

Living Daily in the Blessed Hope

by Jeremy James



The *Bema* at Corinth where Paul stood before Gallio.

Regular readers may wonder about my ministry. It is that of a watchman, of course, but how do I perceive the role myself?

The task of having to continually describe the abject state of the world and the many nefarious schemes that the Enemy is engaged in is not necessarily a pleasant one! I often have to examine and describe developments in the world which virtually no-one wants to contemplate. Indeed, as I write some papers, I continually ask myself whether the material could be presented in a more upbeat way.

I can only fulfil this role because most of my readers believe God's Word. It's that simple. They know where all of this is going. As believers they are already familiar with the general outline of End Time events.

They are also aware that these events have aspects which most non-believers would find too upsetting to consider. In general, believers are not shocked by these aspects since they already understand and accept the prophetic passages in God's Word which point to a sudden, devastating collapse in what we know as 'civilization'.

Watch!

The timing of this event is not something any of us can predict, but Jesus asked that we “watch” -

**“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is...
And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” (Mark 13:33 & 37)**

This request by the Lord applies to every one of us (“I say unto all”). It implies that, even though we do not know when the 7-year Tribulation will commence, we should be able to get a good idea from the way world events are unfolding and the extent to which they match the details given in Bible prophecy.

The Apostle Paul confirmed this when he said:

**“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should
overtake you as a thief.” (1 Thessalonians 5:4)**

Those who are not paying attention are “in darkness”, while those who are watchful are not likely to be taken by surprise.

These papers are also intended to lead non-believers to God’s Word, especially as it relates to the time we are living in. This evangelical dimension is very rewarding. A non-believer who sees how events are unfolding and appreciates how clearly they have been foretold in God’s Word may become more receptive to the Gospel and the awesome program of Redemption revealed in the Bible.

Lord Jesus identified deception as the great defining theme of the End Time. The lies that characterize the 7-year Tribulation will not come out of nowhere. They are already at work. Once the Holy Spirit departs from the earth at the time of the Rapture these lies will become 10-20 times more potent and effective. Without the Holy Spirit to restrain the power they exert over fallen man, these Satanically-charged lies will rush like a fire through the dry brush of empty minds and cold hearts.

A watchman ministry must try to expose these lies in their various shapes and sizes. We must do this without resorting to speculation, keeping as close to the facts as we can and continually measuring everything we find against God’s Word.



Relief scenes on the Arch of Galerius, Thessalonica

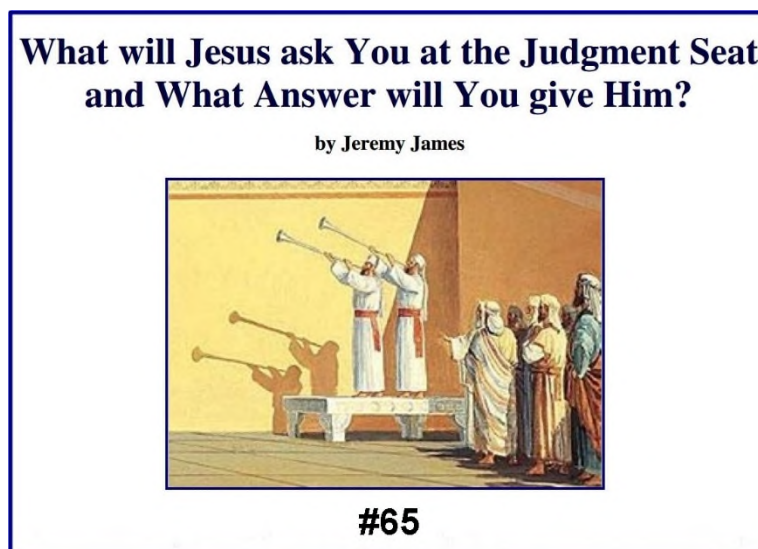
Wherever possible we highlight truths in God’s Word which seem to us to be especially valuable given the challenges that Christians are facing today. The Enemy does all he can to discourage and demoralize believers, so we need to exhort one another, mainly by reminding our brothers and sisters of all that Our Lord achieved on our behalf on Calvary.

This paper is a letter of exhortation based on the imminence of the Pre-tribulation Rapture of the Church and the incredible opportunity that the Lord has given each one of us to build up treasure in heaven while we are still here on earth.

We will not re-visit material on the Rapture that has already been set out in previous papers. It is our intention, rather, to remind our readers of certain facts about the Rapture that we are apt to forget or, very possibly, have not yet considered. We will also express some views about heavenly rewards which we feel need repeating (Our paper #65 – *What will Jesus ask You at the Judgment Seat and What Answer will You give Him?* – dealt with this topic in detail.)

We are taking these two together because they are closely linked:

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Revelation 22:12)



The rudiments of the Rapture

The Resurrection of those who died in Christ – all who became believers after Pentecost – will take place on the same day as the Rapture of the Church. The former will be a resurrection of dead bodies in glorified physical form, while the latter will be a translation or transformation of living people into glorified physical bodies. It is incredible to think that some believers will enter heaven without having passed through physical death. This shows just how great a work Jesus accomplished on Calvary.

The world will not see any of this. It will simply happen. People will disappear in an instant and the world will carry on, unable to comprehend what has just occurred, or why. There will be many chaotic scenes all over the earth as believers performing a service, such as driving a bus or flying a plane, suddenly disappear. It will be the first of the great End Time shocks and will likely affect many who remain. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, will no longer be present on the earth as He was before the Rapture.

The media will spin many stories to explain, diminish or misconstrue this extraordinary event. Without the Holy Spirit to moderate the impact of these lies, the public will believe most, if not all, of what they are told by the authorities. It would be inconceivable to them that those who disappeared were taken to heaven. From their perspective it would be much easier and less troubling to regard those who were “removed” as backward-looking bigots whom the ‘Universe’ had purged from the earth in anticipation of the ‘New Age’, when all mankind would be lifted into a higher level of ‘Consciousness’.

This will be widely accepted since a great many people will be deeply affected by the surge in demonic energy that occurs when the Holy Spirit leaves the earth. They will feel ‘liberated’, as though their conscience no longer constrained their behavior or, more importantly, their imagination. This will occur more intensely among daily practitioners of yoga, meditation, visualization, mindfulness and similar activities, including ‘gamers’ and those who spend long hours in the cyber world or glued to their television screens. Those who have been looking forward to a ‘Great Awakening’ will believe it is happening.

The Church at Philadelphia

The Lord gave the promise of the pre-tribulation rapture to the church at Philadelphia:

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



Ruined columns of the church of St John in Philadelphia, built in the 6th century.

The Bride is a unity, and not made up of separate parts. When the Church is taken away, all born-again believers will be included. The promise is made with specific reference to the Philadelphian church since the majority of true believers in the End Time will be ‘Philadelphian’, meaning they accept, patiently and in full, what God has stated in His Word (**“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience”**). This will be in stark contrast to the Laodicean church, which will comprise the vast majority of professing Christians in the End Time. These neither accept in full nor firmly believe what God has stated in His Word. They are neither hot nor cold; they neither love the Truth nor hate the lies.

The **“hour of temptation”** is the great day of the LORD, the day of wrath, when all the earth will endure the 7-year Tribulation. We know the Church has been removed from the earth before this begins because Scripture specifically says that the hour of temptation will **“come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”**. This implies that the Church is no longer **“upon the earth.”**

We also know for certain that the Church has been removed because the Lie – which depends on the great delusion that the LORD will send upon the earth – would be unable to do its work if, at the same time, it is required to cope with the restraining power of the Holy Spirit (**“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:” - 2 Thessalonians 2:11**). The Lie will rush in to fill the spiritual vacuum left by the departure of the Holy Spirit.

The Sheep and Goats judgment

The Word of God gives further confirmation that the Church cannot be on earth when the 7-year Tribulation begins. This is evident from the separation of the sheep and the goats which our Lord describes in the Gospel of Matthew:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.”

(Matthew 25:31-33)



The sheep and goats to whom this passage refers are all who are dwelling on the earth at the time Christ returns and destroys the Antichrist. The goats are those who persisted in their rebellion against Christ during the Tribulation and behaved accordingly. The sheep are those who came to faith during the Tribulation and honored Christ by their actions. Both groups are mortal.

The earth will be repopulated by the sheep, who will give birth to many children, while the goats will be executed.

Now, if the Rapture had occurred just before Christ returned with the saints, then all of the saints would be dwelling in immortal bodies and would be unable to have children. There would be no mortal believers left to repopulate the earth.

On the other hand, if the Rapture had taken place after the Tribulation began but before Christ returned with the saints, then the Church, the body of Christ, would comprise two types of saints, one which had been subject to the wrath of God and one which had not. Very clearly, the two groups would not have been treated on an equal basis. This would conflict with the principle of righteous judgment which characterizes everything that God does.

In any event, the very idea that the Father would direct any of His righteous anger at the Bride of Christ is simply preposterous. The Father would not dishonor His Son in this way, especially as Christ has already borne in full the wrath of His Father on Calvary on behalf of his Bride, the Church.



The blessed hope

This is why the Word of God describes the rapture as **“that blessed hope” (Titus 2:13)**. It is “blessed” because it is joyful, and it is a “hope” because it is a promise whose fulfilment is assured. As such it is a joyful certainty which every saint may reflect upon daily as a source of comfort and encouragement. Furthermore the knowledge that this wonderful event could occur at any time should fill him with joyous expectation.

Is it any wonder that the world which hates the followers of Christ should also hate the “blessed hope” which sustains their enthusiasm and fills them with a zeal for good works? The **“present evil world” (Galatians 1:4)** is filled with individuals who gladly mock and deride the blessed hope and who describe those who live by this hope as deluded dreamers.

Sadly, it would appear that the proportion of the professing church who have the blessed hope is getting smaller every day. What is more, the number of so-called Christians who belittle the ‘Philadelphians’ who hold to the blessed hope would seem to be increasing.

The Resurrection of those who sleep

The Resurrection had been revealed by Job long before the Exodus:

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” (Job 19:25-27)

This is a truly glorious passage of Scripture! In his wonderful oratorio, *The Messiah*, Handel has the lead soprano sing these words (up to “see God”) and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:20, as follows:

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.”

This solo passage, which is 6 minutes and 42 seconds in length, is one of the most sublime in all of classical music.


	<p>Original flyer announcing the inaugural performance of Handel's <i>Messiah</i> in Dublin in 1742.</p> <p>The Scripture in italics reads:</p> <p>“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” [1 Timothy 3:16]</p> <p>“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” [Colossians 2:3]</p>
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The Rapture, on the other hand, was revealed privately by Jesus to Martha, the sister of Lazarus:

“Jesus said unto her [Martha], I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25-26)

John’s Gospel was written around 90 A.D. When Paul referred to the Rapture as a “mystery” in his first letter to the Corinthians (15:51), it was still not generally known. Thus he could rightly call it a “mystery”, a profound truth not previously revealed through Scripture to the Body of Christ.

Those who are alive on earth when Christ returns for His Church will never experience physical death. Their bodies will not undergo corruption. As we noted earlier, this is a remarkable truth.

<p>The Blessed Hope</p> <p>by Jeremy James</p>  <p>#265</p>	<p>We would encourage our readers to see our earlier paper on this subject – #265.</p> <p>In it we explore, among other things, the deep reluctance by many professing Christians today to accept the blessed hope and live its truth in their daily lives.</p>
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The “last trump”

There has been much speculation about **“the last trump” (1 Corinthians 15:52)**. In an earlier paper (#326) we suggested that this could well refer to the last trumpet blast in a Roman military encampment before they broke camp and marched forth. Such an event, with its associated trumpet blast, was very familiar to Paul’s readers. It could also refer, as others have suggested, to the two silver trumpets described in Numbers 10:1-10, which were blown by the Hebrew priests when it was time to break camp and move on.

There is no basis for connecting the Feast of Trumpets with the “last trump”. The Rapture is an imminent event and could take place at any time (even before this paper is posted to my website).

We drew attention in our earlier paper to the following traps:

Those who identify the Feast of Trumpets with the Rapture of the Church are falling into a trap. Firstly, they are refusing to accept that the *harpazo* can occur at any time. Many will claim they are not, but this is a hollow claim. They are setting a date, albeit one which rolls over from one year to the next.

The second and more serious error is the risk that Paul alludes to in his first letter to the Thessalonians. These believers were greatly troubled by the possibility that the Rapture/Resurrection had already taken place, and seemingly had received one or more counterfeit letters claiming that Paul himself or one of his senior aides was teaching this. Paul wanted them to understand why and how they had been deceived.

Please note this carefully! The Word of God sets out for our benefit a patent example of deception and confusion surrounding the date of the Rapture. Paul had given these believers very clear guidance in this matter and yet they were taken in by a trickster.

If it happened to them, it could happen to us. We must be careful.

The Enemy is quite capable of staging a false ‘rapture’ to bolster his own End Time deception. The professing Christians who are most likely to believe it are those who are already anticipating its occurrence on the Feast of Trumpets or another specified date. Given that the public today are deeply conditioned to believe virtually anything they are told by the mainstream media, the deception – if it took place – would have a profound effect on millions of people.

The *Bema*, the judgment seat of Christ

As we stated earlier the Book of Revelation links the return of Christ for his Church (the Rapture) with the “rewards” that he will give to “every man” (each raptured and resurrected believer):

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Revelation 22:12)

We need to dwell on this because many believers today seem to forget that the Rapture also entails a personal judgment by Christ of each individual. It is Judgment Day, not in the sense that one’s salvation is being decided, but that one’s role and spiritual standing in eternity is being determined.

We examined this in detail in an earlier paper (#65) but would like to look again at some aspects of this momentous event.

Paper #65 was published in 2015. Since that time we have seen a frightful escalation in the program of darkness which the Enemy is executing across the earth. These include the whole range of perversions under the LGBTQ+ agenda, the steady erosion of human rights and freedom of speech, the rapid decay of the judicial system, rampant inter-racial immigration, an international lockdown affecting billions of people, the closure of our churches under 'Covid' regulations, the exposure of a worldwide pedophile and child-trafficking network, and the coercive imposition on billions of people of untested 'vaccines' developed using highly experimental technology.

A mere nine years

All of this took place over a mere 9 years. Given this explosion of wickedness, one would have expected large numbers of born-again believers to have stood up and questioned some or all of these changes, to have challenged the authorities, to have warned the church in general that the wolves were on the rampage, and to have convened endless prayer meetings among the faithful, calling on the LORD to repulse this program of darkness.

Did this happen? I think we all know the answer. Never was the indolence, infidelity, and selfishness of the Laodicean church more evident.

Sadly, very few Philadelphian believers tried to sound the alarm. Some did, of course, but I think you would agree that the majority did not.

This was sad, very sad. It was a sign that many of those who truly love the LORD are not necessarily willing to go out on a limb to defend Biblical truth.



Let's take a simple example. The 'Covid' vaccine was a completely unknown substance. The package insert was blank, which meant the manufacturers deliberately withheld all information in relation to the contents and side effects of the 'vaccine'. The product was developed in record time and was not even tested on animals.

Recipients were required to take the ‘vaccine’ without their informed consent, which was a direct violation of the Nuremberg Code which forbids the covert use of human subjects for experimental purposes. Furthermore, it employed technology that had never been used previously to develop a therapeutic product for either animals or humanity. Millions of faithful Christians willingly allowed this ‘Brand X’ substance to be injected into their body. They did so in clear violation of the Biblical injunction that we treat our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and never allow it to be defiled or polluted:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

It is quite possible that God will “**destroy**” – punish with premature death – some or all of the believers who allowed the temple of God, their sanctified body, to be desecrated in this way.

If the government had commanded all Christians to take a ‘medical’ tattoo on their arm or their leg, they would have objected (loudly!), citing 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, along with other passages of Scripture, as proof that Christians must not desecrate their bodies. But when the authorities demanded that they desecrate – or risk desecrating – their bodies *internally* with an untested experimental substance, most of them complied.

The four types of crown (*stephanos*) mentioned in God’s Word

The Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19) – **Soul winners**

This crown relates to the joy that the saints experience when lost souls find the Lord.

The Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8) – **Exemplary saints**

This crown relates to the steadfast faithfulness of saints who live daily in the joyful expectation of the imminent return of Christ.

The Crown of Life (James 1:12) – **Martyrs**

This crown relates to the patient endurance of the saints, who are not deterred or dismayed by their trials or sufferings, even to the point of martyrdom.

The Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4) – **Shepherds**

This crown appears to have special application to preachers, pastors and missionaries who devote their lives to serving the flock.

We will all stand before the *Bema*

This salutary episode should help us focus more clearly on the *Bema*, the judgment seat of Christ! We will ALL stand before him after the Rapture and watch in awe as all our deeds in the body are examined. The thorough nature of this examination will be incredible. As Jesus said even the gift of a cup of cold water will be taken into account (Matthew 10:42).

The rewards and crowns, the “**treasure in the heavens**” (Luke 12:33), that Jesus will bestow are given purely by grace. We have not earned them in the conventional sense, and God does not ‘owe’ them to us. Rather they are given by the Father in joyful recognition of the service that we have rendered His Son. Since the Father takes great delight in all that His Beloved Son has achieved, He loves and rewards all who honored and served him here on earth.

Rewards and Crowns are conditional

The Word of God makes it very clear that the born-again believer can never lose his salvation. However the bestowal of his/her reward or crown *will* be conditional upon godly service and fidelity here on earth:

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind...” (Colossians 2:18)

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” (1 John 2:28)

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” (2 John 1:8)

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



***The Prodigal Son* by George Cocco
The father rushes out to receive his wayward son.**

As already noted, our earlier paper (#65) looked closely at the rewards and crowns granted at the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ. We would urge our readers to review that paper since it covers material which, as far as I can tell, is not widely discussed in the Church today.

Believers are now entering an era when they will need the comfort of “the blessed hope” more than ever before. In light of the emphasis placed on rewards and crowns in the New Testament, they will also need to consider afresh the wonderful opportunity that the LORD offers every believer during his or her sojourn here on earth, where the prospect of receiving a greater award is held before us as a motivating factor in our walk with Christ.

There is still a lot of misunderstanding about rewards. For example, the following verse from Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews does not make complete sense unless one sees that he is speaking about the Bema:

“Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:” (Hebrews 11:35)

In what way can their resurrection be “better”? Only in the sense that they might receive a greater reward at the Bema.



**'Pentecost' [detail]
St Vitus Cathedral, Prague**

The believer is being refined and sanctified by the Holy Spirit

In his book, *Beyond the Crystal Ball* (1975), Merrill Unger sheds valuable light on the spiritual purpose of the Bema and how it relates to our life here on earth:

“At the judgment seat of Christ, each believer will be judged according to the degree to which he has cooperated with God in allowing the Spirit of God to refine and sanctify his life, making it conformable to Christ.”

Every time we act in service to Christ, sincerely and selflessly, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to refine us, to sanctify us, to bring us closer to the eternal spiritual ideal that Jesus embodies. So, our rewards will be a visible expression in eternity of the extent to which we exerted ourselves here on earth on behalf of Jesus, to honor and glorify him in this fallen domain.

CONCLUSION

In his first letter to the Thessalonians the Apostle Paul asks that we “**comfort one another with these words.**” He is referring, of course, to the Rapture, where the saints who are alive on earth when Christ returns for his Bride will meet him in the air and live thereafter in his presence.

The Greek word in the original which the KJV translates as “comfort” in this passage is *parakaleō*. The same word occurs many times in the New Testament. In the KJV it is translated as “beseech” 43 times, “comfort” 23 times, “exhort” 21 times, and by other words 22 times. So Paul is actually asking believers to beseech and exhort one another! It is not enough, in his view, to simply talk with fellow believers about this wonderful doctrine which today we call the Rapture, but to strongly encourage them to embrace it, to reflect deeply on its importance, and to live in its blessed hope every day.

May our readers rejoice greatly in what the LORD has revealed!

Maranatha!

Jeremy James
Ireland
August 30, 2024

- SPECIAL REQUEST -

Time is running out...

Regular readers are encouraged to download the papers on this website for safekeeping and future reference. They may not always be available.

For an easy way to download all papers (over 390), please email me.

We are rapidly moving into an era where material of this kind may be obtained only via email. Ireland is on the brink of introducing a draconian censorship law which will shut down sites like this and could result in penalties such as confiscation of property, financial fines and imprisonment for up to five years.

Readers who wish to be included on a future mailing list are welcome to contact me at the following address:-

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For further information visit www.zephaniah.eu

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