

#2 The End Times

NEW LIFE STATEMENT OF FAITH

ESCHATOLOGY (The Doctrine of the Last Things): We believe that spiritually Israel will one day return to the Lord and become a fully restored nation. Politically, Israel will spend most of her history prior to the Millennium under the sway of Gentile rulers. **We believe in the pre-tribulational Rapture of the Church**, in which all believers of the Church Age will be caught up by Christ to meet Him in the air. They will then be judged and rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Church also makes up the Bride of Christ, which will be wed to Him after the Rapture at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. After the Rapture, those left on the earth will undergo the Seven Years of the Great Tribulation. This period will culminate in the wars of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, which, unlike the Rapture, will be a coming battle for judgment. After that Christ will establish the Millennium. After 1000 years Satan will be loosed and will lead a revolt with the unbelieving children of the Millennium. This will result in the Great White Throne Judgment of all unsaved people. After this time the eternal new heaven and new earth will begin.

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

1Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

- 1) Some Christians in that church were worried about the fate of loved ones who **HAD DIED** 4:13
- 2) Paul offers solid Christian hope for the future that is **ROOTED** in the truth of the Gospel 4:14
- 3) Paul declares that God had revealed to him that **DECEASED BELIEVERS** will be raised one day 4:14,16
- 4) There will be a generation of Christians who **WILL NOT DIE**, but who will be alive when Christ returns for them 4:15
- 5) At the appointed moment in God's Plan, Jesus **HIMSELF** will come down from heaven, raise the bodies of dead saints, then snatch away the living remnant of His people from the earth to meet Him in the air to be with Him forever 4:16-17
- 6) This teaching on the **RAPTURE** was meant to be a message of **COMFORT** to believers who hear it 4:18

THE DAY OF THE LORD

1Thessalonians 5:1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

- 1) It will come as a sudden and unexpected **CATASTROPHE** 5:2-3
- 2) True believers will not be **SURPRISED** by it 5:4-5
- 3) Christians should be **ALERT** and **SERIOUS-MINDED** in light of it 5:6-8
- 4) Believers are not destined to **EXPERIENCE** the wrath of God that will be poured out during the Day of the Lord, but instead will experience Jesus' **DELIVERANCE** 5:9 (see 4:13-18)
- 5) Both **LIVING AND DECEASED** believers will escape this and live with Christ 5:10
- 6) These are meant to be **ENCOURAGING** words that build other believers up in their faith 5:11

THE ANTICHRIST

2Thessalonians 2:1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

- 1) Before the Day of the Lord and the Return of Jesus, a massive apostasy-“**THE REBELLION**”-will occur 2:3
- 2) The “man of lawlessness” will make his appearance **BEFORE** the day of the Lord will come 2:3
- 3) This “son of destruction” will declare **HIMSELF** to be God, take his seat in God’s temple, and demand worship 2:4
- 4) Something is currently **RESTRAINING** his appearance, but one day it will be removed and he will be revealed 2:6-7
- 5) This man will be empowered by **SATAN** with the ability to perform signs and wonders and thereby deceive many unbelievers into thinking he is indeed God in the flesh 2:9-10
- 6) At some point after he appears on the scene, he will be **DESTROYED** by Jesus at His Second Coming 2:8
- 7) Knowing the sequence of these events should have the effect of relieving Christians’ **ANXIETY AND ALARM** 2:1-2

THE ‘ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION’

Daniel 9:24 “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. ²⁵ “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶ After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

OUR RESPONSE ...

WAKE UP! Romans 13:11-12

CLEAN UP! 1 John 3:2-3

SPEAK UP! 2 Peter 3:8-9

SHOW UP! Hebrews 10:25

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WANT TO DO FOR GOD BEFORE JESUS RETURNS?