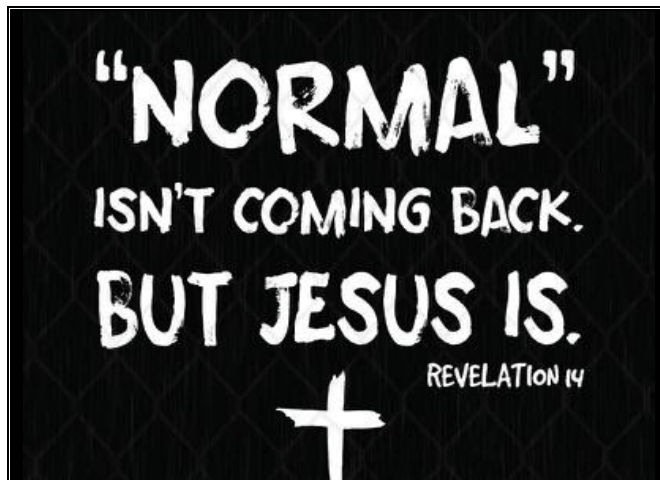


**7th Annual Thanksgiving Celebration
and Rapture Teaching**



By Tim Buck

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FOCUS
ON THE END TIMES

Matthew 24:37-39

³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

I. NORMAL ISN'T COMING BACK!

A. Like the Days of Noah, the world is reaching the 'Point Of No Return' (PONR)

Def. - The PONR refers to God's invisible line when a person, group, nation or the whole world leaves the place where there's still hope and time to change and crosses the line to where all hope and time has run out. (Examples: Sodom; Canaan; Israel)

Genesis 6:3, God says: *"My Spirit will not keep striving with mankind..."*

Genesis 6:5 - *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*

Genesis 6:11 – *"The earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence."*

Genesis 6:13 – *"The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."*

B. The world won't know when it's reached the PONR - Mt. 24: 38-39; Lk. 17:26-27

Eating, drinking, marrying, and did not know until the flood came and took them

C. The PONR brings perilous times, **radical changes**, and bazar behavior

D. Allowing the church to remain on earth after the PONR should **increase our watchfulness**, our witness and our prayer for loved ones and friends

E. If Normal Isn't Coming Back, it's more challenging! **But Noah Lived Victoriously!**

Food Shortages	Immorality	Confusion
Pestilence	Collapsing Economy	Fear
Wars & Rumors of War	Uncertainty	Lawlessness

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household - Hebrew 11:7

II. THE WORLD MUST REACH THE PONR BEFORE THE RAPTURE!

Immediately After the Rapture...

A. God REMOVES THE RESTRAINING MINISTRY of the Holy Spirit - 2 Thess. 2:7-8

He who now restrains (Holy Spirit) will do so until He is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one (Antichrist) will be revealed.

1. The Holy Spirit doesn't leave the Earth, He stops preventing the overflow of darkness
2. World events are orchestrated to quickly allow the rise of Antichrist
 - a. Rise of the 10-King Empire - Daniel 7:24a; Rev. 17:12-14
 - b. Antichrist's Coup to take over the empire - Daniel 7:24b
 - c. Antichrist's Peace Agreement to divide Israel - Daniel 9:27; Joel 3:2-3
 - d. Start of the 7-Year Tribulation - Daniel 9:27

God's wrath consumes the earth for 7 years

Immediately After the Rapture...

B. God sends a "STRONG DELUSION" on those left behind - 2 Thess. 2:11-12

*For this reason God will send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in sin.*

Immediately After the Rapture...

C. God sends "SUDDEN DESTRUCTION" on the whole world - 1 Thess. 5:3

*³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then **sudden destruction** comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

Immediately After the Rapture...

D. God sends the TRIBULATION JUDGMENTS because the world's sin cup is full - Rev. 14:15

"Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

III. WHAT IS THE RAPTURE?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

¹³ I do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, concerning those who have died, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have died in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, (*This is what the Lord taught me about the rapture*), that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (*Gk. - 'harpozo' = "snatched away"*) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

A. The Rapture is a **major NT doctrine** and central teaching of the Apostle Paul!

Paul taught the rapture was imminent and we should be watching & waiting:
Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 2 Thess. 3:5; Heb. 9:28

1. Three major passages: 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18

2. Other Rapture Passages

1 Cor. 1:7-8	1 Thess. 2:19	1 Tim. 6:14	Heb. 9:28
Col. 3:4	1 Thess. 5:9, 23	2 Tim 4:1, 8	Heb. 10:25
1 Thess. 1:10	2 Thess. 2:1	Titus 2:13	

B. The Rapture teaching came directly from Jesus to Paul - 1 Thess. 4:15

Paul invokes the authority of Jesus: "*this we say to you by the Word of the Lord*"

C. A generation alive in the last days that will not see death - 1 Thess. 4:17

We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together

D. The Rapture is **Resurrection Day** for the Church, as certain as the Resurrection of Jesus!

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 1 Thess. 4:14

⁹ If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

IV. THE STAGES OF THE RAPTURE

A. Preparation in Heaven - The Order of Descent

1. The Lord Himself will Return for us - 1 Thess. 4:16a

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout

- a. Christ leaves the Father's right hand for the first time since He was seated
- b. Christ Promised to return - Jn. 14:1-3

If I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again** and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

2. Jesus calls a Meeting in Heaven - Prepare for Resurrection Day - 1 Thess. 4:14

"God will bring with Him those who have died in Jesus."

- a. The "*church of the first-born, registered in heaven*" - Heb. 12:23
- b. The "*dead in Christ*" will not miss the Rapture but will be raptured first!

3. The Archangel Michael and many angels accompany Jesus and the church saints

B. For Believers, There's Nothing to FEAR about Death

1. When a believer dies he is ushered into the presence of the Lord - 2 Cor. 5:8

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord

2. God has everything planned out and ready to take care of you on the other side
3. Instead of fearing death, we should anticipate the incredible trip
4. How many Trips are there in our future to heaven and back to earth?

C. Pause in the Atmosphere above Earth - vs. 17

¹⁷ We who are alive will be caught up (harpazo) to meet the Lord in the air

1. The Lord and his angelic entourage, pause “in the air” above earth
2. Deceased, church-age saints continue to earth/graves and are resurrected - vs. 16b
believers who have died will rise from their graves first
3. The risen saints with glorified bodies return back to meet Christ in the air & wait for the Rapture to greet the rest of the church when it arrives

D. Trilogy of Sounds Announcing the Rapture - vs. 16

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God

E. Living Saints Transformed and Raptured

1. Paul assumed he would be alive at the time of the Rapture - vs. 17
We who are alive and remain will be “caught-up”
 - a. Distinguishing feature = Imminence = “At any moment” (No signs)
 - b. Imminence sets the Rapture apart from the Second Coming (Many signs)
2. A Nano-second transformation (1 Cor. 15:51) “*the blink of an eye*”
3. 4-Fold Design - The believer’s “Glorified Body” - 1 Cor. 15:42-44

⁴² The body sown is perishable, it's raised imperishable; ⁴³ it's sown in dishonor, it's raised in glory; it's sown in weakness, it's raised in power; it's sown a natural body, it's raised spiritual

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| ✓ | “perishable” | No more sickness and death | PTL! |
| ✓ | “dishonor” | No more shame because of sin | Amen!! |
| ✓ | “weakness” | No more weakness in temptation | Amen!!! |
| ✓ | “natural” | No more limits to time-space-matter | Halleluiah! |

F. Rendezvous in the Clouds

1. Meeting the Lord - vs. 17

We who are alive... caught up... to meet the Lord in the air.

- a. "Meet" = Gk. "apantesis" - "an appointed time & location"
- b. Jesus, waiting with open arms - Jn. 14:3

I will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also

2. Meeting friends and relatives - vs. 17

"caught up together with them" (The saints who died)

- a. Gathering together with the completed church - 2 Thess. 2:1
gathering together to meet Him...
- b. The Rapture will reunite friends and loved ones - 1 Thess. 2:14, 19

3. Meeting the rest of the church - International

Chinese - Arab - Africa - America - Asian

G. Escorted by Jesus to the Father's House

1. The Groom brings His Bride back to the Father's House - John 14:3

Since I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also

2. The Lord Presents the Church Faultless - Jude 24

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy

3. Finding Yourself in Heaven - Rev. 4:3, 6

Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald.

V. CONCLUSION - CHOOSING THE LIFE THAT GOD CALLS GREAT: LOVING JESUS

The 'Sermon on the Mount' is the greatest teaching by the greatest teacher in human history.

Nobody has ever said anything like this before! **Math. 5:18-19**

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Whoever breaks (consistently) one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does (consistently) and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says: I want to tell you, whoever breaks or dismisses even the least of what I am telling you, whoever teaches or encourages and emboldens others to dismiss these things, EVEN THE SMALLEST PART—will be called least in the kingdom of heaven (eternity).

But “whoever”—that is my favorite word—anybody who embraces these teachings and strengthens or encourages others to obey them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (eternity).

That is a remarkable statement because both of these groups (Great & Least) are saved individuals living together in eternity yet their status is different due to choices made in this life.

Paul taught this same idea, but he said it a little differently in **1 Cor. 15:41-42:**

“For one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.”

Jesus is saying that the Father will call some people's life choices great and some people's life choices least. He will say in effect that the way you managed your heart and the way you chose to spend your time & money & the choices you made—will be reflected in eternity as great or least.

It does not mean these people's ministry impact was really big. It does not mean they accomplished a lot of things in outward achievements (though that is good to do). It is about the way they engaged their heart. Said another way - how hard did they work at fulfilling the first commandment?

*Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. **Math. 22:37-38***

Believers Prayer

Lord, shock me now. Please do not shock me when it's too late. Tip me off now as to what I need to know. I want to know what kind of lifestyle it is that You call great. I ask for more understanding that both my choices and my heart would be right for you and I ask for an anointing on my heart and life to be empowered to live out the first commandment love in my heart for you and your Word.