

WHAT RAPTURE ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

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1st Thessalonians 4:15 “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

4:16 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:

4:17 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.”

I have started with the witness of our Lord and Savior's apostle to the Gentiles and taught to him personally by revelation of **Jesus Christ** glorified. I had been reading in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians this weekend, and was just so swept away with Paul's testimony towards this Church that he founded in the name of Jesus. There is much controversy about what Paul was speaking of and

it's timing. I will in this message address those controversies in factions of the religious community that read, I believe, not what Jesus, or Paul, John or Daniel was speaking of when it comes to these last days and the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I get every now and then opponents to the concept of the church being removed out of the way from receiving God's Divine wrath upon a sinful world that is in full rebellion to His Law, and the only substitution for redemption of the breaking of God's Commandments is in the **blood** sacrifice of His Only Son, Jesus Christ, which they reject.

Let us first go to 1st Thessalonians and read what Paul instructed this early church on what was coming, and was not only for their ears, but was written down for our admonition in these last days.

As is typical for Paul in his letters, he greets them in love in his opening lines to each of the brethren written to. But in reading on down we come to the first hint that Paul was speaking of a coming event that is yet to transpire. In verse 9, he begins his first nugget of a truth that I have always embraced: 1st Thesalonians:

1:9 “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Paul is writing to the church members and Revelation had not even been written yet by John. He speaks of wrath? This is the coming wrath of Almighty God on rampant rebellion of the nations of this earth in a future time, our time.

You can find many examples of God's wrath to come, even starting in the Old Testament concerning what is coming: Psalms 110,

110:4 “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

110:5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

110:6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries."

Paul speaks of this time further in Hebrews (I believe Paul is the unmentioned author) concerning the wrath of God,

12:26 "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

12:27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

12:29 For our God is a consuming fire."

Of course, we can get a feel of God's wrath when we go to Revelation, but this book is not the only place that speaks of God's wrath to come, but we get the intensity and fierceness of the idea: Revelation,

6:13 "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

6:14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:"

Understand one thing my reader, the coming time of tribulation is divine judgment on a world devoid of love for one another, and committing untold sinful acts in complete rebellion to God's Law and authority, and who have whole-heartedly rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only payment for their sinful condition. Do we not understand that God will destroy up to 80% of all mankind in natural environmental catastrophes and what only be assigned extraordinary Divine occurrences not known to man in modern times and can only be attributed to Almighty God? Humanity is nearly wiped out, but as John wrote, "if the time were not shortened, no flesh would be saved" Let us guesstimate the carnage that will be inflicted on this world, if all of us were still on this planet and none of us were removed. Right now we are approaching or have eclipsed the 7 billion mark of humanity on this planet. If we somehow envision the destruction of 80% of all mankind, that would be 5.6 billion people dying a horrible death leaving roughly little more than 1.4 billion people left. God warned that He will punish the inhabitants of the earth.

Isaiah 26:20 speaks of this coming wrath:

26:19 "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

26:20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

26:21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

(A clear passage of divine intervention and removal of His people before He slays mankind on earth)

Jesus also gave, what I believe is a sister verse of the one Isaiah wrote down, found in John 14:2-4,

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

See the parallel between the two verse passages? Jesus is coming to bring us to Himself, that where He is, we will be...He will hide us in our chambers, our mansions until His indignation passes by....God will come for judgment and we are not involved in it at all.

Oh, I hear the objections who say that the last trump in the opening verses of this message is the same trump that the 7th angel blows in Revelation, but fail to understand that Paul was speaking of a last trump associated with the Feast of Trumpets. For a detailed summary of my position on this gross error by some churches today, go to my website and read "Confusion over End-time Events" or even my last message, "Did Jesus Reveal the Day of His Return?". In each, the conflicts over these trumpets will be explained. One signals a joyous reunion, the other brings damnation and judgment to those upon the earth....they are NOT the same trumpet that Paul spoke of, as John spoke of a totally different trump in a different time frame.

Paul steps it up a bit in the later chapters of 1st Thessalonians in chapter 5:

5:1 "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

5:3 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.

5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

5:7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

How much more clear can Paul say it? Paul speaks of Jesus coming as a thief, or in secret and the nations not knowing the hour of His coming. Do you think that the coming of the Lord when He comes to rule on this planet for 1000 years at the end of the Tribulation will be proceeded in secret? Do you think He will come when they expect it not? Paul talks of sudden destruction, as woman in child labor will not escape the pain or the delivery of the baby. What fits this scenario, a sudden, without warning snatching away of children of light, to the horror of the children of darkness...OR would it be more plausible for them to be going about business as usual in the very run-up to the Glorious Appearing of Jesus Christ in the clouds of glory with great power (preceded by the appearance of great signs and wonders in the heavens . Joel 2:30-31). With almost 5.6 billion people being consumed, dead bodies all around, with animals eating the corpses of those slain, and the carnage of divine

retribution, would it be business as usual? Let us examine the signs of His post Tribulation appearing, shall we? Will it be business as usual? I think we can find the answer.

Revelation,

8:6 “And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

8:7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

8:9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.”

ON down,

8:12 “And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Reading on down the horror that is unleashed by this fourth angel till we get to the fifth angel:

9:1 “And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

9:2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

9:3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

9:4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.”

More pain and suffering/death when the sixth angel sounds his trumpet:

9:13 “And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

9:14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

9:15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.”

Then to the end of the chapter 9, descriptions of a most detailed description of what will befall rebellious mankind. Until, the seventh angel sounds his trumpet to unleash the final assault upon earth in an attempt to turn them to repentance, but God knows that they will not. Revelation 16:20 testifies that every island will be moved and mountains will fall flat. As a result of the great convulsion of the earth, massive land transformations occur, shifting mountains on land and undersea. Obviously, such a violent shaking will create unprecedented destruction and loss of life. As the conclusion of the sixth seal's disturbances, this displacement of *terra firma* is the calamity that most terrifies earth's inhabitants. Suddenly, nothing is stable—not even the earth under their feet!

Again, does this sound like Jesus coming back to this earth as a thief? Will not men know that they are under divine retribution? Will the world that is present be nearly extinguished of all life from what it was prior to the

beginning of the opening of the 1st Seal, as found in Revelation 6:1? Will men be going about business as usual? Men's hearts will be failing them from fear, over what is coming upon the earth. Luke 21:26.

Sheer terror will reign supreme. Does this sound like business as usual? Opponents, ask yourselves, does this sound like as in the time of day of Noah (Matthew 24:37), or does it sound like there is another time period prior to these events that addresses this more realistically and prophetically? Think on that a bit, as I return to Paul addressing the Thessalonians in 2nd Thessalonians.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD

Here the church at Thessalonica was troubled, as false prophets had entered into their midst and were preaching that the "Day of the Lord" had already happened. I call them "Ancient Preterist" who believed that all things had been fulfilled, and we were just waiting for Jesus to come back, except this church at Thessalonica understood the Day of the Lord, as judgment and wrath, not a sign of joy.

Paul admonished them:

1:4 "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

1:5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

1:10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

Paul re-teaches them what he had already told them concerning the coming "Day of the Lord".

Why were they fearful? They believed that they had missed the coming of the Lord for His Church and were found wanting and not fit to be removed from the earth and were waiting for the judgment from God, which would mean they missed the greatest event in all of man-kind, next the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus the Messiah. Paul explains:

2:1 "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2:2 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.

2:3 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;"

Paul explains that this MUST happen first before the Great Day of the Lord, and His judgment upon earth. John reveals in Revelation that this man is revealed by a number:

13:16 "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

This is what Paul spoke of, and what John through the Revelation of Jesus Christ shared with us. He spoke again of this man. Going back to Paul, as he continues in chapter 2 of 2nd Thessalonians,

2:4 "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.

2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

2:8 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:

2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

THE RUNNER UP TO THE ANTI-CHRIST

No where in history after this time period has a man stood in the temple of Jerusalem and claimed to be a god. Only once in the history of the nation of Israel had a man stood in the temple and claimed to be a god, and it was many centuries before this verse was penned by Paul. What he is telling us, is that prophecy has duality, or will repeat itself in our time, and remember, these verses were written for us in modern end times, not just of the church Paul and John wrote them to. Who was that man who stood in the temple and a fore runner of the modern Abomination who causeth Desolation, as Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:15? His name was Antiochus Epiphanies, and he made a statue of Zeus, with his face and put it in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem and proclaimed all must worship it on pain of death. He also sacrificed pigs on the altars of God, which were considered unclean. So this man defiled the temple that led to the Maccabean War and the observance of Hanukkah, or the cleansing of the temple. As Jesus prophesied, and as John and Paul revealed, it will happen again.

Let's look at verse 7 of this last passage. We, as watchmen on the wall, have hammered this home many, many times. Bible students, who is "only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."? If you said the Holy Spirit within each true born again Christian, you receive an A+, as by interpretation in context, it is the only thing that is holding back Satan the devil, having full sway on this earth and attempting full destruction of mankind, along with receiving worship for himself. I like the NIV's interpretation of this same passage...let's look at it:

2nd Thessaians 2:6-7 NIV, "And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time v. 7: for the secret power of lawlessness is already at work: but the ONE who now holds it back will continue to do so till HE is taken out of the way."

For me, this is a strong argument that the church has been removed out of the way, BEFORE the man of perdition, whose name is identified with 666, is revealed and stands in the temple of God, claiming to be a god. Note that Jesus said that He would never leave us or forsake us, (Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 28:20), hence He sent His Holy Spirit, as counselor, comforter, and guider of our walk with our Lord and Savior. If God's Holy Spirit is removed, based on the clear Word of our Lord, who cannot lie, we will be removed as well.

Daniel chapter 9, and the Abomination that Causeth Desolation:

KJV Daniel 9,

9:26 "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

I read where a national organized religion that split apart in the 80s, called the World Wide Church of God, interpreted that passage not to be the Anti-Christ, but the Messiah. Still in existence are pocket organizations who still adhere to this argument, in their attempt to discredit the concept that there will actually be an Anti-Christ, or argue against a 7 year tribulation. They are proponents of post-tribulation second coming and are anticipating, OR relishing the idea of being slain in the Tribulation. When I read that explanation, I was aghast. I went to a website of theirs and pulled this text:

"The most abused verse on the subject of the end times is Daniel 9:27, and it is a linchpin in the Pre-tribulation Rapture theory: 'Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. Unlike the Protestants, we believe that "he" in this verse refers to Messiah, not Antichrist, for the main subject of this section is Messiah. Richard Ritenbaugh, Prophecy Watch."

True, the beginning of the passage deals with Jesus Christ, but He did not cease the sacrifices in the temple. It continue unabated until 70 AD when the Temple was leveled to the ground by Roman soldiers of Tiberius.

Then they go onto to say that:

In Isaiah 28:15, we protestants and "a covenant with death," say that the Antichrist makes a peace treaty for one week—seven years—with the Jews. But this makes no sense! Why would the Beast "destroy the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary" (Daniel 9:26), and "then . . . confirm a covenant . . . for one week"

In this analogy, they deny the clear implication of Daniel's 70 week prophecy that was interrupted when Messiah was cut off in year 483 of the prophecy. That leaves the last 7 years that must be completed for Israel to be saved and receive their Messiah. Obviously, they don't understand the time-line of history, or duality of prophecy. I think anyone, including this minister, is blinded by their ideology of a failed organization that proposed that the second return of Jesus Christ would be in 1972, hence many members of this denomination sold all they had, took no social security, or started living in caves. I recall the cry of "flee in 73" as their mantra. Did it happen? No, much like Harold Camping's failed prophecy, false prophets are all within the camp of the religious and doomed to their predictions of when or how Jesus will return. Now is that minister a false prophet? I am not singling him out, but it is a mindset of many post tribbers that this promise of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is suspect and that we all are full of hogwash which is rampant in this denomination and others just to be fair.

Others in this camp, propose that when Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven to receive His church at the end of the tribulation, that we will be changed. Yes, but then they propose that we turn right around or make a sharp U-turn

and come right back down to do battle with the enemies of God in Jerusalem. They site Zechariah chapter 14, when Jesus' feet touch the Mount of Olives. I asked one minister I know, "are we going up to just saddle up?" coming with Jesus on horses, dressed in linen, white and clean as Revelation chapter 19 shows? He had no answer. And what about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? He proposed it was poetic or an allegory....say what? This same minister pooh-poohs the Jewish wedding feast. Needless to say, we are not in agreement.

Let's examine scripturally what Daniel was referring to and that a vast majority of theologians that are of sound doctrine embrace. I take this from an online website to organize the thought process of examining this passage, which I totally agree with:

"Here are the Sixty nine (7 + 62) "WEEKS" that have already happened:

Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be SEVEN WEEKS , and THREESCORE and TWO WEEKS: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

Daniel 9:26 "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." (note the caps of Prince, and prince, my emphasis. Two different "princes". Prince of Glory, and prince of this world)

Here is the ONE "WEEK" that remains"

Daniel 9:27 "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for ONE WEEK : and in the MIDST of the WEEK he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Since God said he would deal with the Jews as a NATION for SEVENTY "WEEKS" and He promised to regather them nationally in the future in preparation for His Coming, then, God plans to deal with the NATION Israel in the future for ONE "WEEK" before He returns. To say that ONE WEEK of Daniel 9:27 has already happened (since God says He will regather Israel as a NATION) is to say there will be 71 WEEKS. To say that the week WILL NOT happen in the future is to say there are less than SEVENTY "WEEKS."

Since we already know (from the 69 weeks that HAVE happened) that a "WEEK" is SEVEN YEARS, then, God must have a future dealing with the NATION Israel for SEVEN years." (<http://jesus-is-the-way.com/Endtimes927.html>)

Spot on. Israel is the door to end time prophecy and Jerusalem is the key to that door. The Seventieth Week of Daniel's prophecy is future and deals with ISRAEL solely for their unbelief and to finish transgressions. Israel will embrace, finally, their Messiah and proclaim, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"(Matthew 23:39). Our Father and our Lord and Savior will purify Israel as silver is refined in the fire. (Malachi 3:2). When Jesus spoke in Matthew 24, concerning the Abomination that Causeth Desolation, His message was pointed straight at Israel. I envision that the only ones who will remain when Jesus returns for divine judgment and take possession of His creation by the sword of His mouth, by speaking only the Words will be mostly Jewish by birth in the majority. He will completely destroy all rebellion, because the only ones who will listen to the 144,000 evangelist from the 12 tribes of Israel, will be of the nation of Israel proper, or those scattered over the earth with a minority of Gentiles that have believed the Truth about Jesus Christ. How many will be blinded to the truth and take the mark of the Beast is conjecture on my part, but is is prophesied that God will send them a lie, a strong delusion, 2nd Thessalonians,

2:8 "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:

2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Note that if you are still here, then God will send you a strong delusion, A LIE, that you will believe because you want to. Your mind will have no protection, as the Holy Spirit is removed from His fullness, right along with His Church. Satan will have full sway, full unimpeded powers to deceive the human mind. Each of those left will embrace the false god of this world, known as the Anti-Christ, no matter what another religion might feed you. So as a watchman on the wall, I have given you witness of four of the major figures in your bible, John, Paul, Daniel, and the Master, Jesus our Messiah. I proclaim the truth, you decide whether to believe. Understand, that I am not preaching to scare you, but to warn you. There is coming a day when salvation will be mostly for the Jewish people, as the Church Age has suddenly ended for you, and you have been caught flat footed. You were not ready, and Jesus has come, as He said He would. Won't you make yourself ready. Wanna know how?

“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”.

Email me after reading John 3:16 then all of the Gospel of John, just who this man Jesus was, and IS....the great I AM, that I AM...Jehovah God. I would love to hear of your acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord of your life. Repent of your sins for today is the day of salvation. Turn to Jesus so that you will be not surprised by the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ for His Church....will you be ready? Only if you believe John 3:16! The Lord Jesus is right at the door.

This is Pastor Mike Taylor, praying God's salvation in your life and heart. If you have need for counseling, prayer of needs, or just a friendly listening ear, send me an email to realteam1999@sbcglobal.net, God bless you all,

till we meet at Jesus' feet.