

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS LESSON NO. 10

THE BLESSED HOPE

The blessed hope of every true believer is to one day meet the Lord Jesus face-to-face and to be in His presence forever. Many Christians that are alive today may never experience the death of their natural bodies. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 we are given a clear picture of this wonderful hope: *"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: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* For the righteous believers who are dead, the event will be called the Resurrection, but for the righteous believers who are still alive, it will be called the Rapture. (The word Rapture comes from the Greek word Harpazo, which means to be caught up.) This event will come without any warning, for we are told in Revelation 16:15, *"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked..."* Therefore, we should live holy lives that are pleasing to God, for Jesus is coming for a church without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27). We are even cautioned in Colossians 1:10 to *"... walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."* The apostle Paul said that there is a crown of righteousness awaiting all *"...that love his appearing"* (2 Tim. 4:8). We should remember each day to love Jesus and to look and watch for Him, even as a little child would with his childlike faith. Mark 10:15 says, *"... Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."* The expectant bride of Christ will prepare for, watch for, pant for our Savior.

Matt. 24:39-51, 2 Peter 3:1-14, Matt. 25:1-13, Mark 13:32-37, Titus 2:12-13, etc. tell us over and over to **watch**, to **watch for**, to **look for** our Lord's coming. How does one do this if He is invisible and the Rapture is instantaneous? The term "watch" is like that of a watchman, a soldier, a military term – "a guard, to keep awake, be vigilant, be isolated, shout a warning, peer into the distance, to preserve, avoid destruction." Watchmen are soldiers who isolate themselves in the high places above the civilian population and the roar of commerce. They take on a soldier's disciplined and hard lifestyle and mentality. While commoners play and are in denial, watchmen know that the enemy and the threat of warfare is real. Watchmen stay alert, while the others sleep; they must always keep close the armor and weapons of God.

MEMORY VERSE: Luke 21:36

LOOKING AND WATCHING FOR JESUS

1. Write out **Luke 21:34-35**:

2. In **Philippians 3:20**, for whom are we told to look?

3. Did the "goodman (master) of the house" know in what hour the thief would come? (**Matt. 24:43- 44**)

4. Were both of the women, who were grinding at the mill, ready and watching for the Lord's return? (**Matt. 24:41-42**)

5. **Heb. 9:28** says that Christ will appear the second time for those who are _____.

6. What does the grace of God teach us to do? (**Titus 2:11-13**)

7. We should all be watching for the return of Jesus, because He will come as a _____ (**Rev. 16:15; 1 Thess. 5:2**)

8. In **John 14:2-3** Jesus said He goes to _____ and He comes again to _____.

9. (a) At the time of the Resurrection/Rapture, how quickly will events occur? (**1 Cor.15:51-52**)

(b) Will you have time to get ready then?

Lesson #10, cont.

THE RAPTURE

10. Will the Rapture occur before or after the end time Resurrection of the dead? **(1 Thess. 4:13-17)**
11. (a) Does the Bible say what day or hour Jesus will come? **(Mark 13:32-37)**
(b) Who is the only one who knows when Jesus will come?
(c) Therefore, we must be constantly _____.
12. **Song of Solomon 2:10-13** could be a picture of what great event? (Hint: Israel is sometimes referred to as a fig tree, and Jesus said that He is the vine, and we are the branches.)

RESURRECTION TRUTHS

13. There will be two Resurrections. Which one is for the righteous? **(Rev. 20:4-6)**
14. Shall the bodies of the godly dead actually be changed and come forth out of the graves? **(Isa. 26:19; 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51-52)**
15. The Resurrection/Rapture is a time when the righteous, whether they be dead or still alive, shall receive new bodies. Did Job, who lived long ago, have this hope? **(Job 19:25-26)**
16. Who is spoken of in **1 Corinthians 15:2-23** as being resurrected?
17. What two things that will one day happen to all Christians, whether they have passed away or still remain alive. **(1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:17)**
- (a) _____ (b) _____
18. Afterward, will these Christians ever again be separated from their Lord? **(1 Thess. 4:17)**
19. From **1 John 3:2, Phil, 3:21, and 1 Cor. 15:53**, what will our changed resurrection bodies be like (give several responses).

[**Think Question:** What would you give or do at this moment to get such a body?]

PREPARING TO MEET CHRIST

20. What attitude should believers have toward the appearing of Christ? **(2 Tim. 4:8)**
21. How many of the ten virgins were ready to meet the bridegroom? **(Matt. 25:1-13)**
22. Besides watching, give 6 characteristics **1 Cor.15:58, Luke 21:36, 2 Peter 3:14 and 1 John 3:3** exhort Christians to be doing in order to be ready to be raptured.
- (a) _____ (c) _____ (e) _____
(b) _____ (d) _____ (f) _____
23. When the marriage of the Lamb (Christ) comes, what will have been previously done by His wife (the church)? **(Rev. 19:7)**
24. The fine linen is symbolic of what to the Christian? **(Rev. 19:8)**

THE RAPTURE

THE BLESSED HOPE

WHAT? HOW? WHERE? WHY?
WHEN? WHO?

I. **WHAT?** - I Thess. 4:16-18
Caught Up [Enoch & Elijah]

"Harpazo"
Comfort

II. **HOW?** - I Cor. 15:52, + 35-44, + 52-58

III. **WHERE?** - Matt. 24:30-31, Acts 10:34-35

IV. **WHY?** -  - **BRIDE**
Rev. 19:7-9, [Eph. 5:25-27]
Isa. 26:19-21, John 14:1-3

V. **WHEN?** - **BIG ?** - Mark 13:32-37, & 28-30
Matt. 16:2-3, 24:36-51

DELAYS HIS COMING - WHY?

Matt. 25:5, 19, James 5:7-8

II Peter 3:3-4, 8-11, I Thess. 5:1-11

VI. WHO? ★ YOU?!

BIG QUESTION

Matt. 7:21-27

Matt. 22:37-38

Matt. 25:1-13

[Matt. 24:42-51 & Matt 25:14-30]

Matt. 16:24-26

Rev. 16:15

II Pet. 3:12-14

Heb. 9:28

Titus 2:12-13

II Tim. 4:8

I Cor. 1:7-8

Luke 14:16-35

Rev. 2 & 3, 3:20, 22:12 & 17

CHARACTERISTICS

PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH IN THE TENACH/OLD TESTAMENT

*"Who hath believed our report?
To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. 53:1*

Innocent, yet despised, rejected of His people.	Isa. 53:3, 9, Ps. 22:6
Judged, yet opened not His mouth in defense.	Isa. 53:7
Judged and killed with the wicked (criminals).	Isa. 53:8-9
Buried in a rich man's grave.	Isa. 53:9
Passover Lamb sacrificed for our sin.	Isa. 53:4-12
Stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, beaten with stripes, bruised, killed.	Isa. 53:4-5
Believers receive release from sin, iniquities, transgressions, grief, sorrow, sickness.	Isa. 53:3-6, 11
All of Isaiah 53 above is the Plan of God.	Isa. 53:4, 10, 11
Cry of <i>"My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"</i>	Ps. 22:1
Darkness during daytime prayers.	Ps. 22:2
Mockers cry, <i>"He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in Him."</i>	Ps. 22:7-8
[Roman Soldiers] <i>"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."</i>	Ps. 22:18
[Crucifixion predicted] <i>"...they pierced my hands and my feet."</i>	Ps. 22:16
[Crucifixion described] <i>"...all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels"</i>	Ps. 22:14
[Result] Meek (Jews and Gentiles) seek, praise and worship Him - He is governor among the nations...to the ends of the earth.	Ps. 22:26-28
Future prophecy - <i>"...they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him...and be in bitterness for him."</i>	Zech. 12:10
<i>"And say unto him, 'What are these wounds in thine hands? He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'"</i>	Zech. 13:6

[On the cross] Broken heart...no one gives Him pity...*"in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."* Ps. 69:20-21

[Speaks in parables] *"Give ear, O my people to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable..."* Ps. 78:1-2

"Rejoice...Zion...behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding up an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zech. 9:9

[God's staff] *"...Beauty is cut assunder...my price thirty pieces of silver"* which was *"cast to the potter in the house of the Lord."* Zech. 11:10-13

"...the SUN of righteousness arise with healing in his wings..." Mal. 4:2

[Healing] *"...your God will come...and save you...then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped...the lame man leap...the tongue of the dumb sing..."* Isa. 35:4-6

[Timing] *"the Messiah will be cut off [killed 31-33 A.D.] but not for himself...before the destruction of the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [temple - 70 A.D.]* Dan. 9:25-26

The Lord *"set my king upon my holy hill of Zion...Thou art my Son...I shall give thee the heathen [Gentiles] for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession...Serve the Lord with fear...Kiss the Son, lest he be angry..."* Ps. 2:6-8, 11-12

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a VIRGIN shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL." [God with us] Isa. 7:14

"...they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek But thou, BETHLEHEM...out of thee shall he come forth [born] unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old from everlasting." [God] Micah 5:1-2

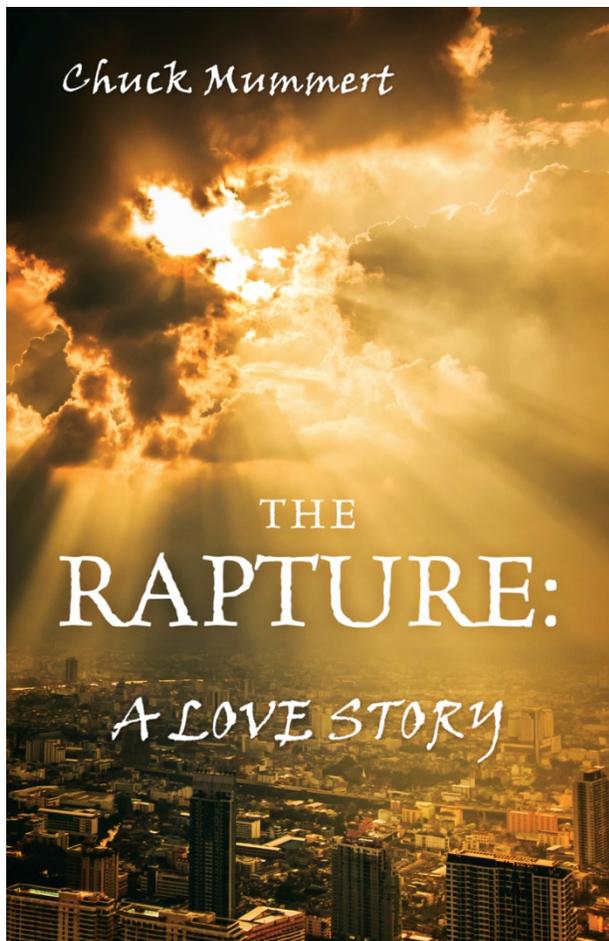
Josh McDowell in *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (1972) as well as a famous scientist and Bible teacher Chuck Missler both quote Peter Stoner's book *Science Speaks* (1958). Stoner, professor emeritus of science at Westmont College had 12 different classes of students figure the mathematic probabilities of just eight messianic prophecies being fulfilled by one person. The results are as follows:

It would be equal to 1×10^{28} [28 zeroes] or one chance in one hundred quadrillion. That number means nothing to the average human mind. In plain person talk, that probability is equivalent to silver dollars covering the whole state of Texas two feet deep (or five feet deep covering Colorado) and you are looking for just one Messiah gold coin.

The chance of fulfilling 16 prophecies (all of Isaiah 53's and Psalms 22's messianic prophecies together given on the accompanying sheet) is equivalent to 1×10^{56} . That is equivalent to a stack of silver dollars from earth to the sun 30 times! [Note: All of the books of Isaiah chapter 53 and Psalms chapter 22 have been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls dating back to a century or two before Christ's birth. I have given you 10 more prophecies and I have left out dozens others!]

Can we put rational faith in Jesus Christ being the prophesied Messiah? Yes! He came to earth for us at His first coming as the miraculous yet suffering Lamb of God. Will He fulfill all of the prophecies concerning His second coming as the Lion of Judah and the King of Kings? What are the chances? I'll bet my life on Him!

Compiled by Chuck Mummert
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Author of *The Rapture: A Love Story*



**ARE YOU REALLY PREPARED FOR
GOD'S IMMINENT PROPHETIC EVENT?**

A Christian car bumper sticker states: **WARNING! THE DRIVER OF THIS VEHICLE COULD DISAPPEAR AT ANY MOMENT!** What instantaneous chaos and tribulation would immediately occur if this happened a million-fold—worldwide?



"Jesus wept over Jerusalem because they did not know the time of his [first] visitation."
The Jewish people looked forward earnestly to their Messiah's coming; they had read dozens of prophetic verses concerning this crucial prophetic event, yet many—no, most—missed it when it happened.

Jesus and his disciples spoke several dozen Scriptures concerning His next visitation, but how many do we know? Everyone needs to explore and embrace Christ's words, admonitions, and warnings—and prepare for the Rapture. These Scriptures are now presented in a uniquely organized, comprehensive, and enlightening way that only an award-winning teacher can do. An outstanding feature is that it emphasizes every one of the many qualities or characteristics of those who will be "taken" or "caught up" in the Rapture. While greatly expanding our understanding, this book will challenge normal thinking on this topic, and it certainly will illuminate this event in the heart of every reader. There are many precious nuggets and gems for everyone to contemplate and reflect on. It is a must read for every Christian and skeptic alike, since this event lies imminently in our future.

And wait! You'll have to read this powerful book to see how and why the "love story" aspect is woven into the essence of this event called the Rapture.



With B.A. and Master's degrees in History and Social Sciences, Chuck is a *Who's Who* award-winning teacher for over 40 years in private and public education, churches, and a layman's Bible College. Married to Norma for 42 years and a father of two, he is also a political activist and drummer.

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Since the writing of my book on the topic of the Rapture, we have totally revamped the class on the Rapture into more of a seminar/discussion (questions and answers) somewhat based on small group questions found at the end of the book. Online students can buy the book at Amazon.com.

For those who do not want to go that route, the older class presentation and outlines are still here, as well as an introduction and excerpts from the book. There are also other handouts concerning the prophetic first coming of Christ our Messiah and the mathematical odds against anyone but Him fulfilling just a few of the prophecies written of His first coming. If He fulfilled the prophecies of the first coming, won't He fulfill all His future coming promises?

Chuck Mummert

THE RAPTURE

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

WHAT, HOW, WHERE, WHY, WHEN, WHO?

We are going to Biblically explore the six big questions that any complete story must answer; I hope all of your questions concerning this event will be answered in this comprehensive study. The first three questions – what, how, and where – are the easier and less controversial topics.

I. WHAT – What is the Rapture?

*I Thess. 4: 16-18 – 16 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: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to **meet the Lord** in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

For many (the dead in Christ) the Rapture is a resurrection to receive their glorified bodies. For living saints it is a live removal from this earth up into heaven. The Greek translation is the word *harpazo*, meaning caught up from one place to another, plucked up, snatched. Old Testament characters Enoch and Elijah experienced or foreshadowed this type of biblical happening [Gen. 5:24 and II Kings 2:11]. Neither of these men experienced death, but were carried straight into heaven.

This should not be considered a scary event. Notice that God tells us to **comfort** each other with these words; comfort is translated here in the Greek to further mean *to call near, invite, invoke, implore, beseech, call for, desire*. I personally like the idea of an invitation – a formal invitation from God to join Him (and stay) in His home in heaven. He implores us, his Bride, to be ready. He is calling us to be with Him.

II. HOW – How it will be performed

I Cor. 15:52 – In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

I Thess 4:16 – 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:

I Cor. 15:16-27 – 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. 21 or since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order:

Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

Notice the main orders or series of resurrections (troop-like ranks) in verses 23-24. The first was Christ at His resurrection – and “*many bodies of the saints which slept arose*” (Matt. 27:50-54); then the Rapture which we wait for; then comes the millennium, the end of the Ages and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20).

*I Cor. 15:35-44 – 35 But some man will say, **How are the dead raised up?** and with what body do they come? 36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: 38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in **incorruption**: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in **glory**: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in **power**: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a **spiritual body**. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

Our old body will be changed! Hallelujah! No more corruption or weakness. Old-timers can really rejoice in that! We will be refashioned with a spiritual body of glory and power as God sees fit.

I Cor. 15: 52-58 – 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

How can this happen? It will happen in the twinkle of an eye – in a moment after a shout from our Lord Jesus Christ. He created the world by His Word; He can surely recreate us by His shout. Yes, it takes faith to believe in a resurrection and a rapture. And only those with a God-given faith will pick up their cross daily and make themselves pure and ready for that special event.

Read the Scriptures concerning Jesus' own resurrection body in Luke 24 and John 20 and 21. At times people didn't recognize him (the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and Mary in the garden), but in most cases his resurrection body was recognizable. Yet he could vanish and appear as he wished. People could touch him and he could eat, but he probably didn't need to.

I ask you a question: What would you give for such a glorious resurrection body that can't become weak, sick, or corrupted by old age? Most of us who have experienced bodily feebleness, infirmity, frailty, and unsightliness would do or give a lot for a resurrection body. Look how much people pay for just plastic surgery or how much time people spend trying to improve or perfect their looks or their bodies. What is the price of such a resurrection body? The answer has already been said in the previous Scriptures; all who are **in Christ** will be given such a body. We can't buy it or earn it or develop it. Christ will give us this body if we are **in Him**. [Read Ephesians Chapter 1. How many times does the phrase **in Christ** or **in Him** occur in this chapter? What does it really mean to be **in Him**? Later parts of our study, I believe, will help us to understand this question.]

III. WHERE – Where will the Rapture occur?

Obviously, the rapture is going to occur **everywhere** on earth at the same moment. No, you do not have to move so you don't miss this key event.

God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

Matthew 24:30-31 – *30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [This is not his first coming when he came as a lowly baby.] 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. [People from all nations and tribes will be gathered together with Him – not just one nation or one denomination.]*

James 2:1-8 – *1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 Are ye not then partial [discriminate – Amplified Bible] in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? 8 If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well.*

Acts 10:28b – *...God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

Acts 10:34-35 – *34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But **in every nation** he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*

The resurrection and the rapture is not restricted to any nation, ethnic group, race, denomination, or people on earth; God the Father is searching the byways of this whole globe for a people (Luke 14:21-23). For further Scriptures on this concept, study the following: Luke 3:6, Acts 2:21, Romans 5:18, I Tim. 2:4, Titus 2:11, II Peter 3:9.

IV. WHY – Why will there be a rapture?

The answer is because of His love and desire to marry his Bride – the Church.

Rev. 19:7-9 – *7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the **marriage** of the Lamb is come, and his **wife hath made herself ready**. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the **marriage supper of the Lamb**. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

Notice that even the dress (our righteousness) is granted or given to us – the Bride. We can't make it ourselves or earn it as an earthly bride does. But, we are to make ourselves ready. We are to keep that dress spotless.

Ephesians 5:25-27 – *25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

He has made it possible for us, through His blood and the washing of His Word, to be clean, without spot or wrinkle, holy, and without blemish. We have to do our part, however. As we see spots of shame on our wedding garments, we must strip ourselves and clean the spots and iron the wrinkles. He has given us the cleaning agent but we must do the washing (James 1:21-25).

Isaiah 26:19-21 – *19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. 20 **Come, my people**, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation [God's fury, anger, froth at the mouth] be overpast. 21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

In verse 19, we see an Old Testament Scripture concerning resurrection, and it is connected in verse 20 with a Scripture on God's judgment, which I believe to be the Tribulation. His people are told to come into His chambers and hide until the indignation is passed over. I believe the chambers to be those He is preparing for us in heaven (John 14:1-3). The indignation is the seven years of Tribulation during which the Church will be in heaven at the marriage supper with Christ. Then He will return to judge the world at the Second Coming (Rev. 19).

I John 3:1-3 – *1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

John 14:1-3 – *1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Jesus at this time is preparing mansions for His Bride and He longs to return and receive His Bride unto Himself.

Following is a study of Old Testament Jewish wedding customs. Slowly study through them and see how they are a beautiful type and shadow of the Church's marriage to Christ. See how much you can glean from this natural event into our spiritual walk today. To do this, you will need to look up the related New Testament Scriptures.

JEWISH WEDDING CUSTOMS

[italics denotes the correlation to the Church.]

- A. Betrothal Phase
 - 1. Contract made by
 - a. Bridegroom and the father of the bride [*John 3:16 – The Father initiated the sending of His Son.*]
 - b. Blood covenant [ketuba] – agreed-on legal document (conditions of marriage) [*Heb. 9: 7, 12, 22 – It took Christ's blood sacrifice to redeem us.*]
 - 2. Bride price – dowry paid [mohar]

3. “Cup of acceptance” poured
 - a. Bride can accept or reject the cup of wine (blood) [*Communion – Matt.26:26-29; John 1:12, Rom. 10:9, we must choose to accept.*]
 - b. Gifts given to the bride [*Acts 2:38, Holy Spirit; I Cor. 12:1-11, Gifts of the Holy Spirit*]
 - c. Legally married at this point [*John 3:29, Matt 9:15 – Jesus is called the Bridegroom and the church is called his Bride at this time even though we are not with him.*]
 4. Groom prepares wedding chamber
 - a. Usually added onto father’s house (extended family) [*John 14:1-3, “I go to prepare a place for you.”*]
 - b. Doesn’t see bride during construction (about a year) [*Rom. 5:1-2. We must live by FAITH and not sight in the blessed hope*]
 - c. Father decides the time of the wedding (bridegroom and bride don’t know) [*Mark 13:32-37, Matt. 24:36 & 44*]
 5. Bride prepares for the groom [II Cor. 11:2]
 - a. Mikveh – cleansing bath (oils) [*II Cor. 7:1; John 15:3; Eph. 5:26*]
 - b. Uses gifts to prepare herself [*II Tim. 1:6; I Cor. 14:1, 12*]
 - c. Prepares clothes and wedding garments [*Rev. 19:7-9; Eph. 5:25-27*]
 - d. Veiled if in public [*II Cor. 6:14-18, we are to be separate from the world*]
 - e. Called “bought with a price,” “dedicated to another,” “set apart,” “drunk the cup,” separate from the world [*I Cor. 6:20, 7:23, bought with a price*]
 - f. Focus is totally on the groom – future expectation – waits – looks for. [*Betrothed people dream of, think daily of, write and want to read love letters from and talk to their beloved future mates; we likewise should have a first love relationship, Rev. 2:4 – read his letters (Bible) and talk to Him daily (prayer).*]
 - g. Oil in the lamp – lamp lit and put in the window for all to see [*Lamp put in window to mark her place. Matt. 25:1-13, Matt 5:14-16*]
- B. Wedding and Celebration Phase
6. Groom comes for his bride
 - a. Groom and friends come after midnight in a procession [*I Thess. 4:16-18*]
 - b. Trumpet (shofar) sounds and groom shouts
 - c. Steals away bride (thief) by candlelight [*I Thess. 5:1-8, II Peter 3:10, Rev. 3:3, 16:15*]
 7. Consummating the marriage
 - a. Seven-day celebration – “fulfilling her week”
 - b. Sealing the covenant – breaking the hymen [*We are to be virgins – only have our relationship with Christ, not with this world; Rev. 19:7-9.*]
 - c. Best man waves the sheet as proof of virginity – faithfulness
 - d. Take food together [*Communion, Matt. 26:26-29*]
 8. Marriage feast – supper – Bride accepted into father’s family.

Fruits, Qualities, or Characteristics Of Those Who Will Be Raptured

- BY FAITH/TRUSTING/BELIEVING—Hebrews 11:5-7, Hebrews 10:23, Romans 11:22, 1 Peter 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:7, [Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Thessalonians 2:13b]
- PLEASED GOD—Hebrews 11:5
- WALKED WITH GOD—Genesis 5:24, 6:9
- FAITHFUL AND WISE—Matthew 24:45-46, [Matthew 7:24-25, Matthew 25:1-13, Ephesians 5:15-17]
- BE READY, PREPARED, KEEP YOUR GARMENTS PREPARED—Revelation 16:15, 19:7-9, Matthew 24:44, Hebrews 11:7, [Matthew 25:9-11]
- A SERVANT DOING THE MASTER'S WILL—Matthew 24:45-46, Mark 13:32-37, [Matthew 7:21-24, Ephesians 5:17]
- SOBER, FAITH, LOVE, HOPE—Hebrews 10:23-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Revelation 3:10-11, Titus 2:12-13
- LOVE GOD FIRST RELATIONSHIP—John 14:3, Romans 11:22, Revelation 2:4, Matthew 22:37-38, 1 Corinthians 2:9
- HOLY— Ephesians 5:27, 2 Peter 3:14-17
- ABIDE IN CHRIST—1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, 1 John 3:1-3, Ephesians 2:13, [John 15:1-5, 8]
- WITHOUT SPOT, WRINKLE, OR BLEMISH, BLAMELESS—Ephesians 5:27, [2 Peter 3:14-15]
- PURE VIRGIN/PURIFIETH HIMSELF—2 Corinthians 11:2, 1 John 3:1-3, [Matthew 25:1-13]
- LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY/DENY UNGODLINESS AND LUST—Titus 2:12-13, Revelation 19:7-9
- PRAY WITHOUT CEASING—1 Thessalonians 5:17, Luke 21:36, Luke 18:1, [Colossians 4:2, Ephesians 6:18, Nehemiah 4:9, Mark 13:33]

- **ARISE, AWAKE**—Song of Solomon 2:10, 13, [Romans 13:11b-14, Ephesians 5:14]
- **BEWARE LEST WE FALL FROM OUR STEADFASTNESS**—2 Peter 3:14-17, [Hebrews 3:14]
- **WAIT AND HEAR/LISTEN TO GOD**—John 3:29, Luke 10:38-42, [Revelation 3:20]
- **STUDY AND WASHED BY HIS WORD**— Matthew 4:4, Ephesians 5:26, [John 15:3, 2 Timothy 2:15]
- **TAKE HEED** (hearts not overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness and cares of this life)—Luke 21:34, Mark 13:33, Romans 11:21, [Hebrews 3:12]
- **PRODUCE FRUIT AND GOOD DEEDS**—Romans 7:4, [Luke 8:15, 13:6-9, John 15:1-5, 8, Ephesians 2:10, Revelation 2:2-5]
- **FEAR HIM AND WORK RIGHTEOUSNESS**—Revelation 19:7-9, Acts 10:34-35, Hebrews 11:7, Deuteronomy 10:12
- **BE HUMBLE, NOT HIGHMINDED, BUT FEAR** (fear of the Lord)—Zephaniah 2:2-3, Romans 11:20, Hebrews 11:7, [Philippians 2:3-4]
- **HOLD FAST, PERSEVERE, BE DILIGENT, STAND FIRM**—Hebrews 10:23, Revelation 3:2-3, 10-11, [2 Peter 3:14, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Revelation 2:2-5, Luke 18:1-8, Ephesians 6:13, Hebrews 3:6-19]
- **OVERCOME**—To each of the seven churches of Revelation Chapters 2 and 3.
- **LOOKING FOR HIS COMING**—[2 Peter 3:12a, 14, Hebrews 9:28, Titus 2:12-13, 2 Timothy 4:8]
- **WATCH** (watch and pray)—Matthew 24:42-51, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, Luke 21:36, Mark 13:32-37, Revelation 3:2-3, 16:15 (watch is used over a dozen times in the above Scriptures alone), Matthew 25:13, [Ephesians 6:18, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Proverbs 8:34, Colossians 4:2, Nehemiah 4:9, 7:3]

HEAVENLY WEDDING INVITATION

The Father invites YOU

*To the Wedding and Marriage Supper of His Son,
the Lamb, the Loving Messiah, the King of Kings*

*This marriage is to the lovely and adopted
Bride of Christ
Who is prepared and has made herself ready*

*Following will be an elaborate and lengthy Wedding Supper
In His prepared place in Heaven*

*Even though delayed, it will be SOON
Exact time to be determined by the Father
He will pick you up in His ultimate stretch limo (called the fiery chariot),
So you must be ready at all times
It is so worth the wait—WAFH and keep your lamps lit!*

Attire: Formal white(s)—clean, without spot or wrinkle

Admission has already been paid for in full by the Son's sacrifice

*Presents are not needed since God owns everything
Present only Yourself, with all the love for the Father and His Son*

Other guests are welcome.

*The Father is so rich and loving that He implores you
to invite all you know to join the other saints
as long as they respect the admission, the dress, and the heart requirements.*

What a wedding! What a party! What an eternity! Don't miss it!

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” [1 Cor. 2:9]

The key difference between them was the oil; the wise had the oil without which the lamps could not work. Oil throughout the Bible is symbolic of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The wise were filled and had a close walk with the Holy Spirit; they *“were ready and watching”* for the return of Jesus their bridegroom. At the end of the parable, they were taken into heaven with Christ their bridegroom to the marriage supper. Christ, however, said of the foolish virgins—*“I know you not”* and they were not taken nor were they allowed into heaven. The key is really knowing, loving and anticipating God as a bride anticipates and prepares for her groom and their wedding day.

The second challenging parable is that of the Great Wedding Supper (or the Excuses) in Luke 14:16-35 and Matt. 22:1-14. Many people were called to the wedding; however, some made *“excuses”* or *“made light of it”*—the invitation to God’s Son’s wedding supper. The excuses they made were that this world’s jobs, merchandise, and family issues were more important than God. They cared less, neglected, did not regard as important, or weren’t interested enough in the things of God. None of those people making excuses were allowed in to the wedding supper. Christ ended the parable saying that we had to love less this messed up world and the things of it, and we have to love Him first. He finished by saying we must be willing to forsake all, to bear our cross, and be His disciples.

Let us all put an end to our excuses and put God first in our lives. Ask for His help to be ready, anticipating, and watching for Christ’s coming for His faithful people.

Luke 21:34-36: *“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (overindulging and careless ease), and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always,*

that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

John 14:2-3: *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

1 John 3:1a, 2b, 3: *“Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God!... We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

Rev. 3:20: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*

Are you ready?

For further help or information contact:

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Weekly sermons and a 12-part Bible Foundations class are available online by going to: www.westmorewest.com.

Written by Chuck Mummert

A complete book about this topic titled: *“The Rapture: A Love Story”* can be obtained at amazon.com (book or kindle), barnesandnoble.com or outskirtspress.com.

The RAPTURE

*God’s Next
Awesome
Event!*

*Are You
Ready?*

Come, let us reason together!

Can God continue to let mankind mess up and destroy itself? Can we keep going the way we are going? And how is your life going?

We are now experiencing what Jesus predicted was just the “*beginning of sorrows*”—the increase in “*wars and rumors of wars, famines, diseases and pestilences, violent earthquakes in various places, and massive persecution of God’s people worldwide. Lawlessness and iniquity will abound and real love (for God and for others) will wax cold.*” After all these preliminary signs, Jesus said, “*then shall the end come*” (Matt. 24:6-14). “*There will be...distress of nations with perplexity...*” (no way out) “*Men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth...*” (Luke 21:25-26).

To expound on Jesus’ words, in the last century alone, WWI killed 16 million, WWII killed 60 million, the Cold War period killed tens of millions. Concerning the persecution of God’s people, the Holocaust alone killed over six million Jews; now Christianity can hardly be found in the Middle East where it began and was once the majority of people. Millions of Christians have been silently killed by atheistic Communist governments or Islamic radicalism.

“This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers...fierce, despisers of those that are good...highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof... never learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:1-7).

God must intervene or mankind will totally destroy itself spiritually and physically. He loves us and begs us to turn to Him before He judges this world during a seven-year period called the Great Tribulation, which will destroy the majority of people on this earth. Afterward, He will return the second time and set up His wonderful kingdom on earth and reign for a period of 1,000 years.

The Rapture! What is it and who will go?

Before this horrific judgment of God—the Great Tribulation, many Christians believe that God will pull His faithful believers out of this world.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

1 Cor. 15:52, 53b: *“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed...and this mortal must put on immortality.”*

Many prophecy-believing Christians believe that God won’t judge the righteous with the unrighteous. Before God supernaturally judged Sodom, Lot was removed by God. God had Noah prepare his family and animals to be saved from worldwide judgment.

“...being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. 5:9). *“...wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come”* (1 Thess. 1:10). *“Let us watch and be sober...putting on...faith and love and the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us”* (1 Thess. 5:6-10). *“Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial (time of Great Tribulation), which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell upon the earth. Behold I am coming quickly!”* (Rev. 3:10-11).

It is obvious from just these few Scriptures that those whom God will catch up, remove, or Rapture from this earth and its coming judgment are the ones who know Christ personally; they persevere, and have faith, hope, and love as they watch and prepare.

How does one obtain salvation?

Jesus himself said that to be saved, a person, by faith, must “*be converted*” or “*be born again*” (John 3:3, Matt. 18:3). Admit to God that you have messed up your life, sinned against God, and you can’t save yourself by any good works. By faith ask God to save you through Christ’s sacrifice of love for you on the cross. Then begin to walk daily with God. Put Him first. Read and study His Words which are found in the Bible. Pray and talk to Him daily. Ask the all-powerful God to help you in every area of your life. Fellowship regularly with other believers. He is desiring—no, demanding a personal relationship with us, not just a religious façade. *“What does the Lord your God require of you? To fear the Lord your God, to walk in all of his ways, and to love Him and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Deut. 10:12).

Those who will be raptured have already rejected this world and its horrible ways and, by faith, they have placed themselves in God’s hands. They watch for and prepare for God’s divine intervention. They “*have made themselves ready*” (John 19:7). How does one make himself ready? Are you ready?

If one studies every Scripture in the Bible concerning the Rapture, one will become aware of the conditional lifestyle, heart characteristics, or qualities of those who will be part of this supernatural event: those who are faithful, taking heed, fear Him and work righteousness, holy, steadfast, sober, patient, wise, servants, humble, purify themselves, and the most important characteristic is those who are looking or watching for His coming. These are the fruit of or results coming from a close walk with God.

Two of Jesus’ parables will especially challenge us regarding the Rapture. The first is the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matt. 25:1-4: *“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”*