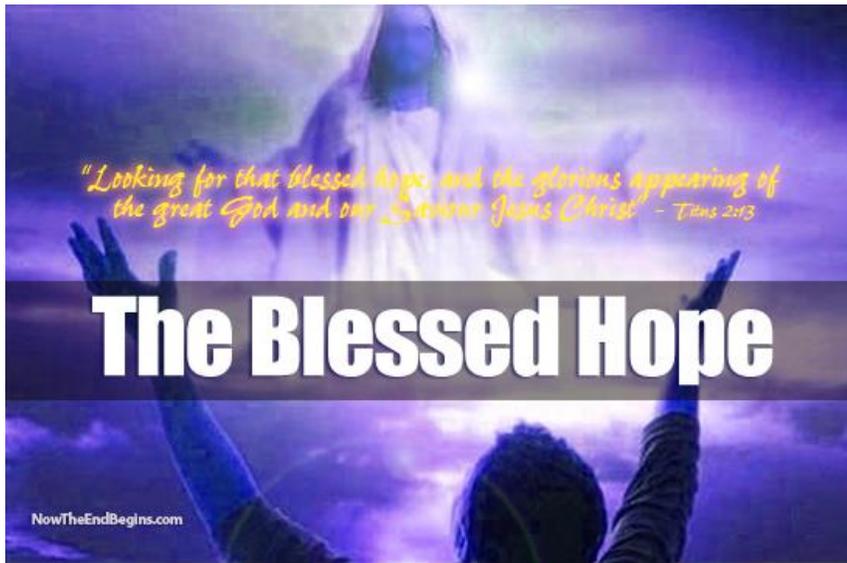


# SIGNS OF THE RETURN OF OUR BLESSED HOPE

By Pastor Mike Taylor



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.” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52-54)

In this message, I am going to revisit a central theme to the belief and hope of

every Christian here on this earth who is preparing themselves for the coming of the Lord Jesus in the clouds of heaven. From time to time we need to remind ourselves of the glorious promise we have in Jesus. And I am here to remind, and not so much as to warn those who have not received our Blessed Hope. Get ready for the soon coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the King of Glory. It could be sooner than any of the people of earth even imagine.

The destiny of the Church is to participate in the Blessed Hope that the Apostle Paul wrote about in the verses above, and what was written in Titus:

**12** “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

**13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

**14** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:12-14)

The central purpose of Bible prophecy for the last days is to give warning to the true Church of the Living God and help her realize that time is running out. Not for the Church, but those who will be left behind to face the most horrible time in all the earth.

The coming of our Lord, identified by the name “rapture” by English translations of the word *harpazo* in scripture, signals the conclusion of this age we live in called the Age of Grace, in the same manner that it began. Let us look what the Bible says about this time, and what it means to each of us.

The Lord explains it to the Apostles before He was crucified

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” (John 16:7)

This verse is not too hard to explain...The bible explains it literally, that unless Jesus goes away, the Holy Spirit (the Comforter) would not come and indwell within them, as what happened on the Day of Pentecost. Of course, at this very moment when the Lord was talking to them on the Mt. Of Olives, they just didn't get it. Right up the moment Jesus rose from the earth in His ascension, the Apostles were confused and afraid. They were expecting Him to usher in the Millennial Kingdom right away.

6 “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:6-7)

And they wouldn't understand until the Holy Spirit came and gave them power to do God's will. But here the Lord was still with them, and the Holy Spirit was not.

So there they stood, clueless and afraid, while the Lord explained the Holy Ghost would soon empower them for the Great Commission.

“And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:9)

Can you imagine if you were standing there and the only Person you had to connect you with the reality of what had just happened was suddenly taken away from you? Here they are staring into the clouds, straining to get one last glimpse of their Master as He arose into heaven.

**10** “And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

**11** Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:10-11)

Here is the chronological order that Jesus being taken up into the clouds will be in reverse order at His coming.. He is *raised up from the earth alive*, in His Resurrected and transformed Body, and taken up until He vanishes in the clouds. That is how He is taken away – and the Promise given is that is how He will return.

#### **WHAT TIME IS IT?**

Now let us fast forward to the event that will end what Jesus began, which is the beginning of the Church Age, or the Age of Grace and what will signal its conclusion.

The Apostle Paul describes it detail in the opening verses in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians and repeats it in the letter to the Thessalonians “

**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.” (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16-18)

He returns in reverse order to His departure. The Lord Himself will descend from Heaven, where He will resurrect the dead in Christ and then those living will be ‘caught up’ into heaven at the Rapture. Why do I say that? Read on for an explanation of why we must be “caught up” before He can come fully down to earth.

#### **PAUL COMFORTS THE THESSALONIANS**

But note in the letter to the Thessalonians, the people were a little confused, as Paul left them in doubt. It is shown that somebody entered into the church and proclaimed that Nero was the Anti-Christ and they were beginning the Day of the Lord with God's wrath falling all about them, and they were sore afraid that they had missed the coming of the Lord to remove His church beforehand. ... This is clear evidence that even the early church, while Paul was ministering to them, were pre-tribulation believers, and fully expected a return of Christ to remove those who believed in Jesus as Lord and Savior and they were afraid they would be going through the coming Tribulation. They were afraid they had misunderstood the teachings of Paul. So Paul had to teach them further. extinguishing their fears with further revelations from God.

**1** “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

**2** That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

**3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

**4**Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

**5**Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"(2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:1-5)

Remember, the issue under discussion here was a rebuttal of the false doctrine claiming that Nero was the antichrist. Nero can't be the antichrist, Paul says, and here's why.

"And now ye know what withholdeth that he [the real antichrist] might be revealed in his time." (2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:6)

Let's go back and quickly review what we've covered about the beginning of the Church Age.

Jesus is bodily taken out of the way by rising from the earth and ascending into heaven

The two witnesses in white reveal that Jesus will return in the same manner in which they watched Him go.

The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost and indwells the Church.

Here is what the Apostle Paul says will signal the end of the Church Age. It ends in reverse order to the way it began.

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven into the air in like manner as He left.

The restraining Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way, together with the vessels He indwells.

The antichrist is revealed and the Tribulation Period begins.

First the Holy Spirit must go away from this earth which was delivered on the Day of Pentecost...Make no mistake, God's Holy Spirit will not be removed, just pulled back to Old Testament manifestations of His power, THEN Jesus will come in like manner as we saw Him leave this earth. Remember these verses:

**6** "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

**7** For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, (Holy Spirit) until he be taken out of the way.

**8** And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

**9** Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

**10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:6-10)

The Holy Spirit must be drawn back, to allow evil and the coming Anti-Christ to be revealed. And as the church was indwelt with God's Holy Spirit down through the ages, because of belief in Jesus Christ, then when He is removed in His fullness, we, the church will be removed as well.

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**

The modern day Church's purpose has many, but the one purpose that we must be about, not only in witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation by His atonement in His blood, is to be on the lookout for the signs of the coming Antichrist. Much like a weatherman who forecasts bad weather coming, we are watchman on the wall to warn those who are subject to the coming wrath of God.

I am reminded of the verses in Ezekiel and quote them often:

**3** "If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blows the trumpet, and warns the people;

**4**Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

**5**He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

**6**But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." (Ezekiel 33:3-6)

I hear people tell me we should be looking for the sign of the coming of Jesus Christ for His people, not the coming of the Antichrist, but they fail to understand, there is no sign of the coming of our Lord for the Church. It is a signless event.

**2**"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

**3** For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

**4** But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:2-4)

Here the analogy is speaking of a thief coming to break into your house. Does a thief give warning? No, the thief will come when you least expect it, unless you have taken precautions.

Speaking of our purpose here on earth, we deliver the Gospel, "the Good News" and we are also to deliver the bad news, as signs of bad weather. But to give proper signs of the Lord's coming, we must look at the total picture to get an idea of the soon coming nature of our Lord. We don't just give the signs that make us feel good about ourselves, but we give the good with the bad.

The bad news is that the Bible predicted all the bad things that will come upon the earth in the last days, the days we are living in right now. We see things God predicted and wrote about in His Word thousands of years ago, coming to pass and unfolding upon this earth. But the Good News is that God has everything under His control. So we are not to fear.

As we said, there are no signs for the coming "catching away of the Church" so there is nothing to look out for. There is nothing we can point to that says Jesus will be coming in our lifetime, because the only clue that those left behind have when Jesus does come, is the vanishing of millions of people from the earth and the turmoil and chaos that will ensue when the reality hits them like a ton of bricks.

There are only signs of the coming Tribulation which we see all around us...We can't point to the increase in earthquakes, famines, and wars all over the globe. These are not the signs of the soon coming of Jesus, but they are signs of the revealing of Antichrist. They are signs of impending doom and gloom that will grip every man and woman to face the next 7 years of sheer, unadulterated horror and misery coming to the nations left. These signs are important to us who scan the news for bible prophecy being fulfilled, the signs in the heavens, the fulfilling of Matthew 24 that Jesus spoke of, because when these signs are all over your news and your wonder what in the world is going on, the Rapture will have happened. The "catching away of the church" the Harpazo found in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians will have been completed, as the rapture happened FIRST, then the Tribulation in full force of the wrath of God will begin to fall.

So the only tangible thing that we can look to as a signal of the closeness of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds to call up His people and to change them into immortal spirit beings, is the signs of the coming Tribulation. We can nail our hopes to, weirdly enough, is the signs of the coming *antichrist*. If we can discern the approach of the antichrist, then it means that the Rapture is just that much closer.

I have people write me that I am, we are doing the people a disservice to the cause of Christ, by not preparing those who will face the Tribulation and the coming Mark of the Beast and they will be unable to combat the coming horrors found during this time. I know they mean well, but they feel we "pre-tribbers" are wrong...to them I have this answer to their baffling arguments.

If we are wrong, and I believe we are right, but in the outside chance we are wrong, the answer to the question of the Mark of the Beast, IS "don't do it"....Now that sounds simple, but it's not really, because as they fail to understand, Jesus opens the 1<sup>st</sup> seal for the redemption of the earth in Revelation 6 and God's Wrath begins to fall. The scriptures say the church is NOT the focus of the coming Tribulation. Meditate on these scriptures and let them become part of your DNA.

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,” (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:9)

**10** “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

**11** Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” (Revelation 3:10-11)

For we have assurances many that we are right, and they are most likely tribulation martyrdom wannabees (which I can't imagine), because they don't understand the truth of prophecy. Because there are many signs that precede the coming Anti-Christ. First, the Anti-Christ is a politician...I have explored many possible candidates that we should all be watching. I have explored the coming 12<sup>th</sup> Imam of Islam, the POTUS in America, the Pope in Rome, and a secular figure that will arise to rule the European Union or the Revised Roman Empire. But I am further convinced even with all the speculation, we will NOT see the man burst upon the scene...why? Because the removal of the church will cause him to come upon the scene to stabilize a world in chaos...Will we, the Christian people, see the rise of a New World Order? I don't know, as this is what the AC will take hold of. It is not revealed how much time between the removal of the Church and the rise of the NWO and the rise of the AC. It could be within a short period of time..or could be years..We just don't know and the Bible is totally silent...But as we draw closer and closer to that time period, it makes the coming of our Lord, more imminent with each passing day.

### **THE RISE OF THE ANTI-CHRIST**

By all accounts the coming Antichrist doesn't seize power in a military coup, but it is given to him by universal acclamation. The world will wonder after this mortal man who will become the “seed of Satan”...

**4** “And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

**5** And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

**6** And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” (Revelations 13:4-6)

From reading the above passage, it appears the AC does not reveal himself as a god, until the middle of the 7 year Tribulation. Things have been bad for the last 42 months, but now, it only becomes worse, as man has to endure hell on earth, when he sits in the Temple in Jerusalem proclaiming himself to be God.

The man does not arrive in secret, but explodes onto the world stage when the world is looking for answers for what has come upon the earth. These will seek peace and safety, and there will be none.

**3** “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:3)

The world is looking for answers from anyone, but Who they should have been seeking the answers from, is Jesus Christ. But at this time, not that there will be few choices...He will be the ONLY choice available.

He is a liar whose rise to power is accompanied by many lying signs and wonders – but *he is thrust into power by the people* – if we are right on the timing, by people that are alive *right now*.

So it is extremely illuminative of the lateness of the hour when a charismatic politician rides into power on the back of lies and disinformation, shows total disregard for Congress, or any international law, buys off the money trust, starts wars in the name of peace and reverses sixty years of friendship with Israel as part of his commitment to globalism.

Many people thought Obama was the Antichrist, but I expect the Antichrist to be more competent and diplomatic in his deceit. Before Obama, it was hard to imagine how anyone could accomplish all that the Bible predicted in just 7 short years, but see what our past “POTUS” (sic) (I can say his name now, because he is finally gone, praise God) accomplished in just 8 short years. He nearly ruined this country and it will take a vigilant POTUS Trump to undo his damage.

And as time goes on, we will learn more revelations about this past “idiot in chief” that we really, really don't want to know, because if you're like me, you were tired of the Obamanation and just want him to fade from our memory.

But one thing the man did do, he put into motions the machinations that will bring the Anti-Christ to power and enable him to accomplish his mission. It is not possible to explain (just yet), how the coming “lawless one” will use the economy to enforce his edicts without understanding how it works. I don't believe that the Lord provided us with such a clear and unambiguous model if we weren't to learn from it.

The three main pillars of government during the Tribulation Period are the antichrist's control of a global economy, religion and government.

If we are to be watchmen on the wall prepared to give the warning, we need to know what we are warning *of*. The antichrist isn't a cartoon character wearing a red union suit and carrying a pitchfork. Neither is he an amateur buffoon with no concept of how to lead or any clue of the Law of Unintended Consequences. (That's how we knew it wasn't Obama.) In fact, he won't announce himself at all, or wear a name tag, saying “Antichrist”.

The man will look like a “savior” to the unsaved world, and they will accept him with open arms. Israel will accept him as their political messiah, until they figure out, that in the attempt to promote national security and sovereignty by making a 7 year peace treaty with this man, they have made a contract with the devil...so it will come to pass what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:

**15** “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

**16** Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

**17** Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

**18** Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

**19** And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

**20** But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

**21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:15-21)

Our Lord shall come, when you think not. In an hour you are not looking for Him...those who are watching and getting their lives right with God, are expecting Him eagerly. Our Great God and Savior will break through the clouds and shout “Come up hither” and it will be as the sound of a great Trumpet....are you ready?

**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.” (Revelation 19:7-9)

So come Lord Jesus. We anxiously await your return. Won't you join Him? How you say?

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”. (Romans 10:9)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life”. (John 3:16)

*This is Pastor Mike Taylor, saying Get Ready...the King is coming...if you need counseling, prayer, or just a listening ear, email me at [realteam1999@sbcglobal.net](mailto:realteam1999@sbcglobal.net), . God bless you all.*

***TILL WE MEET AT JESUS FEET***