

# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RAPTURE

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## Preface

We live in a world governed by two paths, the path to the tree of life, and the path that leads to death. There is only one way to enter the path to the tree of life which leads to eternal life. This is the difficult path which can be compared to swimming against a current: the ways of this present age. Whereas the path that leads to death, which is the starting point for each and everyone us alive today, is easy and everything is acceptable, even when we are in the knowledge that it is not truth. There are many fundamental principles and concepts ingrained in the ways of this world but the majority of us choose to ignore these principles and concepts to follow vanity.

The vast majority of us today cannot be identified by our character because we have become masters of living between many personalities. We have chosen to flirt with the truth, instead of applying what we have learnt from the word of truth. Most often, when correction comes, we scorn at it because of our incontinence.

The question is: how long are we going to continue holding onto the wrong opinions? And secondly, how long are we going to flirt between the truth and a lie? Yet again the majority of us are ignorant of the fact that time is fast running out and the end of the age is very close.

There is no ambiguity in what God has said and understanding comes from God, but we have to be in right standing with God to understand His word. Everything has a process: a beginning, a middle and an end. This sequence cannot be broken. Every event at the end of the age has a predetermined time when it will occur in an established sequence. Therefore the servants of the Lord will know what will come to pass at the appointed time. We should acknowledge the fact that this predetermined sequence of events cannot be changed because the word has already gone forth from the mouth of God, just as Scripture cannot be broken.

There are many aspects of the word of God that have been distorted by many. Not just in our generation of believers but many who have been before us. Ironically, we have not searched for the truth to prove it is so. The rapture, the subject of this study, is one of such events which have been completely misunderstood by many. There is a lack of understanding of what it is, how it will happen and when it will happen. But according to the

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Holy Scripture, if we are the children of light, we should know what it is and when it will happen. The reason for this study is to enlighten your understanding on this topic - the Rapture.

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

If you pick up any book in the world today, it generally runs from the first chapter and concludes at the end with the final chapter. So too does the word of God, the Holy Scriptures. It starts with the first chapter of the book of Genesis and runs through to the last chapter of the book of Revelation. There is no separation between the Old and the New Testaments. There are only two fundamental differences between the two which are:

- They were inspired in different times. The Old Testament was before the acceptable year of the Lord and the New Testament was written during the acceptable year of the Lord.
- The New Testament provides the doctrine on how to worship God in spirit and in truth. But the story in the Holy Scriptures runs from the beginning through all the books to the end, the last chapter of the book of Revelation.

We have to understand that God has already spoken. This statement should stay at the front of our minds, to be considered at all times. The question is: what do we understand about what God has said? Consider this passage of Scripture:

#### **Hosea 4:6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>6</sup>My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

God has said His people are destroyed by a lack of knowledge and for that reason He will also reject them from being priests for Him. The meaning of being a priest to the Lord is to rule the world in the next age with the Lord as lords and kings. If the Lord Jesus Christ will be the High Priest and the Lord of lords and King of kings in the age to come, then all those who qualify with Him will be priests, kings, and lords of God. But God has rejected His people from being priests for Him because they have forgotten the laws of their God. We have been told to search the Scriptures daily so that we will be able to prove the word of God:

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### **Acts 17:10-11 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> 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.

Searching the Scriptures daily for the truth is the foundation that has been set for us. It is up to us now to build on it. Only by searching the Scriptures daily are we able to prove ourselves to be faithful servants who accept rather than reject knowledge.

### **2 Timothy 2:14-15 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. <sup>15</sup> Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We have to be diligent to be approved by God by studying the Holy Scriptures correctly. In other words, we should be able to piece together verses of the same topic from the word of truth as intended by God. If we fail to do so we lack knowledge and fall into error and darkness. But we are supposed to be the children of light who possess the knowledge of the truth.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:4-5 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

It will be our understanding of the truth that will keep us from being overtaken by the day of the Lord. It will come as a thief in the night to many, to those who cannot rightfully divide the word of truth.

To prove that the Bible runs from cover to cover, we can follow a story that runs from the book of Genesis chapter three all the way through to the book of Revelation chapter twenty. Consider this passage of Scripture:

### **Genesis 3:13-15 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup> So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you

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*have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.*

*<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”*

This happened when the Lord our God addressed Adam, Eve, and the serpent, which we know to be Satan the devil, after the fall of man in the garden of Eden. What is interesting is that the Lord put enmity between two seeds: the seed of the serpent and that of the woman. Eve, we know was the woman, but who is the seed of the serpent? The book of Proverbs chapter one to eight describes contrasts between the seeds of the woman and that of the serpent.

### **Proverbs 5:1-2 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup>My son, pay attention to my wisdom; Lend your ear to my understanding, <sup>2</sup>That you may preserve discretion, And your lips may keep knowledge.*

Verse one and two speak of the seed of the woman and verse three to six speak of the seed of the serpent.

### **Proverbs 5:3-6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>3</sup>For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil; <sup>4</sup>But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. <sup>5</sup>Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell. <sup>6</sup>Lest you ponder her path of life— Her ways are unstable; You do not know them.*

And in Proverbs chapter nine we have been given this passage of Scripture to ponder on:

### **Proverbs 9:13-18 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>13</sup> A foolish woman is clamorous; She is simple, and knows nothing. <sup>14</sup> For she sits at the door of her house, On a seat by the highest places of the city, <sup>15</sup> To call to those who pass by, Who go straight on their way: <sup>16</sup> “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here”; And as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, <sup>17</sup> “Stolen water is sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” <sup>18</sup> But he does not know that the dead are there, That her guests are in the depths of hell.*

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From this passage of Scripture, you can clearly begin to see the contrasting paths of two women. One path leads to life and the other to death.

The enmity that God put between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent was again prophesied in the book of Psalms:

### **Psalm 41:9 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>9</sup>Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.*

We should notice that this prophecy of the two seeds will run through many generations and will finally conclude when the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the seed of the serpent. The seed of the woman, which came through the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Israel (who we know is the Lord Jesus Christ), gave us a preview of what is to come at the end of the age:

### **Matthew 13:24-30 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>24</sup>Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup>but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. <sup>26</sup>But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. <sup>27</sup>So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' <sup>28</sup>He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup>But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup>Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"*

The Lord also gave the interpretation of this parable to enlighten our understanding of what is happening through the ages.

### **Matthew 13:36-42 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>36</sup>Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."*

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<sup>37</sup> He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. <sup>39</sup> The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. <sup>40</sup> Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, <sup>42</sup> and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

This is exactly what will happen at the end of the age when the seed of the woman, the Son of Man - the Lord Jesus Christ, will command His angels to gather His sons into His kingdom. He will then command the angels to gather the sons of the serpent, who practice lawlessness, and cast them into the furnace of fire. But first, the seed of the serpent must bruise the heel of the seed of the woman:

### **John 13:17-22 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*

<sup>18</sup> *"I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' <sup>19</sup> Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. <sup>20</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."*

<sup>21</sup> *When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." <sup>22</sup> Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.*

The Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas, the seed of the serpent, to the high priest and was crucified for the sins of men. In doing that, the path to the tree of life was opened to all who receive Him. At the same time, God the Father gave Him all authority in Heaven and on Earth.

### **Matthew 28:18 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

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It is not only the Lord Jesus Christ whose heel will be bruised by the seed of the serpent. The heel of His seed shall also be bruised by the seed of the serpent.

### **Revelation 12:1-6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup>Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup>Then being with child, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth.*

*<sup>3</sup>And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. <sup>4</sup>His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. <sup>5</sup>She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. <sup>6</sup>Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

This passage of Scripture mirrors further the enmity between the seeds that was mentioned in the book of Genesis. It also covers what was previously discussed about the seed of the serpent bruising the heel of the seed of the woman. The male child brought forth by the woman, who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron, is the Lord Jesus Christ - who is now in heaven. The seed of the serpent will then go after the seed of the woman.

### **Revelation 12:13-17 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>13</sup>Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. <sup>14</sup>But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. <sup>15</sup>So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. <sup>16</sup>But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup>And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

In this passage we can see that the tables have turned. We can see that the serpent is cast out of heaven and then the head of the seed of the serpent is crushed.

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### **Revelation 14:17-20 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>17</sup> Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

*<sup>18</sup> And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." <sup>19</sup> So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*

The seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent by first bounding him up for a thousand years in a bottomless pit.

### **Revelation 20:1-3 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup> and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.*

Then He will finally crush the head of the serpent forever.

### **Revelation 20:7-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>7</sup> Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

And for the seed of the woman, thrones were set for them for judgement:

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### **Revelation 20:11-15 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

This is a very short version of the sequence of events that started in the book of Genesis and continues through the entire Bible and finishes in the book of Revelation. None of these events could happen out of this sequence because God has set them in that order.

The rapture, which is also an event due to occur at the end of age, cannot happen before or after the set time. It must happen at the appointed time. We serve a God of order. No day or night has been out of sequence in over two thousand years. We have to realise this awesome fact that God is the author of order.

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## Chapter Two

### MISCONCEPTIONS

When it comes to misconceptions – who is the one who is in error? We must be certain in our hearts that the great God, the Creator of the heavens and the Earth, is pure and without error. It is God who has set everything in order and sustains everything. If there was any dishonesty in Him, then nothing would stand - because His word would mean nothing. The word of God is truth and it is by His word that we change to become like Him in every way. It is a process that takes time. With that established, it leaves just one alternative: man. Man is the one in error.

Men will always try to give, or rather give an opinion, on what they do not know or understand. When we are faced with options - we have only two choices before us. The choice we make depends on our understanding. When it comes to the word of God, understanding must come from God and not from men. If we accept it is God's word, then, we must also accept that He has said it for a reason. It is up to us to go to Him to find out the reason those words were said in that order. The consequence for not having the understanding that comes from God leads to error. This chapter will discuss some of the common misconceptions that have lead men astray.

### GOD HAS ALREADY SPOKEN

It should be clear to all of us alive today that God has already spoken and His word has been recorded and preserved for us in what are called the Holy Scriptures: the Bible. Nothing new has come out of the mouth of God since the days of the apostles who wrote the New Testament. The Lord is working with His people directly through the power of His Spirit.

#### **Hosea 12:9-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>9</sup> "But I am the LORD your God, Ever since the land of Egypt; I will again make you dwell in tents, As in the days of the appointed feast. <sup>10</sup> I have also spoken by the prophets, And have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets."*

If God has already spoken through the prophets, is it not up to us to go and find out what God has said through the prophets? In the above passage of Scripture, God has said He has

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been our Lord and God and He will again make us dwell in tents as in the days of the appointed feast. But do we understand what this means? It means that in the near future, everyone will go to Jerusalem at the appointed feast of the Lord to pray before the Lord as it was during the time of the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles. The day of Pentecost is an example for us to see of how the people of the Lord came from all nations of the world to worship during the appointed feast days at Jerusalem. Many may believe that the feasts of the Lord have been fulfilled, from this passage of Scripture - we can see that this is not the case.

God will not do anything without revealing it to His prophets:

### **Amos 3:7-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>7</sup> Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.*

*<sup>8</sup> A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?*

God has said He will do nothing unless He first reveals it to His servants: the prophets. God has already revealed everything through the prophets. You will be astonished by the clarity of what God has said and the reasons for why He will do what has been foretold at the appointed time. But if we separate the word of God into the New and Old Testaments, we will never understand the complete word of God and therefore, we will fall into error. The Lord Jesus Christ quoted the word of God, spoken by the prophets, and called them by their names to emphasize the fact that the entirety of Scripture was one. But we, on the other hand, prefer the easy route and rely on teachers to tell us what we want to hear and not what God has said.

### **2 Timothy 4:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup> I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

God had already said through the Prophet Isaiah that His people will turn away from the truth and turn towards lies:

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### **Isaiah 30:8-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> *Now go, write it before them on a tablet, And note it on a scroll, That it may be for time to come, Forever and ever: <sup>9</sup> That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, Children who will not hear the law of the LORD; <sup>10</sup> Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.*

As God has said, today the vast majority of professing Christians have turned away from the truth, favouring fables instead. This is because of the carnal mind which is enmity to God and cannot be subject to His laws. If we are in such a position, how can we get understanding from God if we incorrectly separate His word into the Old and New Testaments and listen to teachers who do not teach the truth?

### **PREDESTINED TIME**

From the moment the Lord called: "let there be light" on day one, when He started the restoration of the Earth, the clock for this age started counting down to the end of the age. We are the generation to see the consummation of all things. We live in a time in which certain events have already been predestined to happen at specific intervals. The majority of professing believers are not aware of this fact and try to establish their own beliefs. Our time was ordained by God before the foundation of the Earth, but for some it might seem as if time is just drifting away aimlessly. But the reality is that we have a part to play. We can choose to walk according to the prescribed path. But, even if we do not, it will still happen according to the counsel of God. We currently live in a period of time called the acceptable year of the Lord, in which all men everywhere are called to repent:

### **Luke 4:18-19 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; <sup>19</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."*

The acceptable year of the Lord is a predestined time in which God has called all men everywhere to humble themselves before Him and repent for transgressing the laws and commandments of God, as was explained by the apostle Paul:

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### **Acts 17:26-31 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>26</sup> And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, <sup>27</sup> so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; <sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' <sup>29</sup> Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. <sup>30</sup> Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*

There is an appointed time in which God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, will judge the righteousness of the world. The prophet Isaiah prophesied this:

### **Isaiah 61:2 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>2</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,*

The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the first event of the above passage of Scripture in the book of Luke, when He declared the period of time called the acceptable year of the Lord. The next major predestined event after the acceptable year of the Lord is the vengeance of our God. This is the period of time called the day of the Lord in the Holy Scriptures. But during this period of time the Lord has promised to protect His people here on Earth, as He did with Noah and his family during the flood:

### **Matthew 24:37-39 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

For those without understanding it will be business as usual and this period of time will befall them like a thief in the night. Those who understand the truth who are the children of

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light should know what is to come. They will escape this period of time by following the instructions the Lord has set out for His people through His servants the prophets.

### THE DOCTRINE OF IMMINENCE

The Doctrine of imminence, which teaches that the rapture can happen at any moment, is deceit at the highest level. It would be appropriate to use the analogy of a woman giving birth before conceiving a child and going through the period of gestation. If you believe the rapture will happen at any time, then you are in darkness about the truth. If you are in darkness about this event, what about all the other events God has prophesied to happen before, during and after the rapture? You will certainly be in error about those too.

It is true that no one knows the day or the hour when the Lord will return on Earth in great power and glory with His saints to rule over the entire Earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. We have to be very specific about these events - as it has been given to us.

#### **Matthew 24:29-31 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>29</sup> "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. <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> 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.*

The above passage of Scripture stipulates that after the events of the great tribulation, the powers of the heaven will be shaken. Thereafter, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven and then all the tribes of the Earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with great power and glory. That is when He will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

If that is the same event in question taught in the doctrine of imminence, then no one knows the particular day in which God the Father has chosen to send His Son to rule over the Earth.

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### **Matthew 24:36 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>36</sup> *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*

It is imperative that we do not hide behind this passage of Scripture in the belief that no one knows the day or the hour of the return of the Son of Man. It is true that no one knows the day or the hour of the return of the Son of Man. But we have been given details of events that will precede the return of the Son of Man, but not the day nor the hour. The Son of Man can only return after the tribulation and after the powers of heaven have been shaken. If the events of the tribulation did not happen yesterday or today, then there is no way the Son of Man will return tomorrow bearing in mind that the duration of the great tribulation is over three and a half years.

But are there other truths we are all missing in the word of God? What is the meaning of this passage of Scripture which suggests that the return of the Son of Man will overtake us like a thief?

### **1 Thessalonians 5:4-5 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

We now know the Lord will only come after these events from the Scripture in the book of Matthew:

- The great tribulation
- The sun will darken
- The moon will not give its light
- The powers of the heaven will be shaken
- The angel will gather His Saints from the four winds

Why then will He still come to the majority of professing believers as a thief in the night and even to some who are in the light?

There really is something missing which should be common knowledge to the children of light which has not yet been revealed to all. Their Lord has also said that He will send us His

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servant the prophet, who will come in the spirit of Elijah, with instructions to turn us back to the truth. If we do not follow his instructions, then we shall remain in darkness and the day of the Lord will ensnare us.

### **Malachi 4:5-6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>5</sup>Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.*

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## Chapter Three

### THE GREAT APOSTASY

It is common practice to find many who preach the word of God giving explanations of the meaning of words. Is the word of truth about the study of words? Is it about finding out the Greek or Hebrew meaning of a word and then building a case from the Holy Scriptures to support our findings? It is of paramount importance to begin this chapter with these questions. When we extensively use word study, we miss the intention of the heart of God. This leads us to disregard the fact that Scripture cannot be broken. If we follow scripture and study it extensively, and not merely focus on the study of words, then we will see that the Bible interprets itself.

The word apostasy means defection, abandonment, or renouncing of a religious or political belief or principle. But is there something we are missing from the pages of Scripture, or is it a mistranslation of the original word? There is a simple reason for this line of thought: it does not line up with the rest of Scripture. As we know Scripture cannot be broken. We really have to look into the period of time in question to understand the intention of the heart of God which inspired the use of the word apostasy or 'falling away'. Remember only God can issue understanding of His word regardless of what men can imagine.

The King James version of the Bible used the phrase 'falling away', but many of the other versions have used the word apostasy. The meaning of the word apostasy is: to abandon, to renounce or to defect from something. This passage of Scripture below, on which some have used to build a doctrine, does not speak of a defection or an abandonment by any stretch of the imagination.

#### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup>Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup>not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. <sup>3</sup>Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away (apostasy), comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup>who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. <sup>5</sup>Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

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This passage of Scripture is addressing certain events that will precede the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He will gather His Saints to be with Him at the appointed time of the rapture. We are told that:

- There will be a falling away first, or an apostasy of some sort.
- The man of sin will be revealed.
- The man of sin will sit as God in the temple of God showing himself to be God.

Looking at this passage of Scripture in the context of this chapter, it means there is going to be a falling away of some sort. But when taken in context of what has been prophesied about during the period of time in question - the meaning of 'falling away' or apostasy changes.

The first point we have to understand is that there is going to be a temple of God in Jerusalem for the man of sin to defile, parading himself to be God. Today, there is no temple of God in the world, but according to Scripture, at the appointed time, God will action the rebuilding of His temple in Jerusalem. To fully understand what we have been given, we have to look at what the prophet Isaiah was inspired to tell us:

### **Isaiah 49:14-21 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>14</sup> But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me."*

*<sup>15</sup> "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. <sup>16</sup> See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.*

*<sup>17</sup> Your sons shall make haste; Your destroyers and those who laid you waste Shall go away from you. <sup>18</sup> Lift up your eyes, look around and see; All these gather together and come to you. As I live," says the LORD, "You shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament, And bind them on you as a bride does.*

*<sup>19</sup> "For your waste and desolate places, And the land of your destruction, Will even now be too small for the inhabitants; And those who swallowed you up will be far away.*

*<sup>20</sup> The children you will have, After you have lost the others, Will say again in your ears, 'The place is too small for me; Give me a place where I may dwell.' <sup>21</sup> Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, Since I have lost my children and am desolate, A*

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*captive, and wandering to and fro? And who has brought these up? There I was, left alone; But these, where were they?’ ”*

From the above passage of Scripture, it can be seen that God has said that Zion will not be forgotten and He has inscribed Zion on the palms of His hand and on His people: the children of Israel. These people will surely return to Zion at the appointed time. But we have to acknowledge one profound fact: the Lord Jesus Christ is called Israel at the beginning of chapter forty-nine of the book of Isaiah:

### **Isaiah 49:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>*“Listen, O coastlands, to Me, And take heed, you peoples from afar! The LORD has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.*

<sup>2</sup>*And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.”*

<sup>3</sup>*“And He said to me, ‘You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.’*

<sup>4</sup>*Then I said, ‘I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, And my work with my God.’ ”*

If the Lord Jesus Christ is called Israel by God, then the church: the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, is composed of the children of Israel. More details on this will follow in the next chapter of this study.

The Lord has said He will return the captivity of His people at the end of the age, which He compared to the days of Noah. There are many other passages of Scripture in which the servants of the Lord prophesied that there would be a period of time in which the Lord will bring back the captivity of His people. Most importantly, they prophesied that the salvation of Israel, the body of Christ (the people of God), will come out of Zion when the Lord brings back the captivity of His people:

### **Psalms 14:6-7 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup>*You shame the counsel of the poor, But the LORD is his refuge.*

<sup>7</sup>*Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.*

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There has never been a massive defection from the church of God in any way. Those who are in the body of Christ remain in the body of Christ.

### **John 10:28-29** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.*

The Lord has said then no one can be snatched out of the body of Christ. So, is there going to be a mass defection from the body of Christ? The answer is no. Those in the body of Christ will stay in the body of Christ. With that established, what then is the 'falling away' or the great apostasy? Remember, there must be at least a number of Scriptures supporting the fact that there will be an apostasy, but there aren't. The word apostasy, as it has been suggested, is not the rapture or a mass defection from the body of Christ.

There is a parable to consider at this stage, about ten virgins who went to a particular place to meet a bridegroom:

### **Matthew 25:1-13** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>1</sup> "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. <sup>3</sup> Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.*

*<sup>6</sup> "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' <sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.*

*<sup>11</sup> "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' <sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'*

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<sup>13</sup> *“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*

These virgins knew there was an appointed time when the bridegroom would return and they had to go (fall away) somewhere to meet the bridegroom (as Scripture stipulates). While He was delayed, they all carried on with life but five were wise and kept oil for their lamps. At the time of His return, five had no oil for their lamps and the other five could not give them any oil. This parable is expounded in these two statements made by the Lord Jesus Christ:

### **Matthew 24:37-39 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>37</sup> *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

Noah was a prophet of God and he preached the gospel of salvation to the world that the ark he was building will be the place of refuge. No one believed him. At the appointed time, when Noah and his family went into the ark, the flood came and took them away. There must have been many who professed to have believed in God. So too will it be at the appointed time at the end of the age when a prophet will be sent by God to inform His people about the time of their visitation: the season the Lord has chosen to bring back the captivity of His people. This is when His people will fall away, as they did in the days of Moses, to the land the Lord had promised to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Many professing believers will not go out with them and the Day of the Lord will ensnare them. It is for that reason why the Lord said: if you are in Judah flee into the mountains because His people will be in Judea.

### **Matthew 24:15-21 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that*

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*your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Judea will be the first place of refuge for the people of God. If you are not in Judea at the appointed time and you have not been sealed and sent to the nations by the Lord, then you will be in serious trouble. This will be the first apostasy, in which the children of Israel - the church, will fall away from the world into the land of Judea: present day Israel.

The second apostasy will come three and a half years after the return of the children of Israel to the land of Judea. There are many reasons why there is going to be a second apostasy. The main reason is deeply rooted in the lack of oil in the lamps of the people of God, as the Lord has said in the parable of the ten virgins. This phase at the end of the age will come when we see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.

### **Daniel 12:10-11 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>10</sup> Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.*

*<sup>11</sup> "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

The Lord compared this phase of the end of the age to the days of Lot:

### **Luke 17:28-32 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>28</sup> Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.*

*<sup>31</sup> "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife.*

This is the point in time that the apostle Paul was inspired to write to us about to inform us that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ will not come until there is a falling away and the man of sin is revealed. It will be after the woman, described in the book of Revelation chapter twelve, has fled into the wilderness where she will be nourished for three and a half

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years and then the man of sin will be revealed and will sit in the temple of God parading as God.

As mentioned before, Scripture cannot be broken and every word of truth must align with what God has said. God has also given reasons why He will do these things. This period of time at the end of the age was spoken about by the Lord to His disciples privately. It was not opened to everyone. It is for the Saints to understand what the Lord has said He will bring to pass at the appointed time.

### **Matthew 24:3** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>3</sup>Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

Today, all those who are converted to the kingdom of God understand what the Lord Has said in the word of truth. As you can see from the Holy Scriptures, God has a plan for His people at the end of the age. This plan is not to remove them from the Earth but to protect them on Earth. Moving them from one part of the Earth to another is what is referred to as the apostasy, or falling away, in the Holy Scripture which is not a falling away from the truth or to heaven, contrary to popular belief, but to a place of protection.

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## Chapter Four

### THE LINK BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST

Before we proceed any further, it is vital to establish a solid foundation in order to remove any misconceptions which could lead to errors. The question is: what is the connection between Israel and the church today? Or rather, who is Israel of the Old Testament today? You will marvel at the simplicity of the answer and be astonished by the grave consequences of misunderstanding the connection between Israel and the church the Lord Jesus Christ created.

When God called Abraham, He made a covenant with him and blessed him and said that, through his seed the whole world will be blessed. That covenant was further re-established when the Lord asked Abraham to offer up his only son as a burnt offering to the Lord. As he was about to perform the Lord's command, the Lord stopped him.

#### **Genesis 22:15-19 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>15</sup> Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, <sup>16</sup> and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— <sup>17</sup> blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup> In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." <sup>19</sup> So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.*

The son Abraham was going to offer to the Lord was Isaac. Isaac himself had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Just as the Lord changed Abraham's name from Abram, He changed Jacob's name to Israel. The covenant the Lord had made with Abraham passed on through Isaac to Jacob, who had twelve sons and they became the children of Israel. And because of a famine that affected the whole world, Israel went to sojourn in Egypt.

At the appointed time, God sent His servant Moses to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt to fulfil the promise He had made with their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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### **Exodus 6:2-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. <sup>3</sup> I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD I was not known to them. <sup>4</sup> I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. <sup>5</sup> And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. <sup>6</sup> Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. <sup>7</sup> I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. <sup>8</sup> And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.' "

The Lord, through His servant Moses, gave the children of Israel His laws, commandments, precepts, statutes and Judgements, which they were to keep in the land He promised to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### **Deuteronomy 30:15-20 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, <sup>16</sup> in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. <sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; <sup>20</sup> that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

After the death of Moses, the Lord instructed Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the land He had promised to their fathers.

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### **Joshua 1:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: <sup>2</sup>"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup>Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. <sup>4</sup>From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.

Moses had prophesied that the Lord will raise from amongst them a prophet like him and everyone in the house of Israel should listen to Him. As we now know - the prophet was the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Acts 3:22-23 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>22</sup>For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. <sup>23</sup>And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to expound on what Moses had said and the word of the Lord came to many other prophets who spoke about the same issue:

### **Isaiah 9:6-7 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup>For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

The child, on whom the government of the world will be on their shoulders, was the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the Lord said He will add the Gentiles to the house of Israel:

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### **Isaiah 42:6-7 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> *"I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, <sup>7</sup> To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.*

The Lord confirmed the prophecy of adding the Gentiles into the house of Israel when He said:

### **Isaiah 56:6-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> *"Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants— Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant— <sup>7</sup> Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." <sup>8</sup> The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him."*

These were all prophecies which the Lord was to fulfil whilst He walked the Earth for the first time. In the gospel of John, the Lord said:

### **John 10:15-17 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> *As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*

It had always been God the Father's plan to open up His house to whoever is willing to obey His commandments. Regardless of their race, colour and size. Since God the Father is Spirit, He seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

### **John 4:23-24 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

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To enable both the Gentiles and the children of Israel to worship the Father in spirit and truth, because of the Love God has for us, the Lord Jesus Christ was offered for our sins. This established a path that makes it possible for everyone to be able to worship God the Father in spirit and truth. It started when He said: repent and believe in the gospel for the kingdom of God is at hand:

### **Mark 1:14-15 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>14</sup> Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give testament to all the great work the Lord did. When He was crucified for our sins, He returned to God the Father with His Blood (which is for our cleansing) and in return God the Father gave us His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The Lord Jesus Christ did not fully explain what He meant by: repent and believe the gospel, but He gave Peter the inspiration to expound on the path that is now open to both Jews and Gentiles; the path that will empower them to worship God the Father in spirit and truth. Incidentally, the Israelites are now included with the Gentiles because they were taken into captivity and never returned to the land of Israel. It will be appropriate to point out that on the day of Pentecost, the apostles were speaking to devout Jews who were at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Weeks: Pentecost.

### **Acts 2:37-39 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."*

There is another significant part which he revealed a few days later:

### **Acts 3:19-21 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>19</sup> Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, <sup>20</sup> and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration*

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*of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

There are three conditions necessary for God to give any believer His Spirit. First, we have to repent. Secondly, we have to be converted and then be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ into the body of Christ. Baptism and conversion do not necessarily have to follow a specific order because God knows who is His. Conversion is of paramount importance to enable us to live according to the precepts, statutes, commandments and laws of the kingdom of God. To fulfil the promise the Lord made, of bringing others who were not of the children of Israel, He sent Peter to a Gentile to open up the path to the Gentiles:

### **Acts 10:43-48 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>43</sup>To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” <sup>44</sup>While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. <sup>45</sup>And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. <sup>46</sup>For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, <sup>47</sup>“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” <sup>48</sup>And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

As you can see, the path to the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, the Church and the woman in the book of Revelation - was open to both Jews by birth and the Gentiles, specifically, on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit of God was poured for the first time on men. The apostle Peter, who was with the Lord throughout His ministry, had to be converted into the church on the day of Pentecost:

### **Luke 22:32 King James Version (KJV)**

*<sup>32</sup>But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

The apostle Paul, who also became a convert through the path set by the Lord Jesus Christ, was given the revelation of the plan of God the Father. He understood the profound significance of the part our Lord Jesus Christ had played.

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### **Ephesians 2:11-22 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup> And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

By the blood of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles can now worship God the Father in Spirit and truth, if and only if the Spirit of God dwells in us.

So, what has changed? We now have the Spirit of God, which sanctifies us by the truth; the word of God is truth. We can now live by faith which is empowered by the Spirit of God. This is pleasing to God; as we all know, it is impossible to please God without the faith that comes from His Spirit. The doctrine of the kingdom of God is open to us in the New Testament and the Spirit of God guides us into all truth, empowering us to be able to keep the laws and commandments of God given to us through Moses and the prophets. We have to understand that the carnal mind is not subject to the laws of God:

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### **Romans 8:5-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. <sup>8</sup>So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

This is the essence of the Spirit of God, to both the Jews and the Gentiles. It is for this same reason that we have to go through sanctification: to learn how to be led by the Spirit of God.

### **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>13</sup>But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, <sup>14</sup>to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

All who are called into the household of God: the children of Israel, will be glorified at the last trumpet when the Lord calls for His Saints:

### **Romans 8:28-30 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>28</sup>And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup>For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup>Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

The prescribed path to the kingdom of God, which is open to both Jews and Gentiles, involves being converted into the body of Christ (the commonwealth of Israel). For those within the house of God there is no difference, for they are all one. They have all been led there by the Spirit of God.

In the Old Testament, the people of God were called by the name Israel until the Lord opened the path to worship God the Father in spirit and truth. It is important to remember that the prophets of the Old Testament never had the revelation of the body of Christ, the Church but the Lord did not change the name of God's people from Israel. This means that all prophecies for the end of the age concerning the church, the body of Christ, were

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prophesied under the house of Israel or the house of Judah. You can now see how the descendants of Abraham became the children of Israel and the children of Israel became the body of Christ (which includes the Gentiles). The church, which is the Body of Christ, remains the house of Israel.

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## Chapter Five

### WHAT IS THE RAPTURE?

Almost everything on Earth has a life-cycle. There is a beginning, also a period of time where it goes through many different processes of change before the cycle eventually comes to an end. All life on Earth goes through this cycle. The Holy Scriptures is the word of God, in which God has outlined His plan for the salvation of His creation, which includes us, in great detail. The rapture is one of the events the great God has factored into His plan to occur at a specific period of time at the end of the age. To fully understand the meaning of the rapture, we have to look at one of the most important principles that govern the world we live in.

#### **Genesis 8:22 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>22</sup> "While the earth remains, Seed time and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."*

As long as the world exists, these principles will not change. There is always going to be winter and summer, day and night, hot and cold and the subject of our interest: seed, time and harvest. This principle actually governs everything we do here on Earth. Regardless of what it is, we must at some stage employ labour. Then there is a waiting time before we can reap a harvest. Consider this analogy of a farmer in light of God's awesome plan of salvation:

- He prepares his ground and sows his seeds - Justification
- He watches after His crop and prunes when required - Sanctification
- He harvests and transports to his barn - Redemption
- He grades his harvest and separates the good from the bad - Glorification

The sequence of these processes cannot be altered in anyway. A farmer cannot harvest before sowing, neither can he grade his harvest if he has not watched over it while it grew. There are two parables in the Holy Scriptures that depicts God's plan of salvation. Consider this passage of Scripture, which puts us in good stead to understand all other parables:

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### **Mark 4:3-9 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup>“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. <sup>5</sup>Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. <sup>7</sup>And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. <sup>8</sup>But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

<sup>9</sup>And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

We have to understand that the word of God cannot be understood by those who have not been converted into the kingdom of God - because their ears have not been opened to hear. Only the Lord can open our ears to hear and our eyes to see. All converts of the kingdom of God have had their ears open to understand the mystery of the kingdom of God.

### **Mark 4:10-12 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup>But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. <sup>11</sup>And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, <sup>12</sup>so that

‘Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.’ ”

The Lord also gave the interpretation of the parable when He explained:

### **Mark 4:13-20 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? <sup>14</sup>The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup>And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. <sup>16</sup>These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; <sup>17</sup>and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble. <sup>18</sup>Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, <sup>19</sup>and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes

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unfruitful.<sup>20</sup> But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

This parable forms the foundation for understanding the whole concept of the kingdom of God. It depends on our obedience and application of the truth. It is the implementation of the word of truth that will empower us to make giant strides into the kingdom of God. From the above passage of Scripture, it can be seen that only one type of person will make it through all the trials they face and bear fruits. The one who ‘sows the word’ is the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. This parable is directly connected to what will happen at the end of the age to all of us alive today.

The Lord has given us the truth through His disciples and we have been advised to be doers of the word not just hearers. We have been told to repent and be led by the Spirit of God. This parable explains what will happen at the appointed time of harvest when the event of the rapture has been prophesied to take place. Consider:

### **Matthew 13:24-30 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup> but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. <sup>26</sup> But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. <sup>27</sup> So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ <sup>28</sup> He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ <sup>29</sup> But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”

The Lord also interpreted the parable to help us understand:

### **Matthew 13:36-43 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

<sup>37</sup> He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the

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wicked one. <sup>39</sup> The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. <sup>40</sup> Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, <sup>42</sup> and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

From the above passage of Scripture, we can see that the Lord is the sower of the truth: the gospel of the kingdom of God. We are to repent and believe the gospel. On the day of Pentecost, the gospel of the kingdom of God went out from Jerusalem to all the nations of the world. Those who heard the word and repented of their sins and were converted are the good seed who became the sons of the kingdom of God. Those who heard the word and did not repent are the sons of the wicked one. As the Lord said - the angels are the reapers who will 'gather out of His kingdom all things that offend'.

At the appointed time of redemption at the end of the age, the Lord will send His angels to gather those who are worthy to His kingdom. Those who chose not to repent will be gathered into the winepress on that great day of the wrath of God.

Using the analogy of the farmer and the parables the Lord used to explain to us the principles of the kingdom of God, we have to acknowledge that the Earth is due for a harvest at the end of the age. The Lord will send His reapers into His field - the Earth. The Saints of the Lord will be taken to be with the Lord. So, what then is the rapture?

The rapture is an event prophesied at the end of the age in which the Saints of the Lord, both resurrected and living, will be transformed and transported from the Earth to meet with the Lord in the clouds to be with Him forever. This event marks the beginning of the process of glorification. The Lord will call from heaven with the trumpet of God and the voice of an archangel. All His Saints, beginning with the dead who will rise up, followed by those who are still alive will be instantly changed from a corruptible body into an incorruptible body and then transported into heaven. There they will be rewarded for their obedience to His laws and commandments.

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The rapture involves three events. The dead who have been justified and sanctified will rise up first. The awakened Saints and the Saints who are still alive at that stage will then change from a corruptible body into an incorruptible body in the twinkling of an eye and then transported into the clouds to meet with the Lord. Thereafter they will meet God the Father in heaven.

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## Chapter Six

### MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE RAPTURE

Every process on Earth has an element of time factored in, especially all the natural things which man cannot affect. A tree will bear fruits at the right time of the season; similarly, a woman cannot give birth without first conceiving a child. We serve a God of principles and order. If everything that God has set in order could be altered, none of us would be alive today. So, why do some think something as important as the rapture can happen at any instant? If the rapture could happen instantaneously - it would mean that all other prophecies of the events that mark the age would make no sense.

Is it our misunderstanding of the Holy Scriptures which leads us to such beliefs or is there a greater power working behind the scenes with the aim to lead believers astray? The answer is both. The root of all misconceptions stems from our lack of understanding of what God has said. This leads us to believe these fables. There is also an agent fiercely promoting what is not from the word of truth; subtly twisting the same words to establish deceit. We have all been deceived and are held captive by Satan the devil.

#### **Revelation 12:9** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>9</sup>So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

He has also established his ministers in key positions, who are without understanding of the truth themselves. They themselves have been deceived and in turn deceive those who are in search of the truth.

#### **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>13</sup>For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

If these ministers are without understanding of the word of God - how are they expected to teach the truth? Ultimately, it is our responsibility to seek the truth for ourselves, trusting

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the Lord to guide us into all truth. These following passages of Scripture have all been taken out of context by those who promote the belief that the rapture could happen at any time:

### **Revelation 16:15** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>15</sup> "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."*

And

### **Revelation 3:3** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>3</sup> Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.*

And

### **2 Peter 3:10** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

These passages of Scripture are all instructing us to be watchful and be ready. If we do not watch - we will miss the time of the return of the Lord. Incidentally, the Lord explained what He meant by coming as a thief in the night:

### **Luke 12:35-39** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>35</sup> "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; <sup>36</sup> and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. <sup>37</sup> Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup> And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. <sup>39</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

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The Lord said we should always be ready. We should not return to our old ways because we lack the understanding of the time of His return. There is a blessing for all those who will be earnestly waiting for the return of the Lord.

Every word in the Holy Scripture is deliberate and has a meaning. There will be three periods when the Lord will walk amongst us. The first has passed already: when the Lord walked the Earth in His first coming. The second is the one the vast majority of us today are waiting for, when the Lord will return as King of kings. But there is a third, His return as a thief in the night will happen before the second coming. This is a subject of another study.

Back to this study; we must understand that a thief can only break in if they know no one is watching over the house. If we understand what will happen at the end of the age - the return of the Lord will not come to us as a surprise like a thief in the night. But holding on to the belief: that the rapture can happen at any time, keeps us from the truth. For those that hold that belief, the return of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup>But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup>You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

Certain events, which the Lord described as the beginning of sorrows, have been prophesied to happen on Earth. After an event has happened, the Earth dwellers will start thinking that there is peace and they are safe, then suddenly another event even worse than the previous one will strike the Earth and it will come to many as a thief in the night.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:6-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>6</sup>Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. <sup>7</sup>For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord*

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Jesus Christ,<sup>10</sup> who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him

The people of God have not been appointed to experience wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ so that this day will not come to us as a thief in the night. The 'helmet' of salvation is the knowledge of the truth. The knowledge of what God has prophesied He will do at the end of the age. The Lord also gave this parable of the fig tree:

### **Luke 21:29-33 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>29</sup> Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. <sup>31</sup> So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

The Lord is saying that when we see all the events He has just described to us - we will know that the kingdom of God is near.

### **Luke 21:25-27 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>25</sup> "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; <sup>26</sup> men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

In this passage we are given a similar description, including the instruction of the Lord to His angels to gather His Saints to Him which is the rapture:

### **Matthew 24:27-31 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>27</sup> For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>28</sup> For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.*

*<sup>29</sup> "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. <sup>30</sup> 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*

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power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> 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.

The event of the return of the Lord will not be quiet like a thief in the night. It will be a time of great noise, full of the blasts of trumpets and voices which everyone alive will hear when the Lord comes to gather His Saints to Him. But that time will come after the event of the great tribulation, as the Lord has said. The apostle Paul was inspired to shed some more light on the subject:

### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. <sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. <sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

The subject Paul was addressing was the timing of the return of the Lord for His Saints. He said that we should let no one deceive us about the timing of that day. The return of the Lord to gather His Saints will not come until there is a falling away and the man of sin, the son of perdition is revealed. We know the man of sin is revealed to the world during the great tribulation. This means the rapture can only happen after the great tribulation.

In the letters to the churches in the book of Revelation, the Lord said that He will throw out the members of the body of Christ who do not repent. They will be cast into great tribulation.

### **Revelation 2:21-23 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. <sup>22</sup> Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. <sup>23</sup> I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

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It is important not to mistake this for something else. The Lord is addressing the body of Christ, the Church He built. In this case, He has said He will throw these members into the great tribulation if they do not repent, which incidentally means that these members will not be gathered to Him when He comes for the church in the rapture before the great tribulation. There are members of the body of Christ He has promised to keep from the great tribulation:

### **Revelation 3:10** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>10</sup> Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

The hour of trial that will test those who dwell on the Earth is the day of the Lord, which climaxes with the great tribulation. These members of the body of Christ will be protected from this hour and will not be taken away from the Earth, hence not taken to heaven in the rapture. There are those who will not even be around to see the great tribulation:

### **Revelation 3:16-17** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>16</sup> So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'— and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

These are members of the body of Christ who claim to know everything, but in reality they are miserable, naked, poor and blind to the truth and will be gone even before the great tribulation. At no stage is there any mention of the rapture in these passages. However, there is mention of the fact that some will be thrown into the great tribulation. Paul said that the return of the Lord for His Saints will only come after the man of sin has been revealed - just before the great tribulation.

### **Daniel 12:1-3** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>1</sup> "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. <sup>2</sup> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup> Those who are*

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*wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.*

There is a specific event prophesied to happen during this period of time at the end of the age. It includes a war in heaven and the great prince (Michael) will throw the devil out of Heaven. This will result in the great tribulation on Earth. Only after these events will the Lord return to gather His Saints.

### **Jeremiah 23:5-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. <sup>6</sup>In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called:*

*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

<sup>7</sup> *“Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ <sup>8</sup>but, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they shall dwell in their own land.”*

This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, in which the Lord brings back the children of Israel from the north country and all the countries of the world. Because it has not, the rapture can never happen at any time. Only after the Lord has brought back the captivity of His people will we see the fulfilment of this prophecy:

### **Joel 2:28-32 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> *“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. <sup>29</sup>And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. <sup>30</sup>“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. <sup>31</sup>The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. <sup>32</sup>And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in*

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*Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.*

In the fulfilment of this prophecy on the Day of Pentecost, the Lord did not show any signs in the heavens or on Earth. In the next and final fulfilment of this prophecy, expect to see many signs - including the sun being turned into darkness and the moon into blood.

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## Chapter Seven

### THE REASONS FOR THE RAPTURE

There is no one more transparent than the Lord our God. God has given reasons why He did things in the past and He has already given us the reasons why He will do what has been prophesied to come in the future. We can be in no doubt whatsoever that it is God who has performed His word.

For us to fully understand the reason for the rapture, we have to go back to before the Earth was created to comprehend the will of God.

#### **Psalm 2:4-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. <sup>5</sup> Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: <sup>6</sup> "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." <sup>7</sup> "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'you are My Son, today I have begotten You. <sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.*

The Lord our God has already determined that He will establish His government on the Earth, with our Lord Jesus Christ as King. But although the Lord can - he will not rule over the Earth single-handedly. He has given man the opportunity to rule with Him. In that process - God will grow His family to include those who qualify through faith and obedience during their lifetime on Earth. The apostle John was inspired to write:

#### **John 1:12-13 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

This is the awesome opportunity opened to every living soul - to play a part in the government of God. But we must become part of God's family here on Earth when we become converts into the kingdom of God. Only then can we rule with Him at the appointed time. To be able to rule the Earth with the Lord - we must be born of the Spirit of God, as the Lord told the Pharisee Nicodemus:

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### **John 3:3-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

<sup>4</sup> *Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*

<sup>5</sup> *Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

To be able to see and enter the kingdom of heaven, which is the place where those who qualified must go to receive their reward of rulership, they must become born of the Spirit of God after they have been justified and then sanctified by the Lord.

### **Romans 8:27-30 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

<sup>28</sup> *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

We have to understand that God's plan is not a reaction to what is happening on Earth. On the contrary, it is well-orchestrated and is being enacted with every passing day. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, God has proposed to set up His King to rule over the Earth. Those who God has chosen to rule the Earth with His Son, those He foreknew before He laid the foundations of the Earth, He also predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son. This therefore means that everyone who God foreknew to be conformed to the image of His Son - will be justified and then be glorified like His Son at the appointed time. It is at the time of glorification that anyone can become born again. Those who are glorified will be rulers with the Lord as kings and priests:

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### **Luke 22:27-30 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>27</sup> For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.*

*<sup>28</sup> "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. <sup>29</sup> And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me,<sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

The Lord told His apostles that they will sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel when He returns and sets His kingdom on Earth. But it is not only limited to the apostles. Those who reject the truth and forget to do the commandments of God - will be rejected from being kings and priests when the kingdom of God is established on Earth:

### **Hosea 4:5-6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>5</sup> Therefore you shall stumble in the day; The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night; And I will destroy your mother. <sup>6</sup> My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

There are some alive today who have been preparing to start their duties as priests of the Lord before the kingdom of God is established of Earth:

### **Jude 14-16 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>14</sup> Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, <sup>15</sup> to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

*<sup>16</sup> These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.*

This was a prophecy given to us by Enoch, even before Abraham, that has profound implications on the subject of the return of the Lord that has been missed by many scholars. At what stage this will happen is a subject of another study. These ten thousand saints of the Lord are the first fruits who will be given tremendous powers to perform the will of God:

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### **Revelation 14:1-5** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>1</sup>Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup>And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. <sup>3</sup>They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup>These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup>And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

These Saints have not been granted entry into the kingdom of heaven yet but they have been redeemed by the Lord. They are with Him to do His will, but they have to wait till the appointed time when all the Saints of the Lord will become born again. The reason they have been given this power, is to fulfil prophecies concerning the day of the Lord including:

### **Psalms 149:5-9** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>5</sup>Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. <sup>6</sup>Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, <sup>7</sup>To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; <sup>8</sup>To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; <sup>9</sup>To execute on them the written judgment— This honour have all His saints. Praise the LORD!*

These Saints will be given the honour of executing vengeance, not only on the Earth dwellers, but also on their kings and nobles. There is a deeper meaning to this passage of Scripture which cannot be picked up by a casual glance. 'Fetters of iron' are needed to bind up fallen angels and their hybrids. Remember, as it was in the days of Noah - so will it be at the end of the age. These fallen angels and their hybrids will be on Earth.

The purpose of the rapture is to transform all those who have qualified into the kingdom of heaven. There they will be rewarded for their obedience and faith and will receive their position as kings and priests of God, similar to the Lord who is waiting for His appointment:

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### **Revelation 5:9-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>9</sup>And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, <sup>10</sup>And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*

At the appointed time, which God the Father has set, the Lord and His glorified Saints will return on Earth to complete the establishment of the kingdom of God and rule for one thousand years:

### **Revelation 20:4-6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>4</sup>And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

All those who qualify for the rapture will also be granted eternal life and will have no part in the second resurrection. This will be when every soul which has ever existed will be resurrected for the Great White Throne Judgement. The Saints of the Lord will be the judges.

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## Chapter Eight

### HOW WILL THE RAPTURE HAPPEN?

The Lord has to open our understanding to enable us to be able to perceive the truth. The most intelligent minds on Earth cannot understand the word of God because their ears have not been opened to hear the truth. Nor have their eyes been opened to see the truth. This group also includes the ministers of Satan who pretend to be ministers of the truth but they are full of darkness and without understanding. It also includes all those who hold the doctrine that we can be raptured at any time.

There is an amazing passage of Scripture in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, in which he was taken to a valley filled with dry bones. The Lord told the prophet to prophesise to the bones to bring them back together, forming skeletons which eventually turned into those who had once lived. Sinew and flesh were added to these skeletons and they were each given a spirit which brought them back to life:

#### **Ezekiel 37:1-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup>The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. <sup>3</sup>And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"*

*So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know."*

*<sup>4</sup>Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!' <sup>5</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup>I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD." ' "*

*<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. <sup>8</sup>Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.*

*<sup>9</sup>Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain,*

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*that they may live.” ’ ”<sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.*

We can rest assured that the events in this above passage of Scripture happened, as the prophet Ezekiel saw it happen in that valley. All we are waiting for now is the appointed time when it will come to pass. Then, as the prophet prophesied, those who are to be glorified but are now asleep will rise from the dead.

It is the Spirit of God which dwells in the believer that sets them apart. These are the children of light. If they fall the sleep of death, we have just seen what will become of them in the previous passage of Scripture: they will rise from the dead. As for those who are currently being sanctified and will endure until that day when the Lord calls, they will surely be able to answer because they possess the Spirit of God within them. The Lord prophesied when He said:

### **John 5:24-25 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>24</sup> “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. <sup>25</sup> Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.*

We live in the period of time during which we have all been given the opportunity to pass from death into life. No one alive today can boast of a superior starting position; we have all fallen short of the glory of God. The cost of our shortfall is death, but the Lord has redeemed all of us from the penalty of sin, which is death. The Lord also said that the hour has come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear this will live.

All these truths have already been set in order before us and now it is up to us to obey the instructions at the appointed time. If we choose not to believe in the Son of God and disdain His commandments, we will certainly not hear when He calls and will not pass from death into life. The Lord gave us an example of what it will be like when He called Lazarus from the dead:

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### **John 11:41-43** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." <sup>43</sup> Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"*

The Lord called and Lazarus, who had been in the grave for four days, walked out of the grave. What about those who have the Spirit of God and are alive? They will surely hear when the Lord calls. There are three passages of Scripture describing the same event which will happen simultaneously at the appointed time:

### **Revelation 14:14-16** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.*

This will happen on that great day when the Lord will come to harvest the Earth. Notice that He is not coming to the Earth but will be in the clouds above the Earth. This is explained further to make us aware that those on Earth will be able to hear God. The first to hear will be the dead:

### **Revelation 11:11-12** New King James Version (NKJV)

*<sup>11</sup> Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.*

This passage of Scripture is a description of what will happen to the dead. Those who are alive will hear the voice of the Lord and will be brought together with the dead to be with the Lord:

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### **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>15</sup> 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

The above three passages of Scripture, from three different books, are a description of one event. It will be at this moment, at the appointed time, when the Saints of the Lord will become born again:

### **John 3:5-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

This is the moment when the Spirit of God in the Saints will spring up into everlasting life. It is a new birth, not as flesh but as spirit beings:

### **1 Corinthians 15:51-53 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

This mystery is hard to understand. How is God going to turn His Saints into spirit beings? As we know with God - all things are possible. In a moment the dead will rise up and become spirit beings, likewise - so will all those who are alive. They will change from human beings to spirit beings in an instant. This is how the Holy Scriptures have described how the rapture will happen.

In summary, this event will proceed in this order of occurrence. The trumpet of God will be heard by all on Earth. Thereafter, the voice of the Lord will be heard when He calls those

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who have the Spirit of God to come up and meet Him in the clouds. Instantly the dead will rise up first and they, along with all those who have the Spirit of God and are alive, will be changed instantly to spirit beings. They will then proceed to meet the Lord in the clouds and will be with Him from then on.

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## Chapter Nine

### WHEN WILL THE RAPTURE HAPPEN?

There are three main conflicting ideas of when the rapture will eventually happen. As we know, God is not the author of confusion. Therefore only one of those three is correct. To understand when the rapture will happen, we have to be aware that the rapture is synonymous with the resurrection of the dead. One cannot happen without the other. In the Holy Scriptures, the resurrection of the dead can only happen at an appointed time. This is what we will investigate now.

In the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul was inspired to inform us that God will bring all things in heaven and on Earth under the rulership of Lord Jesus Christ. As it stands, Satan will remain the ruler of this age until that period of time.

#### **Ephesians 1:7-10 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>7</sup>In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup>which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence <sup>9</sup>having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup>that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.*

This is also the same period of time described in the book of Acts chapter three in verse twenty-one as the time of the restoration of all things. The restoration of all things can only happen after the time of trouble described in the book of Daniel. This is due to the fact that all things cannot be restored only for there to be a further time of destruction.

#### **Daniel 12:1-3 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup>“At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. <sup>2</sup>And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup>Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.*

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This was also prophesied by the prophet Isaiah when he was inspired to say:

### **Isaiah 28:19-22 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>19</sup> As often as it goes out it will take you; For morning by morning it will pass over, And by day and by night; It will be a terror just to understand the report.” <sup>20</sup> For the bed is too short to stretch out on, And the covering so narrow that one cannot wrap himself in it. <sup>21</sup> For the LORD will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon— That He may do His work, His awesome work, And bring to pass His act, His unusual act. <sup>22</sup> Now therefore, do not be mockers, Lest your bonds be made strong; For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts, A destruction determined even upon the whole earth.*

The one who is determined to bring to pass His strange act is the Lord. This strange act is the destruction that will befall the whole Earth. The Lord Jesus Christ expounded on the above passages of Scripture when He said:

### **Luke 21:20-24 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>20</sup> “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. <sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. <sup>22</sup> For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. <sup>23</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. <sup>24</sup> And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

And in the gospel of Mark:

### **Mark 13:14-20 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>14</sup> “So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” (let the reader understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>15</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. <sup>16</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>17</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>18</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter. <sup>19</sup> For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created*

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*until this time, nor ever shall be.<sup>20</sup> And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.*

These two passages of Scripture are describing the same event: the great tribulation. The Lord said that when we read these passages of Scripture we should understand that He is speaking of what the prophet Daniel was inspired to write:

### **Daniel 12:11 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>11</sup> "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

The apostle Paul was inspired to shed more light on this topic for our understanding when he said that the gathering to the Lord will not come until after the abomination of desolation:

### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup> Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. <sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, <sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

The Holy Scriptures leave no room for error and are not ambiguous as long as we have understanding of them. But man always finds a way to distort the truth. In this passage of Scripture, it is clear that our gathering to the Lord Jesus Christ will only come after a certain point. This is when the man of sin, the son of perdition, is revealed. The sign that indicates that this is the man of sin - is when he sits in the temple of God in Jerusalem and exalts himself to be God.

The prophet Daniel called this event the abomination of desolation. This was validated by the Lord Jesus Christ as truth. There is no temple of God in Jerusalem at the moment. This means that the rapture cannot occur today or tomorrow to say the least, but only after the temple of God has been built. Not just a structure in which sacrifices can be made, but a fully functioning temple of God. This is on the way. With the technology we have at our

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disposal this can happen very quickly. In the book of Revelation, we are informed that those who were in heaven have come out of the great tribulation, further vindicating the fact that the rapture will happen after the great tribulation.

### **Revelation 7:9-17 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>9</sup>After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup>and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" <sup>11</sup>All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>saying:*

*"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honour and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."*

*<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" <sup>14</sup>And I said to him, "Sir, you know."*

*So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. <sup>16</sup>They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup>for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

The elder, who was speaking to John, knew where the multitude had come from and told John they had come out of the great tribulation. This indicates that the rapture will not be before the great tribulation. There are those who are going to serve God and be rulers of the Earth with the Lord Jesus Christ. But the exact period of time that the rapture is going to occur has not yet been disclosed. So far we know it will be some time after the great tribulation. Consider this passage of Scripture:

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### **John 11:23-25 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*

As mentioned earlier, the rapture is synonymous with the resurrection of the dead. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, knew the dead will be resurrected on the last day of this age. The Lord Jesus Christ had also said:

### **John 6:37-40 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>37</sup> All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup> This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

In as many sentences, the Lord repeated the fact that the resurrection of the dead will be on the last day of this age. Since there can only be one last day of this age when the dead will be resurrected and raptured into heaven, all we need to do is search Scripture for a sign that signifies that day. The apostle Paul informed us that the resurrection of the dead will occur at the last trumpet:

### **1 Corinthians 15:52 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

And in the book of Revelation, the event of the last trumpet was marked as:

### **Revelation 11:15-19 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>15</sup> 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!" <sup>16</sup> And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup> saying:*

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*“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. <sup>18</sup> 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.”*

*<sup>19</sup> Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.*

This passage of Scripture depicts a period of time when there will be great rejoicing - when God finally takes all control over the Earth and hands it to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord in turn will call all His Saints up into heaven to be rewarded. This is the appointed time when the rapture will occur.

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## Chapter Ten

### CONCLUSION

God has a plan which was established before He had even laid the foundation of the Earth. In this well-orchestrated plan, God has set certain events to mark the beginning of a phase and the end of the previous phase of His plan. We have to understand that we serve a God of laws, order and principles - without which, the Earth would descend into a state of chaos.

The Son of God came into the world to save man from the penalty of sin, which is death, and to enable men to become Sons of God. These are just a few of the many duties only the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, can perform. No man on Earth has ever been capable of doing what the Messiah has done. If we consider the life of the Messiah, it was prophesied He will be born on Earth:

#### **Isaiah 9:6-7 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>6</sup>For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

And the Messiah finally entered the Earth after a long wait:

#### **Matthew 2:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup>Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."*

*<sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.*

Even at His birth, before He could walk or talk, the Lord was named the King of Israel and will always be the King of Israel. God sent a man before Him to introduce Him to Israel as the Messiah who was going to redeem Israel from all their sins:

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### **John 1:14-18 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

<sup>15</sup> *John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"*

<sup>16</sup> *And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.* <sup>17</sup> *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* <sup>18</sup> *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*

The Lord Jesus Christ performed His ministry to perfection and with diligence, undertaking all the duties God the Father had predisposed on Him flawlessly. This included saying only what God had told Him to say, hence we have the word of truth. At the end of His ministry, when He was betrayed, He asked if the cup could pass from Him. He wasn't imposing His will on God the Father but accepting to do God's will even though it was the difficult path:

### **Luke 22:1-6 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> *Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.* <sup>2</sup> *And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.* <sup>4</sup> *So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.* <sup>5</sup> *And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.* <sup>6</sup> *So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.*

When He was on the cross, He declared it was finished because He had completed all what was set before Him. This included fulfilling every Scripture that was written about Him during His first coming flawlessly.

### **John 19:28-30 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> *After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"* <sup>29</sup> *Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.* <sup>30</sup> *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

His blood was drawn for us:

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### **John 19:33-34 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. <sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.*

After three days and three nights in the belly of the Earth, the Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead.

### **Luke 24:1-8 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>1</sup> Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. <sup>3</sup> Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. <sup>5</sup> Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " <sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words.*

In the book of the Acts of the Apostles we see the Lord being taken into heaven:

### **Acts 1:9-11 New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup> who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

This is a very short summary of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ when He walked the Earth during His first coming. All these events were prophesied in the Old Testament and happened exactly as they were prophesied, underpinning the fact that the word of God is truth. The Lord fulfilled every scripture that was written about the events of His first coming.

Considering all the passages of Scripture that have been listed so far in this chapter, how likely is it for any of these events to happen before the other? Could the Lord have been resurrected from the dead before He started His ministry, or could the Lord be in the grave

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for three days and three nights before He was born? The answers to these questions is no. Therefore the rapture is definitely not likely to happen at any time before the last trumpet. It has to follow the sequence of events the Lord has set at the end of the age and in a particular order to fulfil the word of truth.

The Lord is very specific about what He has said and takes His word seriously. It is up to us to seek the Lord to find out what He has already said. Do not put your trust in ministers who claim to be from God but are not. You have to escape the claws of those who are out to keep us from the kingdom of God because it is your responsibility to seek the truth. This study is a guide to point you in the right direction, to see the errors of those who claim to be ministers of light but are full of darkness.