all,

Today I'll share what happens to the human body at the 'rapture', what about the people already in heaven - and next week I'll cover if the whole body goes, or is there a bride apart from the overall body of Christ, and close out this series at 7 weeks, somehow a rather poetic number considering the subject. lol.

What happens at the rapture?

Paul says 'this corruption (perishable) must put on incorruption (imperishable), this mortal (part of us) must put on immortality' in I Corinthians 15:50-55 when the Last Trump is blown. But what exactly happens?

Jesus' resurrection is the type and shadow of our own resurrection. Romans 6:4 says Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Jesus' dead human body was made of earthly material, just like ours. But when the glory of the Father was unleashed, the power was so strong when His spirit and soul were reunited with His body, it not only brought that body back to life, but went beyond that to change the molecular structure to transform it into a body made of heavenly material.

Now Jesus' body is made of heavenly material, and being made of heavenly material is no longer subject to the lower laws like death, aging and even gravity. During my teen years I was expressing awe of the Father and out of the blue, like a father telling something to his son he knew would excite him, He said:

"You'll find when you receive your glorified body it isn't subject to the natural laws of the earth." I asked what He meant and He replied: "If you want to walk you can walk, if you want to run you can run. If you want to float you can float, if you want to fly you can fly. If you want to be somewhere at the speed of thought you can be there." I can hardly wait!

"Slain in the s(S)pirit"

Our bodies are made of the earth, and are therefore a poor conductor of the Spirit of God. Our bodies are like a heating coil on a stove that resists the electricity flowing into it, and so it heats up. The more electricity you put into it the more it heats. So it is with the Holy Spirit flowing into our bodies.

If the Spirit comes on a person heavily, their body becomes affected by it. With a little power a person may feel lightheaded or sleepy, get 'goose bumps' or chills, seem drunk, wobbly, or even fall down.

Healed of cancer, but 'drunk' in the Spirit

In 1980, my 27 year old boss at the time told me of his Jewish wife who was scheduled to have a hysterectomy due to tumors on her ovaries which caused her great pain and threatened her life. The night before surgery I asked to meet them at a park so I could explain how healing belonged to her.

Because she was Jewish I knew believing in healing would not be an issue like it can with 'church people'. I showed her Christ in the Old Testament, explained Abraham's covenant and walked her through much of the Old Testament to Isaiah 53, then into the gospels, showing how Jesus is the Father's Word made human.

I did as the Lord had taught me, shared with her the Mark 11 event of the fig tree withering away from the roots, and told her that would happen to the tumors when I commanded them to die. She understood and believed, having been taught healing in her Jewish faith, and now seeing Christ Jesus throughout the Old Testament and as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

As I laid hands on her and commanded the tumors to die and wither away, she became woozy, so 'drunk in the Spirit' she passed out for a time, and even 45 minutes later she required her husband under one shoulder and me under the other to carry and walk her to their truck. The next morning before surgery she made them take pictures again of the tumors, and to their surprised confusion they were gone, so they released her with a clean bill of health.

Trances

If the power is turned up a bit more the body continues to resist because it is of the earth: Your spirit is made of God so doesn't resist, but your body is made of earth so is naturally resistant to the Spirit of God. Maybe a person gets 'knocked out' or their physical functions and senses are suspended which is a trance. During this time they may be like Peter, who in Acts 10:10-17 was in a trance and had a vision.

I was ministering in a chapel at a Bible school and one of the ladies on the platform worship team fell into just such a trance. She stood completely still, one arm slightly raised, for over 90 minutes. My eyes were opened to the Spirit realm and I saw a shaft of light from above encompassing her. Finally the chapel meeting closed and the next instructor came to teach his class, and I told him to just let her stand there until the Lord was done with her. She stood like that for nearly his whole class, then suddenly 'came back' and reported what she had seen and heard. I've seen things like this dozens of times and it still amazes me.

If the power is turned up enough, it will kill this earth-body. That is what happened in II Samuel 6:7 when the man tried to steady the Ark of the Covenant which David was improperly bringing into town on a cart rather than on poles on priest's shoulders (he later repented and moved the Ark of God the proper way).

BUT...if the power is turned up beyond that, it not only kills the body, but goes beyond death to change the molecular structure to heavenly material - and THAT is what happens when mortal puts on immortality, perishable becomes imperishable! That is what happens to the living at the 'rapture'. The power unleashed will be so great to many millions of people, it will raise the dead, change the living, and we will be in heaven with glorified bodies just as our Lord has now.

But what about those already dead in Christ?

Paul said that when a person dies they go directly to heaven. In II Corinthians 5:8 he said 'to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord'. In Philippians 1:23 he expressed desire to leave this world and 'to be with Christ, which is far better'.

But what part of a person goes? It is the spirit and soul, which are united as one and only the Word, the Lord Jesus, can divide by critique. Hebrews 4:12 says "the Word is like a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discernor (to critique) of the thoughts and intents of the heart...and all things are open and naked before Him with whom we have to do." The point isn't being made that He literally divides the two, but that He knows our thoughts and motives and all our inner being is open and naked to Him. Amazing that He still wants us, isn't it?

Your soul is your personality, your mind, your sense of humor, the part that is renewed by learning to think and be as He is - it is the part people know when they get to know you. Your spirit is the part that is born again and can be sensed, for you can sense a meek or gentle spirit, a sweet spirit, a strong and

dominating spirit, etc. We cannot separate spirit and soul just as no one can separate the Father from His Spirit.

As Jesus said in John 15:26, the Spirit proceeds from the Father. So too does our soul proceed from our spirit. These 2 parts are the eternal part of us; when a person dies it is their spirit and soul that go to heaven.

What about old people in heaven?

They look like they do here, but having been to heaven I can tell you that older people lose all that gravity and earth and the world caused, so that all people look like they are about 35, yet if they were older when they died you can tell that. It's hard to describe because there isn't anything on earth to compare it to, I can only say that which earth etched in the face is gone, and that which is etched in the countenance from walking with the Lord for decades remains. Lines of wisdom and a look in the eyes that reveal age and wisdom, but outwardly about 35...like I said, hard to describe.

The dead in Christ who are the first resurrected, receive their glorified bodies. How He does that I don't know, for the question naturally arises, What if they've been dead so long their body has returned to earth? The short answer is science tells us matter cannot be destroyed, it merely changes form.

That means the leaves you burned in the autumn of 1973 still exist. What rose as smoke particles went into the air, was carried by wind, a water molecule latched onto it, and it fell as rain into a lake or ocean. A body returned to the earth still exists in its most elemental form. Matter cannot be destroyed, but only changed. Spiritually that is because God created it, so it cannot be destroyed. But it can be changed just as those leaves were changed into smoke particles or ashes that became part of the dirt beneath the fire.

I've always wondered if He will gather the particles from human bodies through the centuries that now make up our soil and the bottoms of lakes and seas, which would dramatically change every landscape, or if that is not even relevant when giving someone a glorified made-in-heaven body. Does He need the earthly to change its structure, or does He just create a body for them? I don't know, but will be fascinated to learn.

Next week - is there a distinction between the body of Christ and the bride of Christ? In other words, are carnal Christians NOT going to be raptured? Until then, blessings,

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2014-05-10

Rapture, body or bride? #7

Hi all,

Today I close out this series with the question: Does the whole body of Christ go in the rapture at the Last Trump, or just a bride who has faithfully lived for Him? (Are the bride and body the same?)

Related to that question is: If all go in the rapture how do we explain verses that say He is coming for a bride without spot or wrinkle (sinless) on the wedding garments of righteousness, from Ephesians 5:25-27?

First rule of Bible interpretation

The first rule is that the scripture must make sense to the original hearers and readers. Anything understood in our time must be built upon the foundation of understanding held by the original recipients and readers, and agree with how they understood it. If what we think it says contradicts or would not agree with how they understood it, we drop our understanding and adopt their understanding.

For instance, if someone told you God doesn't heal today, you'd look at Acts 3:16 where Peter said the lame man was healed by this: "And His name, through faith in His name this man stands before you whole."

You'd look at Peter's words, how his audience understood him, and conclude there is no other way to understand it than faith in the name of Jesus healed the lame man. Then you would know your friend is wrong because we still have faith in the name of Jesus, and faith got him healed, so healing is for today.

Those dysfunctional Corinthians!

So when Paul told the believers in I Corinthians 15:51 "We will not all die, but we will all be changed...at the Last Trump..." our understanding must agree with and be built on how they understood it - they were all going in the rapture living or dead. This would have been a great relief to the Corinthians, because they were by any standard, extremely carnal and immature. I Corinthians lists 10 separate issues they had:

- 1) In chapter 3, envy, strife, and divisions. Paul told them they were living like un-born again people.
- 2) In chapter 4, arrogance thinking they didn't need Paul anymore, independence from his leadership.
- 3) In chapter 5, a man having a sexual relationship with his stepmother.
- 4) In chapter 6, 2 men in the same house church suing each other in public court. Also, some were having sex with prostitutes.
- 5) In chapter 7, confusion about being single, staying married or getting divorced.
- 6) In chapters 8 & 10, some were eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols, which was fine, but they were flaunting their freedom by eating in front of believers they knew were bothered by it.
- 7) In chapter 9, even though Paul had worked for 18 months to support himself while discipling them, they still didn't want to support his ministry though they financially could - in 30+ years of ministry we only have record of him working for those 18 months at Corinth yet they had no integrity to give back even a little.
- 8) In chapter 11, class envy was an issue as the rich refused to eat with the lower classes in the house church meeting where meals were common. Also, wives were using their freedom in Christ to cast off their veils -the culture of the city expected married women to be veiled. He told them they could pray and prophesy in the meetings as long as they were veiled according to the local custom.
- 9) In chapters 12 & 14 it was about the gifts of the Spirit and orderly home church meetings.
- 10) All these issues were related to them not knowing and living true love, which he defined in chapter 13.

In spite of listing and dealing with all these things through the first 14 chapters, in chapter 15 he tells them "... we all will be changed..." The original readers would have breathed a sigh of relief I think.

Considering he also taught the Feast of Trumpets to the Thessalonians, and quoted parts of the Feast's instruction to the Ephesians who in chapter 4 alone have sins listed equal to the Corinthians - sexual sin of every variety, stealing, laziness, cursing, strife and division, outbursts of anger, to name a few, we'd have to conclude they too thought they would be going in the rapture.

A contradiction?

And yet...Paul also told those same Ephesians in chapter 5:25-27 "...as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish..."

The reference of being presented is to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb which is found in the Feast of Trumpets and seen in Revelation 19: 6-9 at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where the bride is given "fine linen clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." How can the churches with all their dysfunction and sin he names be considered as having no spot or wrinkle on their wedding garment?

What qualifies us

Here we are in the 21st century and all those people are long dead and in heaven, yet according to Paul they will be raised and changed in the rapture. Are we to believe that all believers in Corinth, Ephesus and Thessalonica died having achieved a level of perfection we would consider as no spot or wrinkle in their robes of righteousness? Or were they normal people living for the Lord as best they could as a life-long process of discipleship? If so, at what point does one cross the line to be considered 'pure enough' for the rapture?

Isn't the fact they died in Christ what qualifies them for being raised and changed at the Last Trump, not how mature and sinless they were in life? Therefore isn't the qualifier now the same; If you are in Christ dead or alive, you are participating in the rapture, and it is not based on perfection in life?

Paul further said that to the world Jesus will come like a thief in the night to take (what they think) doesn't belong to Him. But He is coming for what belongs to Him - those who know Him. Paul doesn't say they have to know Him AND be perfect, just that He comes for those who are His.

Paul told the Philippians, "Not that I have now attained this ideal or have already been made perfect, but I press on..." , yet he included himself in the 'we will all be changed', group when he wrote to the Corinthians.

So if Paul wasn't perfect what hope is there for you and I? Therefore if we think the whole body of Christ will come to some level of uniform maturity and sinless-ness in order to be worthy of the rapture, we are clearly wrong. What qualifies us is whether we are truly in Christ, or not. (With some, only they and God know.)

About those robes

The confusion enters when we compare our imperfect human life with our pure born again spirits. We think our physical lives must rise to the same level of purity our spirit man has now, then we get discouraged at our every failure, thinking we will never 'get there'. (Revealing we aren't really living a faith that walks with God, but rather a performance based faith that thinks He wants us jumping through hoops.)

We need to settle it that if Paul said he had not attained the level of maturity he desired, we won't either...so rest in the fact you are a human being and in this body you'll never 'arrive'. To quote a good friend: **We aren't accountable to perfection; but we are accountable to growth.**

Living in clean robes

In I John 1:7 it says this: "If we walk in the light we have and have fellowship with Him (vertical walk) and fellowship with our brethren (horizontal walk), the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us (as an ongoing process) from all sin."

That verse says if you walk in what you know towards the Lord and the brethren, there is an ongoing cleansing process of our sins in our lives. These are the sins we do but are ignorant of in our immaturity.

For instance, 10 years ago you saw a movie and thought it was great. Then you saw it last week and were horrified how carnal it was and ashamed you thought it was a great movie at the time. The movie didn't change, you did, but because of your immaturity 10 years ago but right heart, the Lord forgave your sin as you were walking in the light you had at the time. That is the ongoing process of cleansing of v7.

Verse 9 says: "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." These are the sins we know about.

If we confess the sins we know we did, He not only wipes out that sin, but automatically wipes out any other sin at the same time. Wow. So if we are walking with Him to the best of our ability and walking in love to the brethren, we are continually having our sins wiped away meaning our robes are clean and white, without spot or wrinkle. And when we do realize we've sinned, and admit that to Him, He wipes that away along with any other unrighteousness to once again restore those robes.

Spiritually then, a body of Christ walking in the light it has, has clean robes of righteousness. That isn't a perfect body of Christ, but one that is walking in what it has. Beyond that, the Lord alone knows.

What we do know is that with the blowing of the Last Trump the dead in Christ will receive their new bodies, those alive will also receive their new bodies, and we will all join the Lord for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. None of us will attain perfection before, for we wouldn't need a Savior if we could do it on our own.

I hope this has been a thought-provoking series that helps you sort out what you believe and why, and like I always say, it isn't important we agree 100%, just that you know what you believe and why. Next week a new series begins...until then, blessings,
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