

## **Why the 'rapture' comes first 1 of 4: What does Judaism say?**

Hi all,

The most popular end time theology going around today is called 'preterism'. From the Latin, praeter, which means 'past', preterism believes all prophetic words in the New Testament have already been fulfilled. This is based on the belief it was all fulfilled in the year 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed.

**Preterism** sees The Revelation as a historical document and full of symbolism of things that have already happened. The foundational verse for preterism is Matthew 24:34: "Truly I tell you, the generation that sees these things will not pass away until all these things have happened."

The error is that they read the verse as one reading it nearly 2000 years later rather than one listening to Jesus speak it live. If you put yourself into the conversation you see the context Jesus is talking about. He had just gotten through telling of anti-Christ in the temple at the mid point (3.5 years) of the treaty prophesied by Daniel, and then said THAT generation that sees that won't pass until all is fulfilled.

### **If someone fully believes preterism**

They believe Jesus' return in The Revelation is merely a spiritual return, which is closely related to 'Dominion theology'. Dominion theology also believes end time prophecy is spiritual rather than actual. It believes that Christians will come to dominate the world in the '7 mountains' or 7 areas of worldly influence, bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth.

### **The 7 Mountains are:**

Religion, education, family, media, business, government, arts & entertainment. It was started in 1975 by Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright and YWAM (Youth with a Mission) founder Loren Cunningham. It was later popularized by Peter Wagner in his 'New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)' which taught there would be 'apostles and prophets' and the rest of the ministry gifts in each of the 7 areas, bringing them under the dominion of Christians.

Because preterism (and Dominion theology) believes everything in The Revelation is symbolic of events that have already happened, they view things we've covered in the previous series like the double asteroid hit, as having already happened - and not a literal asteroid hit that literally blots out the sunlight - but somehow, spiritual...I know, preterism falls apart rather quickly...

There are other end time beliefs making their case for no rapture, or perhaps a U-turn rapture in which the saints go up into the sky, meet Jesus, then turn around for His 2nd coming. Those who believe preterism or dominion theology may be forced to believe some of it and not the rest - which is what happens when someone believes error - not all of it fits so they have to believe part and not believe the rest. That should be a clue that what they believe is error, but for most, they don't recognize that.

### **None of these theories are based on the Jewish teaching of a catching away of the saints.**

That's the error of all those other beliefs about end times - None of them consider the Jewish teaching about the Feast of Trumpets, which God gave to Moses. They haven't studied Judaism which is the context from which Jesus and Paul taught, so they build an incorrect foundation of beliefs about end times. In this part 1 I will briefly summarize what God gave Moses below, and in parts 2, 3, and 4 go into detail.

I will provide a lot of Jewish sources in this series including the Targum (translation and commentary), Torah (written law), Mishnah (oral law), Gemara (commentaries) and Midrash (Rabbinical study). I only do this because the Jewish belief in a pre-tribulation rapture as we would call it, is so strong, so well documented, I don't want people to think I'm making it up.

### **The 7 God-given festivals of Leviticus 23**

The 7 are known in Judaism as 'rehearsals' and kept as 'divine appointments' on their day, looking to a future fulfillment. For that reason we find the 4 spring festivals were fulfilled exactly on their day.

Unleavened Bread and Passover were fulfilled on their day by Jesus' sinless sacrifice on the cross.

Jesus was resurrected that Sunday which was also the Feast of First Fruits (of the barley harvest).

Jesus is the first born from the dead, we believers are the first fruits of the earth offered to God as they waved a sheaf of grain to Him in thankfulness.

Fifty days later is Pentecost (Pente, or 50) which celebrates the 50th day after passing through the Sea, when God gave Moses His law (Exodus 19). Judaism teaches on that day the Spirit of God went into the 70 known languages on the earth and gave all mankind the 10 Commandments in their own language. (Which is why man is born with the inner knowledge it is wrong to lie, to steal, to murder, to commit adultery, and that there is a God who created them/purpose to their life.)

This is why tongues is an ongoing fulfillment of God giving His Word to mankind, for in tongues we speak God's Word in the languages of earth, and heaven. That is why tongues continues to this day - as long as God's Word is spoken among the nations, so is Pentecost in a state of ongoing fulfillment. Just like Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is continually in effect, and His resurrection on the Feast of First Fruits is ongoing and in effect.

The 4 spring festivals were fulfilled on their exact day. The 3 fall festivals have yet to be fulfilled. They are Rosh Hashanah/Feast of Trumpets (which includes the rapture), Yom Kippur - the day of atonement (Jesus' return), and the Feast of Tabernacles (God living with man, to be celebrated annually in the Millennial age with Jesus, according to Zechariah 14:9-16).

This means 4 of the 7 were fulfilled on their day, and the 5th, Tabernacles, will be. That leaves only Yom Teruah/Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah (the rapture) and Yom Kippur (Jesus' return) in question. It seems reasonable that some September the rapture will happen on the appointed feast day...

#### **A summary of the Jewish teaching of 'the rapture'; to be covered in detail starting next week**

The Feast of Trumpets is the only festival that starts on the New Moon phase, which is when there is no moon, it is hidden out of view. The moon stands for believers, who get their light from the sun. They will be hidden at the blowing of the Last Trump. Paul taught the new moon is a shadow of something to come.

The Last Trump is a very specific trumpet blown only at the Feast of Trumpets; to bring the righteous dead to life to be gathered together with Messiah. The Last Trump is the right horn of the ram caught in the bush which Abraham blew to celebrate Isaac raised from the dead in a figure, that he did not have to sacrifice him. Judaism teaches at the blowing of the Last Trump the righteous will be judged, followed by a celebratory feast in heaven with Messiah.

Judaism teaches the blowing of the Last Trump raises the righteous dead to go to Messiah, while the earth enters into a 7 year period of Daniel's 70th week, known as the Time of Jacob's Trouble. Also known as the Day of Wrath. Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9 God has not called us to wrath - if you don't know the Jewish teaching you don't realize its significance in Judaism and tie to the Feast of Trumpets.

All these things God gave Moses and they are written about extensively in numerous rabbinical works. There is much more, and these details will be outlined over the next 3 weeks, so stay tuned!

Until then, blessings,

John Fenn

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#### **Why the rapture comes first, 2 of 4**

Hi all,

Last week I gave a brief look at other rapture opinions, and the thing in common among them is that none consider that maybe God gave Moses the teaching on the rapture. In fact, He did, and that is what we will look at in these next 3 weeks.

#### **Yom Teruah, the Feast of Trumpets**

It is also called Rosh Hashanah (the head of the year, the Jewish new year). It teaches about the coronation and wedding of Messiah, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the gathering of the nobles (you and me), the giving of rewards to His court (the nobles/kings/priests of His kingdom), the day of judgement, the start of Jacob's Trouble (the tribulation), and the anniversary of the start of the world.

The original instructions about the blowing of the trumpet are found in Leviticus 23:23-25, and mentioned later in places like Numbers 29:1 and Psalm 81:3 ("Blow the trumpet in the new moon". It is the only 1 of the 7 festivals that starts at the New Moon phase, when there is no moon, for the moon is hidden. The moon has long been a type of believers in Messiah, as it has no light source of its own, but relies on the sun - that's Judaism not Christianity making that symbolism. So at the rapture the believers are hidden from view in the heavens, like the moon at the new moon phase.

Paul would later write in Colossians 2:16-17 that the new moon is a 'shadow of things to come', alluding to the Feast of Trumpets and the resurrection of the dead.

If you look up Yom Teruah, the Hebrew Lexicon tells us the word 'teruah' means 'an awakening blast'. This 'awakening' or rising from the dead is found throughout rabbinical teachings on the Feast of Trumpets. What trumpet is used to awaken the righteous dead?

#### **According to Pirke deR' Eliezer (Rabbi Eliezer's writings)**

He says the left horn of the ram caught in the bush in Genesis 22 when Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac but found a substitute, is the 'first trump'. It was blown on Mt Sinai when Moses received the Law.

The right horn or 'last trump' will be blown to announce Messiah. It was blown by Abraham in connection with Isaac raised from the dead - he received him raised in a figure Hebrews 11:17-19, so he blew the horn in celebration. It has been used at the Feast of Trumpets since. (Though the original ram's horn is long gone)

There is also 'The Great Shofar' which is reserved for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when Messiah comes and the end of the age is announced. That is blown as the final call to receive atonement for one's sin.

Paul wrote of this last trump in I Corinthians 15:51-53: "Behold, I show you a mystery. We won't 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 all will be changed."

If you are reading that and have never studied the Jewish teaching about the last trump, then all you read is some trumpet will sound and not know why it is called the 'last trumpet', that will cause the dead in Christ and those alive at that time to be changed to join the Lord. But if you know what Judaism teaches, then you realize Paul's great revelation that differs from Judaism, is that those alive will also be changed - that is the mystery, that is what is new and not taught in Judaism.

This is important because it shows Paul believed the traditional Jewish teaching about what we call the rapture; That it is a Jewish teaching from the Feast of Trumpets. The last trump will be blown at the New Moon phase, when the moon is hidden from view, as a type of believers being raised and changed to be hidden in Messiah.

#### **This is from a teaching and (Jewish) temple prayer prayed during the Feast of Trumpets:**

"Awake you sleepers from your sleep, arise from your sleep, examine your life and repent and remember your Creator. Forsake vanity, look into your souls and improve your ways, forsake your evil thoughts and your path..."

Paul paraphrased this same Feast of Trumpets temple prayer in Ephesians 5:14-17: "Therefore as he says; 'Awake you who sleep and rise from the dead, and Messiah will give you light. See then that you live rightly, not as fools, redeeming the time for the days are evil. Therefore don't be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.'"

Most readers of Ephesians have no idea Paul is paraphrasing the temple prayer about the rapture here in Ephesians 5:14, the raising of the righteous dead...they don't know who the 'he' is at the start of Paul's quote, that it would be the priest praying that prayer at the Feast of Trumpets in the temple. Now you know.

During this time in the Jewish festivals, even in our day, Psalm 27 is read daily. Verse 5 says this: "For in the time of trouble (time of Jacob's trouble, or the tribulation) He will hide me in His pavilion. In the secret of His tabernacle He will hide me. He will set me upon a Rock." Also v10: "When my father and mother reject me, the Lord will take me up." (receive me to Himself)

This confirms the Jewish belief that in the time of trouble, Jacobs's trouble or the Day of Wrath, He hides us in Him. Again, if you didn't know this Psalm is read in association with the Feast of Trumpets about the rapture, you'd just be reading an interesting Psalm.

This is why Paul wrote in I Thessalonians when teaching about the 'rapture', he told them in 1:10: "...to wait for Jesus who has delivered us from the wrath to come" and in 5:9-10: "For God the Father has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, for whether we have died or are awake, we will live together with Him."

If you are just reading the word 'wrath' without understanding in Judaism that refers to the tribulation or time of Jacob's trouble, then you wouldn't understand. But the use of 'wrath' in context, sets it to mean the days following the blowing of the last trumpet.

### **The days of wrath?**

"...Three books are opened on Rosh Hashanah: One for the wholly righteous, one for the wholly wicked, and one for the intermediates. The wholly righteous are at once inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life; the wholly wicked are at once inscribed and sealed in the Book of Death; and the intermediates are held suspended from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). If they are found worthy, they are inscribed for life.; if found unworthy, they are inscribed for death." *Rosh Hashanah 16b*

The Intermediates are those undecided about the Lord and will have through the end of the Tribulation, or days of wrath, to decide for Him, or not.

Joel 2:1, 11 writes of the day of wrath, the wrath of the Lord to come. Also Zephaniah 1:14-17. Isaiah 13:6-9 and 34:1-8 talks of the time of indignation of the Lord, the wrath to come. Jeremiah 30:4-7 speaks of the time of Jacob's trouble. Revelation 6:14-17 says they wanted to hide from the 'wrath of the Lamb' for the great day of His wrath has come." The concept of the day of wrath, what we call the tribulation, is throughout the Old Testament. Paul told the Thessalonians to comfort one another, for God has not called us to (the day of) wrath.

Even with Noah, who went into the ark when he was 600 years old, escaped the flood waters of judgement. It's long been understood there will be 6,000 years of modern man in the earth, then Messiah the Ark will cause His people to enter into Him, will be sealed by the Spirit (the Lord shut the door on Noah's ark), thus hidden in Messiah/Ark, rise above the flood waters of wrath and judgment.

The tribulation or time of Jacob's trouble is also called the Days of Awe, the Day of Wrath, the Indignation, and the Birth pangs of Messiah. Those are the days Paul told the Thessalonians we are saved from. Those are the days Psalm 27 says we will be hidden with Him in His tabernacle.

### **Birth pangs of Messiah**

"It was evidently expected these 'pangs' would be understood of the travail in which the new age (Millennial age with Messiah ruling the earth) would be born. The corresponding phrase in the Rabbinical text is 'the travail of Messiah', that is, not the sufferings of the Messiah Himself...but the throes of mother Zion which is in labor to bring forth the Messiah to the Jewish people." *Judaism in the First Century Christian Era, George Foot-Moore.*

This shows the earth will go through 'birth pangs' to 'birth' the Messiah into the earth - that is what we call the tribulation, the last and most violent 'birth pangs' before Messiah is revealed to mankind - when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

Understanding the terms like 'wrath' and 'birth pangs', we can now understand Matthew 24 in its Jewish context, and that is for next week. Until then....blessings,  
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## **Why the rapture comes first, 3 of 4, Matthew 24**

Hi all,

We ended last week talking of 'birth pangs of Messiah', which describes the final process of 'labor pains' the earth must go through before Messiah is 'birthed' into the world - His 2nd coming.

### **Understanding Matthew 24:8-31**

In His teaching of Matthew 24, remember Jesus was taught and believed all the Jewish things of the Feast of Trumpets I'm sharing here - this is ancient doctrine. He spoke of wars and famines and earthquakes on the earth, then said in v8-9: "All these are just the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you up to be afflicted, to be hated of all nations..."

To the Jewish ear, when Jesus used the term 'birth pangs', He shifted the focus of His teaching to address the last 7 years of the age, the time of wrath, the time of birth pangs in the earth for the coming of Messiah. Matthew was written for Jewish people and includes several 'Messianic' things throughout, just for the Jewish ear.

For instance, the term 'Son of David' which is a Jewish term for Messiah, is used 10 times in Matthew. In fact, chapter 1 verse 1 asserts Jesus is the Son of David, making that subject the topic throughout. (Used only 3x in Mark and 4x in Luke and 0x in John)

So when he quotes Jesus saying 'These are just the start of birth pangs', every Jewish person reading that in Matthew 24:8 knew Jesus was now talking about that final 7 year Time of Jacob's Trouble, or 70th week of Daniel: The birth pangs of Messiah.

Fortunately there will be millions who come to the Lord during the last 7 years. The 144,000 Jewish evangelists, the 2 witnesses, are all about showing Israel and the world the reality of Jesus as Messiah. Those who missed the rapture will also miss the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Remember from previous teachings about the Feast of Trumpets/rapture, the earth is divided in God's mind into the 3 groups at this time - the righteous, the wicked, the intermediates. There will be believers in the earth at that time; Revelation 6:9-11 shows martyrs before the Father asking how long until He take vengeance upon those who killed them.

### **But when Jesus used the term (the beginning of) 'birth pangs'**

To the Jewish mind it started a 7 year context in Jesus' teaching. This would mean v8-14 is the first half of this time, for in v15 Jesus tells them that when they see the man of sin in the temple at the half way mark - It mentions reading Daniel 9 to understand), then get out of town for then will be 'great tribulation'.

Daniel's prophecy will happen as stated, which is at the 3.5 year mark the man of sin will defile the temple, and the remaining 3.5 years will be great tribulation. In fact, in v22 He said if those days aren't shortened mankind would succeed in destroying itself.

In verses 29-31 He concludes that 7 year period by saying: "Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days the sun and moon will be darkened...and the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven...and He will gather His elect from one end of HEAVEN to the other..." (not gathering His elect from earth, but from heaven)

It is of this teaching of the last 7 years that Jesus said in v33-34: "The generation that sees these things will not pass until all is fulfilled." That understanding fits the Jewish teaching of the time, and of our NT. That at the end of the birth pangs of Messiah, He will appear to restore Israel to be the lead nation and establish the kingdom of God on earth, with Messiah as King.

**A final thought in this segment:**

The Feast of Trumpets is also called The Day of Remembrance or Yom HaZikaron, by God in Leviticus 23:24: "...it will be a sabbath, a memorial (Zikkaron) of blowing of trumpets, a holy appointment."

In the Talmud and order of service for the day, it is taught the Feast of Trumpets or Day of Memorial (remembering) includes God bringing to His mind the deeds of mankind. It is taught many books are opened by God on that day, including the Book of Remembrance. (A reference is found in Malachi 3:6)

The teaching is that when believers in Messiah are raised from the dead to join Messiah, they are also judged right then. (Rosh Hashanah 16b) This is not a heaven or hell judgement for what are known as the nobles of God, but rather an accounting of what we have done in our lives since knowing Him.

Paul writes of this several times, including I Corinthians 3:3-15 where he says if we bring such things as envy, strife, divisions in our hearts to heaven, it will be burned away like wood, hay, and stubble, but we will be saved. He urges them to repent of strife and division and grow up in Christ, thus securing gold, silver, and precious stones built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ in their lives.

There is so much more, but next week I need to conclude the series with how the events of I & II Thessalonians describe exactly what we are talking about...until then, blessings,  
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#### **Why the rapture comes first, 4 of 4**

Hi all,  
Today we'll look at I&II Thessalonians to bring all we've covered full circle. But first the summary:

Judaism teaches when the Last Trumpet is blown during the new moon phase at the start of their year, dead believers in Messiah rise to meet Him. Paul added his own revelation that we who are alive at that time will join them. While they are judged and have a celebratory 7 year feast in heaven, the earth enters into the Days of Wrath\*, the Time of Jacob's Trouble, and Birth Pangs of Messiah. Daniel prophesied this as a 7 year period of time when a man of sin will make a 7 year treaty with Israel, then betray them at the half way mark, 3.5 years into the treaty.

\*Note these mentions of the days of wrath: Revelation 6:16, 11:18, 14:10, 19, 15:1, 7, 16:1. Isaiah 13:13, Jeremiah 10:10, 21:5, 32:37, Nahum 1:2. See also Joel chapters 1-3 for 'the day of the Lord'.

When you read in The Revelation, about 'the wrath of Him who sits on the throne' and 'the day of His wrath has come' in Revelation 6:16-17, know that is a very Jewish thing. It isn't a casual use of the word 'wrath'. Paul and the writers purposely use that word to communicate a specific time. It is distinct and unique to the time of Jacob's Trouble, also known as the birth pangs of Messiah.

#### **I & II Thessalonians.**

In I Thessalonians 1:10 Paul sets the theme of his letter: "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 the sentence structure, that he specifically mentions Jesus having been raised from the dead, alluding to the dead in Christ rising and we who are alive to be changed at that time).

We can clearly see the use of '(delivered us from the) wrath to come' and that we have been delivered from that time, is a very specific time frame. But if a person isn't knowledgeable of the Jewish use of the word or phrase, they will miss it.

#### **Having assured them we will be delivered from the wrath to come, he explains those days in 4:13-16:**

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have died, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 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 unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord shall not come before those who

have died. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"

That is of course exactly what he said in I Corinthians 15 - all things in order, the dead in Christ 1st, then those alive, in his explanation of how we will be delivered from the wrath to come.

He repeats his statement of 1:10 in 5:9-10 to drive the point home: "For God (Father) has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. So whether we have died or are alive, we will live together with Him."

This agrees with his teaching of I Corinthians 15, his use of the temple prayer at the Feast of Trumpets in Ephesians 5:14-16, and assertion the New Moon is a shadow of something to come (the blowing of the trumpet so the dead and alive are changed and with the Lord). The Father has delivered from the Days of Wrath.

### **The Thessalonians wanted more detail about the events around the Lord coming for them...**

So Paul wrote a second letter to the Thessalonians with more detail about 'the rapture'. In chapter 1 of his 2nd letter he spoke once again about how we will be with Him as He pours His wrath out on unbelievers at that time. Then chapter 2 opens:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a departure (falling away) first, and then the man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Don't you remember that when I was with you, I told you these things?

And now you know what withholds him that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work: Only he who now restrains will continue to restrain him, until he is taken out of the way.

And then the Wicked one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. (2nd coming)"

### **Departure debate**

The focus of many is on the word 'apostia', 'departure', or 'falling away'. Also used to describe a revolt, a leaving of one for the other, a falling away. Therefore when Paul says a 'falling away' must happen before the man of sin is revealed, many assume it means a 'falling away from the faith'.

There is no 'of the faith' in any Greek manuscript. Paul didn't say a falling away from the faith, just that a falling away, a departure must happen first. But to those who think it is a falling away of the faith, they believe Paul to say the man of sin cannot be revealed until there is a massive departure from the faith.

But that makes no sense grammatically. Read this as 'falling away from the faith' to see the contradiction: "That day will not come until the massive falling away from the faith happens, then the man of sin will be revealed...and now you know what is preventing him from being revealed, and so he who restrains him from being revealed will continue to do so, until he is taken out of the way."

How does that make sense? A massive departure from the faith must happen and THEN the man of sin is revealed, and somehow anti-Christ is restrained until there is a massive falling away from the faith? Then who is 'he' that is restraining him who must be removed or 'taken out of the way' so anti-Christ can be revealed? It makes no sense.

### **What does make sense is following Paul's teaching in the rest of the NT**

The Amplified Bible in its notes, and Kenneth Wuest's NT make notes that reveal the word 'apostia' at their root, mean departure, falling away from view, or departure on a journey. In Bible school in 1979 I learned the original use of the word described the act of a ship leaving port and 'falling away' out of site over the horizon as it departed. THAT understanding of the word is consistent with the rest of the NT and grammatically here:

"That day will not come until the rapture (Jewish catching away of believers in Messiah) comes first, and then the man of sin will be revealed...and now you know what is restraining him that he may be revealed at the right time...and he who restrains him will continue to do so until he is taken out of the way, then the man of sin will be revealed." (II Thess. 2:3-7)

The 'he' who is restraining him is the body of Christ, Christ in the earth, acting as a salt or preservative that must be removed for the man of sin to be revealed. Some would suggest it is the Holy Spirit who is removed so the man of sin may be revealed. I would say it this way, it is the Holy Spirit in us and His time of ministry to us, Jews and Gentiles alike who have been part of the last 2,000 years of the age of the Gentiles, must be removed.

**The Holy Spirit will remain on the earth for people are born again in the Tribulation.**

But His ministry as we know it in the body of Christ, will be removed. God will deal with Israel in the last 7 years which is Daniel's 70th week, which is why we see the 2 witnesses of Moses and Elijah - God will be on 'Jewish time' so to speak.

So the body of Christ and the Holy Spirit's ministry which is uniquely to us in this 'church age' must be removed from the earth so it may 'go bad' we might say. I know we want to always refer to us as the bride, but the NT references to the body of Christ being the bride of Christ are very few (4 of them, all in The Revelation), while the references to us being the body of Christ and one body with Christ are by far the more numerous, around 130 times saying we are in Him and He in us in context about being His body in the earth while He as the head guides from heaven.

Now we have consistency in all Paul wrote on the subject. In I Corinthians 15:35-56 he mentions the Last Trumpet which identifies the Jewish belief that at the Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah, when it starts at the New Moon, the dead in Messiah will be resurrected with glorified (heavenly material) bodies. Paul adds his own revelation that those alive at that time will also 'be changed in the blink of an eye'.

He repeats this assertion in Colossians 2:16-17 stating among other things, the New Moon is a 'shadow of things to come'. He again confirms this to the Ephesians in 5:14-16 translating the temple prayer from Hebrew to Greek, saying: "Rise you who sleep, rise you who slumber, and Messiah will give you light. See then that you live soberly, not as fools (fools say 'there is no God') but as wise, for the days are evil."

He tells the Thessalonians the same things - the Father has not destined us to wrath, but to obtain our salvation. The Lord will descend with a shout and the sound of the trumpet, and to the unbeliever He will be like a thief in the night - a thief breaks in to take something that doesn't belong to him - but we belong to Christ so Him taking us is legal and right. But to the unbeliever, the rapture will be like Jesus breaking into homes and taking that which doesn't belong to Him - but we do.

Then finally, providing the last bit of detail for the Thessalonians, he reveals the man of sin cannot be revealed until the departure comes first, which is restraining the man of sin from being revealed. But once removed, the body of Christ's departure will allow the man of sin to be revealed.

And that is why consistently Paul writes to 'therefore comfort one another with these words' (I Thess. 3:2, 4:18, 5:11, II Thess. 2:17). Amen. Let yourself be comforted, let it resonate in your spirit....and rest....new series next week, until then, blessings,

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