

# **The Day of Rescue**

## **Rescues from Wrath**

We know that the "sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:1) "were by nature children of wrath" (:3). "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (Jn 3:36). However, "because of His great love with which He loved us" (Eph 2:4) he delivers us from wrath. "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth" (2Th 2:13). "The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus 2:11). Christ has been "offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28). He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed" (Titus 2:14). "By grace you have been saved" (Eph 2:5). Salvation is an ongoing process. We are "those who are being saved" (2Co 2:15). We participate and "keep the commandment without stain or reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Ti 6:14). However, in the course of time he will "appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin" (:28). "For now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Ro 13:11). "You are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pe 1:5). Therefore, he will "confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 1:8). We know the day of the Lord is synonymous with his coming. Jesus directs us to "straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Lk 21:28).

This fits into a larger perspective. If you have an "unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom 2:5). "It is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come" (Col 3:6). There will be "a time of tribulation" (Mk 13:19). "Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved" (:20). In John's revelation he saw that "the Root of David, has overcome to open the book and its seven seals" (Rev 5:5). John heard a loud voice saying, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God" (16:1). They contain "the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come" (6:16-17). Fortunately, we are "to wait for His Son from heaven . . . who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1Th 1:10). "God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation" (5:9). Therefore, put on "as a helmet, the hope of salvation" (:9).

## **Saved from Wrath**

"God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Th 5:9). It doesn't say how we would be protected from divine wrath but "obtaining salvation" is the context of the verse. Christ "died for us" (:10) so that we "will live together with Him" (:10). We obtain salvation because "He who believes in the Son has eternal life" (Jn 3:36). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (:16). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish" (10:27-28). But "He who does

not have the Son of God does not have the life" (1Jn 5:12). "He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Mt 25:41). The context is not the method by which we will avoid the wrath but that "we will live together with Him" (1Th 5:10).

Jesus said, "I will keep you from the hour of testing" (Rev 3:10). In Greek the word is "tereo" based on the primary root "teros" meaning to guard. When you guard something you (1) watch over, (2) are careful to pay close attention, and (3) observe to keep close track of it. This preserves its character so it functions as its supposed to and doesn't morph into another configuration or existence. "He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles" (Prov 21:23). To guard is "shamar" which is the primary root of "to keep." You possess and hold the status quo and guide yourself accordingly to avoid distractions. They expressed to "keep yourselves free from such things" (Ac 15:29) and to remain stationary outside from alternatives and separate from enticements. David prayed, "Deliver me from my enemies, O my God. Set me securely on high away from those who rise up against me" (Ps 59:1). He was not a captive and was separate though surrounded. "They lie in wait for my life; the mighty gather against me" (:3). He was free being outside but threatened being inside. The purpose was "to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine" (Ps 33:19). If God keeps you "from the hour of testing" (Rev 3:10) you can be in the midst of famine but you will not die because of the protection. They prayed "deliver our lives from death" (Jos 2:13) where the word is "natsal" to deliver oneself or snatch away. Deliverance is a major tenet of salvation in that "He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom" of God (Col 1:13). Jesus prayed, "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one" (Jn 17:15). They were in the world but "not of the world" (:16) because Jesus "guarded them" (:12) and they had been kept "in Thy name" (:11). "He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him" (1Jn 5:18) and "no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (Jn 10:28). You can be present in the "hour of testing" but preserved from the dangers.

## Rapture

Paul told the Ephesians he was "made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace" (Eph 3:7) "to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God" (:9). He said to the Thessalonians that "God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" (1Th 4:14) and that those who are alive "shall not precede those who have fallen asleep" (:15). Isaiah prophesied, "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise . . . and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits" (Isa 26:19). "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (Da 12:2). Paul told the Corinthians he would "prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2Co 5:8). God will "bring with Him" (1Th 4:14) those who have died and "the dead in Christ shall rise first" (:16). But if they are with the Lord in heaven having previously died then how could they be brought along by being raised from the grave? Peter referred to Paul "in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand" (2Pe 3:16). Then Paul said "we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds" (1Th 4:17). Jesus

had told them "In My Father's house are many dwelling places . . . [and] I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2). We will "meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1Th 4:17). This implies that we have been transported to heaven.

Paul said "I tell you a mystery . . . [which is] we will all be changed" (1Co 15:51). He refers to "the coming of the Lord . . . [where] the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout" (1Th 4:15-16). He describes it as "the day of the Lord [which] will come just like a thief in the night" (5:2). "Whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him" (:10). Does this refer to living together before "the coming" (4:15) also? In his second letter Paul asks, "Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?" (2Th 2:5). The Thessalonians had "received the word in much tribulation" (1Th 1:6) and wondered if the Great Tribulation had begun and they had missed being "caught up." Paul advised not "to be disturbed . . . to the effect that the day of the Lord has come" (2Th 2:2). He explained "let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (:3). Furthermore, "the Lord will slay [him] with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming" (:8). Many refer to this coming as "the rapture." The "son of destruction" (:3) is the ringleader for the Tribulation, but it is argued that "God has not destined us for wrath" (1Th 5:9), so by being "caught up" we avoid experiencing it. However, if the antichrist is destroyed at the Coming (which is when the rapture occurs) we would have had to have been present during that tribulation waiting for the Coming when Christ would bring the lawless one "to an end" (2Th 2:8). In Paul's letters "some things [are] hard to understand" (2Pe 3:16).

### **Caught Up**

Premillennialists take literally the events of Revelation 20:1-6. They see the church as "caught up" or suddenly "seized" by Christ to meet him "in the clouds . . . in the air" (1Th 4:7). This is necessary "for God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:9). We would therefore avoid the Tribulation which occurs next. Jesus "rescues us from the coming wrath" (1:10). This is in accordance with "the words of this prophecy" (Rev 1:3). "Blessed is the one who reads . . . and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near" (1:3). Premillennialism literally interprets this as a preliminary resurrection where "the dead in Christ will rise first [and] then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together" (1Th 4:16-17). It is an upward "snatching away" as distinguished from "when our Lord Jesus comes [downward, the next time] with all his holy ones" (3:13).

### **Raised Up**

Jesus said, "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (Jn 5:28-29). "Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:40). "Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day'" (11:24). "They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Rev 20:4). "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the

first resurrection. The second death has no power over them" (:5). "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies'" (Jn 11:25).

"God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation" (1Th 5:9). "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). "Salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Rom 13:11). However, we are saved when we believe. But Christ "shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin" (Heb 9:28). It is "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pe 1:5). We are therefore "those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). "We wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God" (Titus 2:13). "We through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness" (Gal 5:5) which is represented by the "crown of righteousness" (2Ti 4:8). We "wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead" (1Th 1:10).

### **Gathered Up**

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness" (Rom 1:18). But God does "not appoint us to suffer wrath" (1Th 5:9). "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb 9:27). The Lord is "the righteous judge" (2Ti 4:8). He "will judge the living and the dead, in view of his appearing and his kingdom" (4:1). Paul said God "will award me on that day [the crown of righteousness]--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (4:8). "Keep this command . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time" (1Ti 6:14). "At the last trumpet . . . the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1Co 15:52). "When He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (1Jn 3:3).

A concern of Paul's was "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him" (2Th 2:1). He explained to the Thessalonians "we do not want you to be uninformed . . . [because] God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" (1Th 4:13-14). He used "the coming of the Lord" (:15) to clarify the position of "those who have fallen asleep in Jesus" (:14). They were to "comfort one another with these words" (:18) because "Jesus [also] died and rose again" (:14). Paul referred to "the coming of the Lord . . . [who] Himself will descend from heaven" (:15-16). Then "we shall always be with the Lord" (:17).

### **Raised Imperishable**

Paul told the Corinthians, "I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1Co 15:51-52). He told the Thessalonians, "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead 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, and so we shall always be with the Lord" (1Th 4:16-17). John said, "I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them" (Rev 8:2). Jesus said, "He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect" (Mt 24:31). "Blow the trumpet in Zion . .

. for the day of the Lord is coming" (Joel 2:1). Everyone who "believes in Him may have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:40). "Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself" (1Jn 3:3). He "shall appear a second time . . . to those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). "He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed" (2Th 1:10). "What will you do on the day of the appointed festival and on the day of the feast of the Lord?" (Hosea 9:5).

Paul said "we will all be changed" (1Co 1:7). But "it has not appeared as yet what we will be" (1Jn 3:2). It means that "this mortal must put on immortality" (1Co 15:53). It is a "mystery which has been hidden from the past ages" (Col 1:26) that "has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (Eph 3:5) and "manifested to His saints" (Col 1:26). Therefore he can "transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Php 3:21). Jesus provides a logic for this translation when he says, "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" (Jn 14:3). "To be absent from the body [is] to be at home with the Lord" (2Co 5:8). Paul said he had "the desire to depart and be with Christ [which is] very much better" (Php 1:23). Jesus told the criminal "today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43). "Enoch was taken up" (Heb 11:5) and "Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven" (2Ki 2:11). Paul was "caught up to the third heaven" (2Co 12:2) and didn't even know if it was in or out of the body (:3). "The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away" (Ac 8:39). Snatching takes place faster than the blink of an eye. They are instantaneously "caught up together with them in the clouds" (1Th 4:17) in "our gathering together to Him" (2Th 2:1). Paul wanted to substantiate that his teaching in his first letter on "the day of the Lord" (:2) was accurate and that they shouldn't be "shaken from [their] composure" (:2).

## **Imminency**

Rapture advocates promulgate the imminency of the event since it is impending. They say it is signless so it can occur at any moment even though its inevitability may be postponed. Even Jesus said of that generation that "a sign will not be given it" (Mt 16:4). However, later his disciples asked, "When will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (24:3). Much later Jesus said, "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown" (Rev 3:11). Paul advised "let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near" (Php 4:5). James agreed saying "be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (Jas 5:8). They anticipated his return using the word "Maranatha" (1Co 16:22) which means "our Lord, come." They were so convinced that Paul suggested they be "awaiting eagerly the revelation" (1:7). He said "we eagerly wait for a Savior" (Php 3:20). Another observed that Christ would appear "to those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). Jude advised "keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life" (Jude 21). But Christ did not come as soon as they expected. Waiting then became an attitude they had to cultivate so they wouldn't be nervous and upset.

We are to wait on God for an answer when we have a problem or decision to make. However, it is appropriate anytime as in waiting "for your God continually" (Hos 12:6). To wait means to tarry, hope for, or to expect. It doesn't mean to put yourself "on hold" or be sitting next to the telephone waiting for a call not knowing when it will come. You must be actively involved and positive. "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps 27:13). Waiting isn't just academic. You might be in a "time of trouble" (Ps 37:39) or in a "pit of destruction" (Ps 40:2). The psalmist exclaimed "I am weary with crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God" (Ps 69:3). Another cried "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I wait for Your words" (Ps 119:147). A third professed "O Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong" (Ps 30:7). And there are times where "the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression" (Isa 30:20). Paul told the Corinthians about "our affliction which came to us in Asia" (2Co 1:8). The rationale is that "the sufferings of Christ are ours" (:5). He said "we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so we despaired even of life" (:8). The purpose is "so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God" (:19). God said "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (2Co 12:9). Jesus said "apart from Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The result is that God "comforts us . . . so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction" (:4). Paul cited that God "delivered us from so great a peril of death" (:10).

God has "acted on our behalf" (Ps 68:28). He "acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him" (Isa 64:4). God "delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him" (Ps 35:10). "He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power" (Isa 40:29). "He is their strength in time of trouble . . . [and] helps them and delivers them . . . and saves them, because they take refuge in Him" (Ps 37:39-40). God is "my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken." (Ps 62:6). He is "the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God" (:7). God has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we may confidently say, 'the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?'" (Heb 13:5-6). "Those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength" (Isa 40:31). It applies to all ages because even "youths grow weary and tired" (:30). "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage" (Ps 27:14). "With the heart a person believes" (Ro 10:10). Therefore, without this strength you will lose heart (Ps 27:13). But remember it is "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit" (Zec 4:6). Make sure you aren't trying to save your own life for you "shall lose it" (Mk 8:35). But whoever "loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it" (:35). You defend against being self-centered with this mindset. "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col 3:23).

## **Day of Atonement**

What kind of framework do you put this doctrine in? A world view is okay as far as it goes. It says keep your feet on the ground and stay in touch with reality. It seems to advocate a survival rationale which is what is necessary to survive. So where does the heavenly perspective apply? "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Php 3:20). Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn 18:36). We are as "strangers in the world" (1Pe 2:11 NIV). Even "the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God" (1Co 3:19). Over the centuries religions have tried to reconcile the physical world with spiritual realities.

Denominations have created doctrine to define truth for themselves. Some will even use a scripture from the Bible to customize a doctrine to use. However, "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (2Pe 1:20). Therefore, we must be "handling accurately the word of truth" (2Ti 2:15). One helpful framework is the Feasts (festivals) of the Lord. Passover occurs in the first month of Israel's religious year. Pentecost transpires in the third month, and Tabernacles in the seventh. The historical events happened to Israel, and then Christ completed them, because the Old Testament experiences pointed to Christ's fulfillments. Passover and Pentecost were fulfilled in literal 24-hour days. The Day of Atonement will similarly take place because, "On exactly the tenth day of the seventh month is the day of atonement" (Lev 23:27). "Through His own blood, He entered the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12). This will "cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve" God (:14).

The high priest entered the Holy of Holies "once a year, not without taking blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people" (Heb 9:7). "It is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you . . . from all your sins" (Lev 16:30). "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2Co 5:21). "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3). Christological fulfillment of this day is "where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever" (Heb 6:20). Therefore we must "hold fast the confession of our hope . . . for He who promised is faithful" (10:23). Furthermore "by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement" (:18). We are "laying hold of the hope set before us" (:18) which is "an anchor of the soul" (:19) and "one which enters within the veil" (:19). God told Moses, "I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat" (Lev 16:2) which was in the Holy of Holies. In addition, "Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear . . . to those who eagerly await Him" (Heb 9:28). We are "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of Christ" (Titus 2:13). "Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself" (1Jn 3:3). "When He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (:2). It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). "This perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1Co 15:53).