

V. The Kingdom: A whole Millennium* of Light & Peace

At the conclusion of Section IV, we have anticipated that when the rapture of all the believers in Christ Jesus takes place, and simultaneously, the rest of the whole World will pass through a seven-year period of severe *physical* and *spiritual darkness*, on the one hand those who "turned to God from idols to serve the Living and True God; and wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come", *1 Thess. 1:9&10*, are hence saved from "the wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (*and women*), who hold the Truth in unrighteousness", *Rom. 1:18*. On the other hand, at the end of the seven-year tribulation, thus the Earth itself is also purified in preparation to again receive the Messiah as **King of Kings and Lord of Lords**, "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying: Allelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth", *Rev. 19:6*.

Historically, at the first advent of the Lord Jesus, it was proclaimed that: "the people which sat in *darkness* saw great *light*; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death *Light* is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: Repent: for the **Kingdom of heaven** is at hand", *Matt. 4:16&17*. Therefore, when Christ appeared to the Jewish people, the next logical thing in the order of revelation, as it then stood, should have been the setting up of the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom, for that was what the angel Gabriel said unto Mary: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the **throne** of his Father David, and **He shall reign** over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His **kingdom** there shall be no end", *Luke 1:32&33*. But the Jewish people rejected Him, for "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not", *John 1:11*.

Following Israel's rejection, His Kingdom was no longer overtly manifest, but locked up in the 'secret' Counsels of God, and was only

* The expression: The Millennium Kingdom, refers to the reign of "thousand years", which occurs six times in the first seven verses in *Rev. 20:1-7*, it comes from Latin: *mille annis*, from *mille* meaning thousand, and *annus* meaning year, which gave rise to the now familiar term "millennium", and because it is stated that He shall reign for a thousand years, His is the Millennium Kingdom, in the promised restoration of the Davidic Kingdom, "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever", *2 Sam. 7:13*.

It is my firm and most ardent belief that the coming-again of Christ is undoubtedly very imminent in our time, however, it is quite wrong, indeed it constitutes a blatant disobedience to speculate or calculate as to when the Lord's return is going to happen. Before the Lord returned to heaven, as the disciples "were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them: It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His power", *Acts 1:6&7*, of which He had also said: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only", *Mat 24:36*.

If that applies to the subsequent events, *viz*, the Second Advent, it necessarily follows that it must also apply to the rapture. Likewise, and in obedience to the Lord's command, it is therefore not my intention to enter into the debate of the exact timing of the rapture, and whether Christ's 'secret' return for His own, is Pre-tribulation, i.e., preceding the seven-year tribulation, or Mid-tribulation i.e. at the 'last' trump which will sound at exactly the "one thousand two hundred and threescore days or forty and two months", heralding the Great Tribulation, *Rev. 11:2&3*, or Post-tribulation and immediately pre-millennial, i.e., at the end of the seven years and just before the Messiah's 1000-year reign on Earth as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS", *Rev. 19:16*. Fundamentalists always think they are right, but if each of these three timeframes is 'individually' thought to be correct, then it necessarily follows that they all must also be potentially wrong. Let us, therefore, not lose sight that what matters most is that we must always be watchful as we anxiously await in eager anticipation for His very imminent return.

In conclusion.

As the Millions of believers in Jesus Christ, "from all Nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" are caught up in the air, the void that is *left behind* will be sorely felt, as *chaos* and *physical darkness* are expected, and as the pin of moral compass will also be severely compromised, the world will be plunged in *spiritual darkness*. However, as for us, if we truly believe that Christ has physically partaken in our flesh and blood so that we are soon able to partake in His spiritual nature, and if our desire is sincere to finally reach our heavenly destiny, therefore, in the interim we must strive to be like Him and our lives should be the pure fragrance of Christ: "unto God a sweet-smelling aroma of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish", *2 Cor. 2:15*. For this reason: "Beloved, we know that when *He shall appear*, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. **And every man that hath this hope in Him *purifieth* himself, even as he is pure**", *1 John 3:2 & 3*.

3. Shortly afterwards, in recalling the institution the Lord's Supper, *Matt. 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, & Luke 22:19-20*, Paul declared: "That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said: Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also He took the cup, saying: This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death **till He come**" *1 Cor. 11:23-26*.

4. Further still, Paul in his beautiful oration on *agape* or unconditional love, *aka charity*, which he concluded with "Love never faileth ... For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when *He* which is perfect **is come**, then that which is in part shall be done away", *1 Cor. 13:8-10*.

5. In the same first letter to the Corinthians, Paul intricately explained the importance of Christ's resurrection, *1 Cor. 15:12-24*, accordingly he was enabled to elaborate on the resurrection of the Dead, *1 Cor. 15:35-50*, which will take place in an orderly fashion: "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's **at His coming**", *1 Cor. 15:23* which Paul has quite logically concluded as to when it will happen: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump**, *vide supra* for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed ... Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ", *1 Cor. 15:51-57*.

6. Moving on to *c. A.D. 60*, St. Paul again writes, this time to the Philippians: "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also **we look for the Saviour**, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself", *Phil. 3:20&21*.

7. Finally, St. John the Divine, in *c. A.D. 95*, began his 'Revelation' by saying: "Behold **He cometh with the clouds**; and every eye shall see Him", *Rev. 1:7*, who also recorded the last message of the Bible: "These sayings are faithful and true", *Rev. 22:6*, and there and then, the last promise reverberated on three occasions: "**Behold, I come quickly**. Blessed he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this Book, ... for the time is at hand. ... And, **behold I come quickly**; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ... And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. ... He who testifieth these things saith, **Surely, I come quickly**. Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus", *Rev. 22:7, 12 & 20*.

and after the long engaging and illuminating discourse with Peter in respect of *agape*, i.e., unconditional love, and shepherding of His flock, and referring to John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved,... *He* said unto *Peter*: If I will that he (*John*) tarry ***till I come***, what is that to thee? Follow thou me", *John 21:15-22*.

The confirmation of the Lord's return to the Earth is re-iterated by His Angels and by the disciples, which is incontrovertibly established in the Scripture. For immediately after His ascension, for "when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, ***shall so come in like manner*** as ye have seen Him go into heaven", *Acts 1: 9-11*.

Sadly, this fundamental 'Truth' is not universally accepted, for it is repeatedly stated that the idea of a rapture is not found in early Christianity, but is a recent eschatological interpretation and is a theological position held only by some end-time evangelical Christians! This cannot be further from the truth, for if we carefully examine the texts of the early Christians, we must come to a different conclusion. I, therefore, make no apology to consider in details 7 testimonies of the disciples of the Lord, as follows:

1. I have already quote the full text of *1 Thess. 4:13-18*, which St. Paul, the Apostle, had written in *c. A.D. 51* therein is a clear, even explicit, discourse to the 'early' Church of the Thessalonians, regarding the material descent of the Lord from heaven. "Now ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And ***to wait for His Son from heaven***, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus", *1 Thess. 1:9&10*, who will first raise all the believers that have died in Christ, over the generations, and then the contemporaneous Christians who are living in the constant expectation and hope, as we are still to this day, will ***"be caught up"*** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord", *1 Thess. 4:17*.

2. St. Paul again writing in *c. A.D. 56*, "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth" who were clearly twice identified as ***"waiting for the coming"*** of our Lord Jesus Christ", *1 Cor. 1: 1&7*, and in exhorting them to "judge nothing before the time" are reminded to do so ***"until the Lord come"***, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God", *1 Cor. 4:5*.

particularly from 1833, when it was advocated, explained, and advanced by one John Nelson Darby (1800 – 1882), who as a Biblical scholar and expert in the ancient original-languages of the Scripture, had quite scholarly derived the word rapture from the Latin verb: *rapio*, meaning ‘to catch up’, or more likely the Latin word: *raptura*, meaning ‘seizure, kidnapping or carrying off’. Alternatively, it is likewise derived from the Greek word: *harpazo*, meaning ‘to snatch away’ or ‘be seized or caught up’, as it appeared in 1 Thess. 4:17.

The ‘secret’ return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church, i.e., the body of Christ and His ‘bride’, composed of all the believers in Him, is detailed in the following quite explicit passage, which needs no further elucidation: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep*, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto **the coming**[†] of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep*. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and **with the trump of God**; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so, shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words”, 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

The Lord Himself has repeatedly referred to His return to His own, for He said: “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also”, John 14:1-3. Likewise, in His High Priestly and intercessory prayer, He said: “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, **be with me where I am**, that they should behold my glory, which Thou hast given me; for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”, John 17:24. And His final personal reference followed on after His glorious resurrection, as He “showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias”, John 21:1,

* Implying died in Christ: John 11:11-14, 1 Cor. 15:6 & 18

[†] In Greek there are 3 words that are predominantly employed in connection with the **coming** or the **return** of the Lord: *Parousia*, which indicates a personal presence, *Apokalupsia*, which means the unveiling or a revelation, thus emphasises the public visibility of the Lord’s return in the Second Coming, and *Epiphaneia* which implies the brightness or manifestation of appearing.