

NOW The RAPTURE ?

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

(Part 1 — Booklet #1)



Does the Church of Jesus Christ take seriously her LORD's Counsel to be ready – ready in light of *actual* Bible Truth? Contemporary eschatology often encourages the polar opposite – seriously! There are dangerous extra-biblical *myths* contained in many popular end-time viewpoints today.

Dr. Jon Swanson appeals to Scripture in order to present *the challenge* found in this work.

Don't be caught unprepared as a result of having accepted a faulty, unbiblical view concerning end times. It continues to be the Word of God which provides our Lord's insights into, what has now become, an eternally significant topic. Will the Church rise to the occasion? The Bible offers prophetic insight on this and many other related and most pressing questions. Please, because you're in harm's way, read on.

NOW The RAPTURE? (Part 1) **Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth**

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(Part 1 — Booklet #1)

Jon Swanson
Endurance Ministries

An important Pre-Release of
NOW The RAPTURE? (Part 2)
is also currently available – as posted
on the “gift page” of www.currentmatters.org.

Also, go to
www.TheRaptureGathering.com
for a short but important video
presentation pertaining to these matters.

A note of preface from Endurance Ministries

We live in a very unusual day as, no doubt, you've discerned. How can we, as followers of Jesus Christ, assure He receives glory and praise through our lives? To live lives in accord with what He has communicated in His Word is to love Him. To love Him is to glorify and praise Him. Surely this is a desire of God's sincere people today.

The following presentation makes a simple appeal: We need to get back into His Word if we are to be prepared for His return in the manner He requires. This work then goes on to propose another possible end-time scenario. Because most agree there are problems in every end-time position—those who have studied the topic especially understand this to be the case—we encourage the reader to participate in a very God-honoring challenge: Go back to the Word of God and build your end-time perspective (eschatology) upon what He has revealed—and only upon what He has revealed. As you do, consider the position briefly proposed in this short address. Another work which more thoroughly defines this view is now available.* As you walk through this document, simply consider the general proposal in light of the clear content of the BIBLE. We can and must continue to be thankful for His Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!

* *The Final Trumpet RAPTURE Gathering: An Introduction*

We hope the following Scriptures will be of strong encouragement to you!

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.
(Joshua 1:8,9; NKJV)

... Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge.... We must obey God rather than men.
(Acts 4:19b & 5:29b; ESV)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
(Romans 8:18; NKJV)

Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
(II Timothy 3:12; NASB)



What a beautiful day in which to live. YES, what a wonderful time to be alive in Christ!

In the same way they've unfolded through human history, **God's promises** continue to be realized today. What joy for those of us who are His. God is indeed trustworthy—so contrary to the *opinion* of much of the world today.

Let's review what He has said concerning His Son's glorious return for His people in Jesus Christ. We hope you will find REST and JOY as you contemplate these precious Truths.

“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.”

(John 14:1-3; NLT)

(The NIV translates this passage in such a way as to allow for the promotion of an idea not found in the Greek texts. Compare the NIV to the other English translations and see if you can discern what that *idea* is.)

“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! 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.”

(I Corinthians 15:50-52; ESV)

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For

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 in Christ 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

(I Thessalonians 4:13-18; NASB)

These passages are often called *Rapture* texts. We find in these portions of Scripture God’s promises that those who are on the earth (who are born-again followers of Jesus Christ) will one day be gathered up to meet Him in the air. Let’s interweave the content of these passages:

God graces His people with such a hopeful perspective! Our Lord Jesus has conquered death and is now in glory preparing a place for us. One day He will come back and receive us to Himself—that where He is, there we will be also. It’s at the wonderful last-trumpet rapture event where we will be changed in a twinkling of an eye. At that time those of us in Christ who are still living on the earth will experience something beyond what words can describe. We will receive glorified bodies. First the dead in Christ will rise, then we who are still alive will also be gathered up and will meet our blessed Lord Jesus in the clouds ... and will then always be with Him. Glorious!

(Glorious IF you are a follower of Jesus Christ. If you are reading this and have not yet accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and what He did on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins, please go to the concluding page of this short address and read the Good News appeal. If you receive God’s gift you will sincerely experience a radical conversion. In fact, you’ll actually read the rest of this booklet differently. So don’t wait until you’ve finished reading this. Scroll to page 14 now and act on what you find there. Receive God’s love gift to you. If you take this step of beginning anew with God, please tell us—we have some materials to help you in your new life in Christ.)

We find such encouragement in the three passages quoted above (though there are others)! God will make a short work of this earth. This brief moment of human history will serve as an illustration throughout eternity concerning the consequences of rejecting God and going our own way. In light of the grotesque fruits of rebellion over these past millennia, we will choose differently in the eternal state. Beyond question, the temptation to disobey will be so negative in our minds—if that thought would even present itself—we will not, ever again, rebel. Praise God!

We need to get back to our main topic: Can the Rapture take place at any moment?

Let's consider three important historical events pertinent to our address.

The Man of God – I Kings 13

Designated only as the “man of God” in the passage, this spokesman delivered a strong message against a false altar. This message was indirectly spoken to King Jeroboam who was burning incense on the same altar. Having delivered the message with miraculous affirmation, the prophet returned home another way. (The Lord had instructed him, upon completing his mission, to go straight home using a different route.)

An old prophet in the region heard about the encounter this prophet had had with King Jeroboam and immediately pursued him. Once he caught up to this *man of God*, this other prophet told him the Lord had declared he was to return home with him. The text says he was lying in this matter. (vs. 18)

Instead of obeying the command of the Lord to go straight home, the man of God listened to the old prophet and followed him home. He followed wrong counsel that day and before the day had concluded, he was dead—judged by the Lord for heeding counsel contrary to what he had been given by Almighty God.

The Prophet – Jeremiah 20 – 29

These chapters bear a striking parallel to our spiritual day. Many who publicly claimed to hear from God were actually bringing false messages. Jeremiah was different. While he also claimed to be bringing the Word of the Lord, Jeremiah's appeals actually were indeed words God had truly spoken. The false prophets brought deceitful messages and, as a result, also brought persecution against Jeremiah. Can you make any possible parallels to today?

One day those who had listened to the false prophets discovered Jeremiah was correct.

Those who the people had heeded were wrong—false prophets giving empty promises of *peace and safety*. These chapters are amazing in that they speak to our contemporary setting. Some, in the name of the Lord, are bringing false messages of peace and safety today. “If we would only align with the other spiritual paths, we would secure a world without war,” they say. But this counsel—called syncretism—is diametrically opposed to both common sense and to clear revelation in the Word of God. And again, they say: “It's all about grace so don't worry, be happy, for it's all going to *pan out* in the end!” But this counsel also represents dangerous deceptive half-truths.

The Lord Jesus Christ – Matthew 15

Our Lord Jesus confronted those who pretended to bring God's messages and standards. In this fascinating passage, Jesus actually tells the religious leaders (of all people!) they were worshiping God in vain because they had 1) put their traditions above God's clearly revealed absolutes and, 2) went so far with this that they even encouraged their ritual practices to the extent of disobeying God's standard. They elevated their own ideas above God's and did so to the extreme of actually rejecting the clearly established regulations of the very God they sought to honor. As a result, they were in grave sin and the Lord addressed their error. We do not want to make similar mistakes, yet it's so easy to gravitate in that direction.

Is it possible you've read through the three passages on pages 4 & 5 and have interpreted them to teach the idea that God's people in Christ Jesus will be taken before the time the antichrist will seek to rule the earth? If so, what biblical basis do you cite for such an idea? Oh, yes, perhaps you've heard it from some of the *Bible preachers*. But these days, since there are so many around today who do not actually teach the content of the Word of God, that's not a good enough answer. The important question is: What biblical support explicitly evidences that idea? That's what matters. If our *tradition* is not supported biblically, is it possible we've been misinformed, as were those in the examples highlighted in the preceding paragraphs?

Here are a few related questions to consider: What is the biblical justification for claiming the Rapture event is the next event on the prophetic calendar? Some theologians claim the gathering of God's elect could happen at any time, or *imminently*. Where in Scripture does it ever speak to the "imminent" (as some Pre-Tribulationists define it) rapture event? These are both fair and important questions!

Do the passages on pages 4 & 5 explicitly state the timing of the event? What are some of the particulars of these end-time rapture passages? Isn't the sounding of the "last" or "final" trumpet also included in the context?

These concerns have tremendous ramifications! If the timing of the gathering of the elect takes place **after** the time of tribulation as defined by Matthew 24, the Pre-Trib Rapture position actually discourages God's people from preparing as Christ Jesus has so mandated.

In Acts 17 the people of Berea checked the teachings of Paul with the Word of God in order to see if what was being preached was correct. Now you, too, have a crucial *Berean* opportunity—a *challenge*, if you would!

Let's reread the passages carefully—a second time. Following these passages are a few other portions of God's Word where the gathering of God's people is also addressed. Pay close attention to the clearly stated content in the contexts of these pertinent passages. Let's differentiate between 1) the assumptions we may possibly hold based on what we've always believed or been taught, and, 2) the actual data in the text. This includes interpretations, but be careful here. We often don't discern between the two.



Here's our "NOW The RAPTURE?" *mystery* for you to prayerfully consider:

(Note the unusual connection I Corinthians 15's *mystery* has in relationship to "mystery" in Revelation 10:4-7 ... Awesome!)

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am."

(John 14:1-3; NLT)

"I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! 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."

(I Corinthians 15:50-52; ESV)

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For 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 in Christ 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

(I Thessalonians 4:13-18; NASB)

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

(Matthew 24:29-31; NKJV)

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.’ ... Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.”

(Revelation 11:15-18; 14:14-16; NKJV)

(By the way, any quality version could have been submitted for these passages. As you contemplate the proposal, go to the other Bible versions in order to include a comparison in your study. Also, go to the other pertinent passages which address specific events tied to the wonderful, soon-coming return of our Lord Jesus Christ. See our [web sites](#) for the biblical references. <http://www.endmin.com/519958#Q13>)

Did you notice a common denominator through the passages? With the exception of John 14, each passage includes a trumpet blast. Is it possible the last of the Revelation trumpets—trumpet number seven—is the last or final trumpet of I Corinthians 15? What BIBLICAL grounds do we have in support of our answers?

One final thing before we conclude ...

Practical Ramifications of This Position

When our Lord Jesus was asked by His disciples when His return would take place, He said to be ready. But ready for what? In the Matthew 24, 25 address, Jesus answers the question, “What will be the sign of Your coming?” Note His very first response includes the counsel to watch. He says “Take heed.” He then goes on to forewarn them much tribulation (from the world; not from God) will come to those who are in Christ in those closing days of human history. But this is not all. He counsels them to discern false prophets who will deceive many.

The signs continue. After the tribulation of those days there will be heavenly signs. See Matthew 24:29 for details. Thereafter, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven. All the inhabitants of the earth will see Him coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Wow! Luke 21:28 is especially interesting in light of these signs. It says God’s people are to look up, for our redemption draws near! Read this passage in its context. In short, our Lord Jesus states certain signs will take place before His return. Even many Pre-Tribulationists confess some of these early signs are taking place today.

In relationship to this concern, some have argued against the Final Trumpet Gathering by saying, “But you presume the Rapture hasn’t taken place before this Matthew 24 account.” Our response: “It’s not a presumption because the Bible **nowhere** explicitly teaches the Pre-Tribulation Rapture! The actual assumption is that the Rapture event will have already taken place before this time of tribulation.” “But this passage is talking about Israel,” some say. Again, discern the assumptions here because this is NOT what the text says. (We also encourage you to conduct a word study on *imminency*, including a general dictionary definition of the very word – “imminent” – AND a study of this word if and/or when it’s used in the biblical texts. An objective study may surprise you!)

No, the Rapture event is NOT the next event on the prophetic calendar. This idea is nowhere stated in the Word of God. Yes, one theological tradition says so, but that's one of the things we are challenging in this short address. We also do not find the Preterist assumption (that these passages are speaking to events which have already taken place) to be supported biblically simply because these passages are addressing the days immediately prior to our Lord's return. A simple reading of these end-time passages makes this clear. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is yet future!

So what are the practical ramifications of a final-trumpet rapture position? We need to live differently than we are living today. In ready expectancy of His soon return, we need to be discerning the times in order to avoid the deceptions of today and tomorrow.

The Final Trumpet Rapture Gathering proposal is further defined on the following web sites. If you would care to write to Endurance Ministries, you will find the means to get in touch with us on these sites. Please be sure to look over these site materials before contacting us. It's a good possibility your question(s) may have already been addressed. For a definitive introduction to this new end-time position, please read our 260-page book. [Click here](#) [<https://vimeo.com/521078459>] for a video sound-bite.

**WORLD WIDE WEB
listings available for everyone
who can access the Internet:**

We've posted quality material on the Internet.
Please download the material while you still can.

www.TruthMatters.com

It's crucial one has a sound foundation upon
which to build. In God we really can be *set free*.

www.TruthFoundations.com

Only in God's Word do we find His eternal
Truth revealed in such a clear manner.

www.endmin.com

This site states the basic intent of our
ministries and contains our popular FAQs.

WEB LISTINGS (continued)

www.endmin.org

This issue of end times is MOST practical.
Our days are fulfilling Bible prophecy!

www.FinalTrumpet.org

The Final Trumpet Gathering is worthy of
consideration. This is our “definition” site.

www.FinalTrumpet.com

A chronology of events is presented on this end-time site,
especially highlighting the Final Trumpet Rapture event.

www.EnduranceMinistries.org

This site offers “what if” stories, ones based on the data
we find in Scripture. Practical application is emphasized.

www.DestructiveDogmas.com

As the Bible predicted, deception will be rampant in the days prior
to the return of Jesus Christ! Doesn't that describe our world today?

www.CurrentMatters.org

Go to this site for, 1. our weekly and commentary blogs and,
2. free, edifying discipleship handouts – posted on our “gift” page.

There is NOTHING like God's Word ... NOTHING!

Here are some passages worth meditating on as we recall the authority foundation upon which
we build our eschatology. All passages on this page are taken from the NKJV Bible.

Proverbs 3:5,6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your
ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Psalm 11:3

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Psalm 119:97-100

Oh, how I love Your law! *It is* my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they *are* ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies *are* my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever.

Psalm 118:8,9

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

Psalm 119:89,160

Forever, O LORD, Your Word is settled in heaven. ... The entirety of Your Word *is* truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments *endures* forever.

I Corinthians 1:20; 3:18,19a, 21a

Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ... Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. ... Therefore let no one boast in men.

The Berean Challenge

“Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.”

(Acts 17:10,11; NKJV)

We encourage you to honor God in the following way:

1. Learn the [*Final Trumpet Rapture Gathering*](#) perspective thoroughly. (Some have misjudged this position as a result of failing to understand its basic tenets.)
2. After coming to an understanding of the position, go to the Word of God and evaluate the proposal ... *to find out whether the things presented are so.*

Good News !

The Gospel is in one sense so simple a child can understand it and accept it for his/her very own. Yet, God's wonderful plan of salvation from sin and death is so deep even the inspired theologian, Paul, concluded his treatise on salvation with these words: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (Romans 11:33; NASB) This presentation of the Gospel is one of those *simple* ones.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the One who provides forgiveness of sin and victory over death. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. We would encourage you to *shout* this call to Him in the following way, for there is no greater life decision than where one chooses to spend eternity. Call on Him, acknowledging He came as God in the flesh and as such was able to make a sufficient sacrifice to atone for or make right your sins. Confess you are a sinner needing God's forgiveness. In your new, *born-again* life in Christ, repent and worship God by living godly in Christ Jesus. Claim and apply the resurrection victory Jesus Christ secured through His own resurrection.

This Good News is everlasting, not temporal. Salvation has been secured for those who would receive Him. Pray to our Creator God. As you do, tell Him you say "yes" to His love gift. Receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior from sin and Provider of eternal life in God's very presence. Contact us at email@endmin.org. We have some exciting Scriptures for you, ones bringing better understanding concerning this awesome gift of God. Please visit our Gospel pages, ones which offer other expressions of God's Good News in Jesus Christ, at www.currentmatters.org.

An Explanatory Word About Our Logo ...

Enough have asked for an explanation about Endurance Ministries' logo that we've decided to offer one here.

Including "E" and "M" for "Endurance Ministries," the logo also points to that which brings about the need to endure in our commitment to Jesus Christ. As His followers—who humbly serve at the foot of the cross under the Lordship of Christ—Scripture states the whole world will increasingly reject God, His Son and His faithful New Covenant Saints, His Church. (see Daniel 7:21, 25 and Revelation 13:7; 14:12)

The blood-colored triangle represents a piercing of / a persecution against God's people who are faithful to Jesus Christ. During this time we are to endure in our Faith. Those who do not persevere will one day suffer great harm—Hebrews 10:35-39.