

What is 'The Rapture' Eschatology

by Tim Conway

This sermon delves into the concept of the two ages - the current age and the age to come, emphasizing the importance of being prepared for Christ's second coming and the judgment day. It highlights the individual nature of judgment, where each person's deeds will be evaluated, and the eternal consequences of being ready or unprepared for Christ's return.

Scripture: Matthew 25:31, 1 Corinthians 3:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 14:13, Revelation 1:7, John 5:25

Topics: "Preparedness for Christ's Return", "Individual Accountability in Judgment"

Description

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Transcript

The question is this, what is the rapture? Now I don't know where you all are at on that. I mean, I don't know where the church is, but I don't even know England. Is the rapture a big deal over here or not so much? It's probably the same as over there.

There's some people that are really bothered about it and some people that are not. And some people don't know. Well, it gets brought up a lot.

Obviously, some preachers and teachers that you all might like and love and even listen to at times, they hold to the rapture. They believe this. And it often gets brought up.

It's obviously there's TV shows and movies. And so the question does come up. I thought it may be a good one for us to deal with.

I really think that there's some real problems with the whole eschatology, that theology that's behind the rapture. I really believe that there's some big problems with it. I think there's some damaging error that is associated with it.

But be that as it may, I thought maybe we would just give a little bit of consideration to the end times. I know that's a very popular thing, maybe too popular in some circles. But then I think there are other circles where they hardly deal with it at all.

And namely, the reform circles. Maybe eschatology isn't dealt with very much at all. And the Bible has a lot to say about it.

So I don't think it's something that we want to ignore. Before we dive in, let's just pray. Father, as we once again are going to take the time ahead of us to look at your word, I ask you to make this real, make this alive.

Lord, we recognize that even when we're talking about end times, your word has much to say, you have light to shed. And it's not as though this is an insignificant part of our doctrine. You have chosen to say much in your word about the future.

Of God's people, how this all comes to an end, what expectations we should have. So Lord, I pray that you'd use this study in a good way for your people. And I ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Let me ask you all this question. Where is the rapture taught in the Bible? Give me a chapter in a verse for the teaching of the rapture.

Thessalonians. Second Thessalonians. Okay, the primary passage, the passage of all passages that people who hold to the rapture are going to take you to is found in First Thessalonians chapter 4. So let's all turn there.

First Thessalonians chapter 4. Let's see if we can actually find a rapture here. First Thessalonians chapter 4. And you can see in verse 13, most of our Bibles give us some indication that there's a change of subject matter here. You typically have some sort of heading that that is a giveaway.

We do not want you to be uninformed brothers. This is First Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 13. So that's good, right? That's good.

The Apostle Paul doesn't want us to be uninformed. He wants to tell us about those who are asleep. Now, let's just stop right there for a second.

The rapture. Typically when people talk about the rapture, their big concern is this. Are Christians going to go through the tribulation or not? You notice that's not what Paul's concerned about.

Paul has no concern right here about whether Christians go through the tribulation or not. Whether the rapture is before the tribulation or after the tribulation. That's not even what he's concerned about here.

He's concerned about Christians who are asleep. Not literally. He's talking about Christians who have died.

You don't grieve over napping Christians. That's what he's talking about, grief. He says he doesn't want us to be uninformed about those who have died.

That you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. So we as Christians, when we lose brothers and sisters, we're not like the rest of the world. We're not hopeless.

Verse 14, since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. That's what you want to see. Okay, picture this.

What he's concerned about is Jesus coming again and bringing those who have fallen asleep. Now, if you know anything about the teaching of the rapture, it's got nothing to do with the people who have already died. It's got everything to do with those who are still alive being taken up.

It's got nothing to do with those who have already died. And yet, his big concern right here is that this coming of Jesus that he's speaking about here is... Jesus isn't coming alone. Jesus is coming with those who have fallen asleep.

Now, look what he says. Verse 15, for this we declare to you by a word from the Lord that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord. Now, notice this.

This is the coming of the Lord. This is not simply people disappearing and vanishing, leaving a pile of clothing for the rest of the world simply to go on. This is the coming of the Lord.

And what he's saying is those who are left will not precede those who have fallen asleep. In other words, when Jesus comes, if you've already died or if you're still alive, it's okay. He says the Lord himself is going to descend from heaven with a cry of command.

Okay, that's pretty public. When the rapture, supposedly, whatever this rapture is, Jesus is supposed to come another time to zap his people away and it's supposed to be a secret. I mean, you don't see him.

The rapture, you don't see Jesus. Jesus comes secretly. Did people just disappear? But that's not what you have here.

You have the Lord descending from heaven with the cry of command and with the voice of the archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. What's that? Nobody who believes in the rapture believes that the graves are going to open up and the dead are going to come out at that point.

If you've seen any of the movies, the rapture movies, the left behind movies, that's not even in the picture. And listen, this is their primary passage. And what I'm saying, this doesn't have anything to do with any secret rapture.

This has to do with the second coming of Jesus Christ. It's not a secret coming. It's a very public coming.

There's a sound of a trumpet. The dead are going to rise. And then we who are alive, who are left, we're going to be caught up.

See, that's where they see the rapture. They're caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

And so, you know, if you just isolate verse 17, they get a rapture. But if you start connecting it with all the other verses here, it just doesn't work. Brethren, let me tell you something.

The rapture doesn't even appear in history until the 1800s. And many of you may know there was an Irishman by the name of John Nelson Darby. He was over here.

He came up with this. Now, if you study it, it seems like it came from a woman who had a vision or a dream. Darby ran with it.

You know, Darby was one of these Plymouth Brethren guys. And he ran with this teaching about the rapture. It had never been introduced into church history before that.

And then you know who picked it up? C.I. Scofield. Scofield's study Bible. Scofield ran with Darby's teaching.

And he ran with this rapture thing. And the thing is, Scofield put the teaching of the rapture in his footnotes in his study Bible. And now everybody that touted the Scofield Bible, they ran with it.

That's one of the dangers of a study Bible. I personally don't recommend study Bibles. You know why? You've got God's Word mixed with man's Word.

And there can be a tendency to take both at equal value. And that is not good. I don't recommend study Bibles because I think that we become too dependent on the notes.

And the notes are often wrong. Why? Because man is often wrong. And man is the one that wrote the notes.

And so even the best teachers can be wrong. That's why we have to be Berean. And so, and I think what happens is that when you have a study Bible, you stop being Berean.

You let your guard down. And every time you read from God's Word, you're constantly looking at the notes. Because you want the notes to interpret for you what you just read.

That is a very bad way to study God's Word. I mean, I'm okay with going to commentators. But I think it's key that we read God's Word prayerfully for ourselves first before we begin to consult with men.

So, oh, here's the thing. Basically, you've got a teaching today that the next major event on the Christian timeline is the rapture. That's what so many today are teaching.

That we're going through life right now. And the next major event in biblical timeline, in biblical history, is the rapture. Followed by seven years of tribulation.

And then Armageddon. And then a thousand year literal earthly kingdom of Christ. Where the temples rebuilt and Old Testament sacrifices take place again.

And then at the end of that thousand years, finally the remaining enemies of God are defeated and were ushered into the eternal kingdom. That's basically a timeline. And so the next major event is the rapture.

It is really a second chance theology. Have any of you ever watched any of the Left Behind stuff? It's best if you haven't. I'm not encouraging you to do it.

But you know what you typically find in those genre of TV shows and movies? Is that the rapture takes place. All the Christians disappear. And then a bunch of people get saved.

Because now they see that all the Christians are gone. Now they know it's real. Now they know it's true.

And now a bunch of people start believing. That's false. That's dangerous teaching.

You don't want to get sucked into that. Brethren, let's just ask this question. What is the next major event on God's timeline? I want you to see what it is.

The return of Christ. Somebody said the return of Christ. Brethren, you know what one of the problems is with the people that hold to the rapture? If you start talking to them about eschatology.

They very dogmatically want to say things like, confidently, well, you know what Daniel says. You know what Revelation says. Brethren, have you ever read Daniel or Revelation? Have you ever studied Revelation and really tried to understand what it's saying? People who so confidently say, you know, these apocalyptic, these prophetic apocalyptic books.

And they so dogmatically say, well, you know, this says this and Ezekiel says that. And it's like, seriously, that's where you're going to start? You're going to start by going to these incredibly difficult books. And you're going to just so confidently tell me that the rapture is found there.

And that this whole dispensational eschatology is found there. Brethren, what we want to do, but one of the one of the basic ways of studying our Bible that's safe is you want to go to the plain teaching first. You want to look at what Jesus taught and what the disciples taught in the epistles.

That's very plain. You want to do that before you graduate and move up to Matthew 24 and into Revelation. And so what I want to do is I want to show you from God's word, very plainly, what's next on God's timeline.

I want to show you from passages that oftentimes these people who tout this idea of rapture, just verses that they don't often go to. And so if you've got your Bibles, let's kind of just do a systematic study of something. First, I want you to turn to Ephesians.

So I'm going to show you a concept that I think when we come to study eschatology is absolutely essential that we lay hold of. Sam Waldron is a Reformed Baptist scholar who has written a book called The End Times Made Simple. He's done part one and part two.

Sam Waldron, End Times Made Simple. And in his first volume, this is one of the things he really stresses. Just this really basic outline to redemptive history, where we find ourselves right now as we move towards the end.

And I want you to see it. Are you all in Ephesians? You got your Bibles there? Because you have to see this with your own eyes. Now look, look at Ephesians 1, and I want you to look at verse 20.

Now I know we're picking up right in the middle of a verse. And it's speaking about God and the immeasurable greatness of His power, the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Christ from the dead. That's where we're at in Ephesians 1, verse 20.

God has demonstrated this great might in us. And it's the same power that He worked in Christ when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at God's own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named. Now here it is, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Now I know, if you're using the King James Bible, anybody got a King James Bible? Anybody use a King James Bible? Okay, we didn't even have to deal with it. So you all see what we have here. This age, but also in the one to come.

Now you want to grasp that. We've got two ages. This one, and one to come.

Now, that's very simple. If you listen to the dispensationalists, they've got all manner of dispensations. If you listen to Schofield, he's got like at least seven different dispensations.

And even right now, working towards the end, well you've got right now, you've got the rapture, you've got the seven year tribulation, you've got Armageddon, you've got a thousand year kingdom, you've got a battle at the end of that, you've got eternity that we launch into. There's a lot of these divisions. But you know what, when you listen to Paul, Paul has a very simple two age concept.

This one, so we're in one. Right where we're at now, we're in an age. And you know what, he only sees one other one.

There's an age we're in now, and then there's an age to come. You see it. It's not really sophisticated or complicated.

I mean, reverend, one plus one equals two. That's what you have here. This age, and the age to come.

Now age, age is the word that we get eon from. It's like the Greek word aion. But what we have here is we have the one that we're presently in, and then we have an age that is yet future.

And so, oh, brethren, people get into eschatology, and they want to start talking about 666 and a thousand years, and they want to talk about the ten horns and ten European countries and a European Union, and oh, they want to get into all this stuff. But let's just, let's look at what these two ages are. That's primarily what I want us to do.

What are these ages? So now I want you to think. What is Ephesians 1, right where we're at? What does it say about these two ages? Let's ask ourselves that question. We're in one, and one's coming.

What's true of both these ages according to Ephesians? Christ is reigning. Christ is reigning. Right, that's what it says.

It says he's seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, authority, and power, and dominion, and above every name that is named. So Christ has dominion. Christ is on the throne.

Christ is over. Is that true right now? Is that true in this age? According to Scripture, absolutely. Absolutely.

That's what it says right there. Absolutely in control. He rose.

He ascended. He is at the right hand of his Father, and he is seated there. It seems like the age we're in started right there, where he took the throne.

That's what it seems like. So he's there. And you know what? It's going to be true in the age to come.

Christ reigns. Christ is in control. This age and the age to come.

So we all need to be clear about that. Christ is preeminent in both ages. And so let's look at something else now.

Let's turn to Matthew 12. Matthew chapter 12. Because we're going to see this concept again.

See, this is the thing. When we get done, I really want you to all put the rapture away and be done with all of that. And I want to have something imprinted on your minds.

I really want you to go forward thinking about the simplicity of just what the timeline looks like. This age, the age to come. Both ages, Christ is ruling and reigning.

I recognize that in this one, in this age, all of his enemies are being made a footstool for his feet. They're all being subdued. When we get to the next one, they will have been subdued, and there won't be any uprisings anymore.

But you know what? Just because the world is the way the world is right now doesn't mean he's not on the throne. He very much is on the throne. You better believe it.

He is very much in control. He's very much far above all the rule and authority and power and dominion. He is king.

He is king of kings and lord of lords now. And it seems like this age started with his rising and his ascending to be seated with his father. But now we're going to see something else about the age and the age to come.

Matthew 12. Look at verse 30. You know this.

This is blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in Matthew 12, verse 30, whoever is not with me is against me. Whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Now, brethren, we are not here to discuss what that sin is. So put that right out of your thoughts at this moment.

But notice what's said. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Here it is.

When won't they be forgiven? When won't they be forgiven? What's it say? Right. In this age or in the age to come? And there it is. You've got to love the unity of Scripture.

The same thing said by Paul over in Ephesians is said by our Lord right here in Matthew's Gospel. This age, the age to come. Okay.

Now, it's a sin that will be forgiven when? When will this sin be forgiven? Is there ever a time? Never. Why not ever? It won't be forgiven in this age. It won't be forgiven in the age to come.

But what if it was able to be forgiven in the age after that? No. Turn over to Mark 3 really quick. Mark 3. If you look at Mark 3, it says concerning the same thing.

Verse 28. Mark 3:28. Notice what it says. Truly I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter.

But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. Now isn't that interesting? Matthew says this age or the age to come. Mark says never.

It's an eternal sin. Okay. Let's use our heads.

These are both talking about the same event. Matthew describes it one way. Mark describes it another way.

Let me ask you this. If Mark is saying you can never be forgiven, and Matthew says not in this age or the age to come, you know what that means? It means that this age and the age to come equals what? It equals forever. What does that tell you about the age to come? Does it tell you anything? That it's the only age that will come.

Well, yes. It's forever. Once that age comes, it never ends.

So basically we're in an age right now that's going to come to an end. It's got to come to an end if it's going to be replaced by the next age. But when you add this age plus that age, it's forever.

Because that's what Jesus says. He says it will never be forgiven in this age or the age to come. And Mark says, wow, that's just the same as saying it will never be forgiven.

That's exactly what's happening here. Okay. Let's do something else.

Let's look at another verse about 1 Timothy 6. 1 Timothy 6. We're going to see this again. 1 Timothy 6 and verse 17. As for the rich in this present age... Well, there it is again.

This present age. ...charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy, there to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. Thus storing up treasure.

Okay, storing up treasure for when? For themselves as a good foundation. Now notice this. For the future.

Do you know the word future there? Literally means for the coming one. Basically what he's saying is as for the rich in this present age, they are to be generous and store up treasure for the coming one. In other words, the coming age, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

You see what's being said here? This age is the age where you get an opportunity to use your wealth. How you use it in this age impacts them. That which you get then is what is truly life.

What you have now is that which is the shadow land. It's not the substance. That's what's being taught here.

You have this age. This is the age where we get to do our work. This is the age where we have to work for the night is coming when no one can work.

You see this age is like a day. The day is going to come to an end. The night is going to come.

Then we can't work anymore. This age is the age to work. This is the age to give.

This is the age to be wise with your money. Why? Because it's the coming one. You see what we do here, we lay up for there.

Two ages. This age and the coming one. I want you to see it again.

Turn back to Mark's Gospel. Mark 10. Go to Mark 10.

Notice with me in verse 28. You see, brethren, this teaching is all over the New Testament if we have eyes to see it. But so often the people that are touting all this rapture talk, they miss some of the plain teaching of Scripture.

They get mesmerized by 69 weeks in Daniel and they get mesmerized by the beast in Revelation. But all the while you have this very clear teaching of Scripture. Notice Mark 10.

Verse 28. Peter began to say to him, now this is after the rich young ruler walked away from the Lord Jesus Christ. And Peter says to Christ, see, we've left everything and followed you.

Of course, he's comparing himself to the rich young ruler who refused to sell everything and walked away. And Peter says, see, we've left everything. Jesus said, truly I say to you, there's no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time.

Now notice this. The New American Standard says this present age. It's the word *kairos*.

It means that this time or this present age. Notice, if you leave these things for Christ's sake and the gospel's sake, you will receive a hundredfold now in this age, in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands with persecutions. And notice this.

And in the age to come, eternal life. Now, I mean, do I have to prove to you beyond that, that the age to come is an eternal age? It's the age of eternal life. That's what we have here.

In the age to come, the life in that age goes forever. It's eternal. Make sure you don't miss what our Lord says about this age that we're now in.

Do you know what this age is? This is the age to sacrifice for Christ and the gospel. That's what this age is about. Now, the age to come we've seen is the age of treasure.

It's the age of eternal treasure. It's the age when the sacrifices that you've made now come to fruition. They follow you.

Brethren, the time we have in this age, the time we have to live in this age is very short. That age is forever. Do you see the foolishness of not making sacrifices and not living for Christ and living for the gospel and leaving behind whatever needs to be left behind and using your riches and your treasures and your wealth for the sake of good works and for the sake of the kingdom? Seek first the kingdom of God.

Brethren, this is the age of the gospel. This is the gospel age. This is that time.

This is the age when there's resistance against the gospel. This is the age when there's persecution. I mean, you see it.

Persecutions. Did you see it there in verse 30? You'll receive... Here's the thing. In this age, if you make all these sacrifices, this age, you'll receive a hundredfold.

Houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, lands. Did you catch? Persecutions. And in the age to come, eternal life.

No persecution in the age to come, but this is the age of persecution right now. And we should expect that. You see, one of the problems with these dispensational folks is they look for the seven-year tribulation.

Brethren, can I tell you this? You'll have a hard time finding any place in Scripture that teaches a seven-year tribulation. Do you know what the apostles taught Christians in their day? You know what they

taught? You know what Jesus taught? What they teach about persecution. Whoever desires to live a godly life will face persecution.

For seven years? No, for the entirety of their time in this life. Paul and Barnabas told the disciples there in Acts 14, through much tribulation, we enter the kingdom. Not seven years.

And so, this is the age of persecution. Let's look at another verse. Go to Luke 20 now.

Luke 20. If you look at verse 34, this is the same truth again. But this verse is so rich.

You don't want to miss this. Luke 20. And we're going to look specifically at verses 34, 35, and 36.

Notice, we're talking about this age and the age to come. And I trust you'll all see it as it unfolds here. Let's begin reading in verse 34.

And Jesus said to them, the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore.

You see, there's the age to come. The age to come, there's eternal life. We've seen that already.

And the age to come, that sin against the Holy Spirit is never forgiven because the age is eternal, thus eternal life. The age is eternal, thus they're never forgiven. The age is eternal, therefore you can't die anymore because they're the people worthy to attain that age, the age to come.

They cannot die anymore because they're equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Now, see, I'll say this again. We want to look at the clear teaching of Scripture.

We don't want to start with Revelation. First, we want to sit at the feet of the Lord Jesus. We want to hear His plain teaching on what is going to happen in the future.

And here again, we have this very simplistic structure. You see it here. This age, that age.

That's how He speaks. It's the same way that we've been seeing all through here. Now, notice how the Lord makes a sharp distinction between the two ages.

Notice the difference between the two ages. In this age, there's marriage. In that age, no marriage.

In this age, there's death. How do we know there's death? Well, we know there is. But the contrast here is in that age, they cannot die anymore.

Don't you like that? What is that implying? Can't die anymore. Well, anymore means they were prone to dying before that, but they can't die anymore. They did die, but no more.

So there's death in the first age, but no more in the second. That's the idea. Very sharp distinction.

Marriage, no marriage. Death, no death. Death, they can't die anymore.

But notice very carefully the other very pronounced difference between the two ages. This age has everybody. Notice the sons of this age marry.

You know what? If you're a Christian, many of us on the screen here were married. Why? Why are you married? Because you wanted to not be single, right? But you know why you're married? Because you're a son of this age. Sons of this age are not just lost people.

The sons of this age are people who live now. They're all men, saved and lost. But notice this.

The age to come does not consist of everybody. Notice verse 35. Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age.

Wow. Everybody's in this age, but there's only certain people who are worthy to attain to that age. All men are together in this age, but the wicked will not see that age.

That age is only for those that are worthy to have it. And our Lord's parables really capture this reality. Let's look now at Matthew 13.

We're going to see this again. Matthew 13. We're going to look at the parable of the wheat and the tares where Jesus explains the meaning of it.

It's found in Matthew 13. Jesus teaching. If we have ears to hear, listen to what He has to say.

Matthew 13:37 Jesus answered. Now He's explaining to them about the parable of the wheat and the tares. And He said, the one who sows the good seed is the son of man.

The field is the world and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one. And the enemy who sowed them is the devil.

Now notice, the harvest is the end of the age. Now that's key. So think with me here.

We right now are in this age. Do you know what's happening in the biblical timeline? We're moving towards the end of this age. And then we usher in the new age.

But what divides the two? Right here you see it. At the end of this age, before we enter into the next one, there's a harvest. The harvest is the end of the age.

The reapers are angels. And just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age. Remember what we saw in Luke? Those who are considered worthy to attain that age.

Not everybody attains it. How are we worthy? I mean, we can talk about that in a second. But here's what it says.

It says that at the end of the age, there's a harvest. Matthew 13, verse 40. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

The Son of Man will send His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace. You see what's happening at the end of this age? It's judgment day. That's what happens.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Notice this. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

You see, that's the age to come. And these are the people who are worthy to attain that age. They're the righteous.

And they're going to shine like the sun. And that's the eternal kingdom. He who has ears, let him hear.

Or go a little further. Matthew 13, verse 47. Another parable.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers, but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age.

The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous. You see that? There's a separation. In this age, we're all together.

In that age, there's separation. That's key. And the angels are going to separate out the evil from the righteous and throw the evil into the fiery furnace.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Another verse. Go over to Galatians 1. Some of you may know Galatians 1, verse 4. What Paul says there.

Galatians 1, 4. Paul says that Christ gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age. Now, I know he doesn't talk there about the age to come, but that's key. This present age is evil.

This present age... In fact, go back a book. Go to 2 Corinthians 4. Very well-known verse. 2 Corinthians 4. In their case, this is speaking about unbelievers who are perishing.

In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel and the glory of Christ. World there is our same word, *aion*. It's the God of this age.

Satan is the God of this age, and this age is a present evil age. That's the issue. Even if it is this present evil age, Jesus said, I'm with you always.

I'm with you to the end of the age. That's what it says to the end of the world or to the end of the age. Think about that.

Think about that. That is Matthew 28. That is the Great Commission.

Here you have Paul talking about this present evil age. You have Paul talking about the God of this age blinds the minds of unbelievers, and yet Jesus says to His people, go make disciples of every nation. You go out there.

All authority has been given to me. And He says, go therefore. And He says, Lo, I'm with you to the end of the age.

And so this is that age. We're in that evangelistic age. We're in the harvest age.

We're in the age when Christ is with His church, and even though it's a present evil age, we know that the gates of hell are not going to prevail against us. That's what happens in this age. This is the age to reach the world.

Now, here's what I want you to see. Go back to Luke 20 where we just were. Luke 20.

Back to verse 24. Luke 20. Because I want you to see something that I didn't point out when we were just there a second ago.

Luke 20 verse 34. Notice this. I want you to notice the resurrection.

Jesus said to them, the sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. Those who are considered worthy to attain that age, and notice this, that age and to the resurrection from the dead, neither marrying nor are given in marriage. In other words, that age is the age of resurrection.

For they cannot die anymore. I mean, they've been raised to life. If you keep reading, they cannot die anymore because they're equal to angels and are sons of God being sons of the resurrection.

Don't you love that? Another thing we clearly see about the age to come is it's the resurrection. And we're not resurrected in this age. We get resurrected in that age because something... Here's the thing.

At the end of this age is the harvest. But obviously, when the harvest takes place, that's where the resurrection also takes place. Harvest and the wicked are thrown into hell.

That's at the end of this age. Now we usher in the new age. The new age is the age of resurrection.

So something happens at the end of this age and the start of the next age where you have a harvest, but you also have God's people are resurrected. That's when that takes place. We're not resurrected in this age.

We get resurrected as we transition into that age to come. Do you all remember what Jesus said? Do you remember several times in John 6? Think with me here. Jesus says, this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day.

He says that repeatedly in John 6. I will raise Him up on the last day. You see, the last day, what's that? The last day of what? This age. This age is the age that's coming to end.

There's no last day to that age because that age is forever. You don't die anymore. There's only two ages, and only one of the two ages has a last day.

And the last day means the day when we transit, the day when we're done with this age. And that's when Jesus says He's going to raise us up. And that's what it says.

That age is the age of resurrection and those worthy to go into that age are children of the resurrection. You know what, brethren? Those of us that are worthy, we're going to look at each other. We can say that.

You're a child of resurrection. We'll run around and we'll be dancing and doing flips, calling each other by that name. The last day.

It's coming. You remember what Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus, you remember Jesus was saying, you know, Martha, your brother's going to rise. And Martha specifically said, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

See, her theology was right. But Jesus was actually saying that He was going to raise Lazarus before that. He was going to bring him out of that grave.

He'd been in there for too long. But Martha hit the nail on the head there. The resurrection, the resurrection, being raised, that's the doorway from this age to that age.

And if you don't receive the resurrection to life, then there's no door there. So I want you to consider several verses now. Because I want you to see, yes, Christ raises us up at the last day.

Yes, there's a harvest at the last day. But I now want you to see how Christ's return, Christ's second coming, fits into this picture. So go to 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians chapter 15 is one of the most thorough chapters in all of our Bibles that deals with the resurrection of the dead. It's glorious. We're going to reach in here and just pull out a few verses.

But I want you to see, I want you to fit the second coming of Christ into the timeline of these two ages. Notice, 1 Corinthians 15, verse 21. That's where we're going to look first here.

Verse 21, For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. Now that ought to jump out at you. Because we've already seen, Christ raises us up at the last day.

Those worthy to enter that age are children of the resurrection. They're sons of the resurrection. They can't die anymore.

It's the resurrection of the dead that ushers in that age. And here we see it again. The resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all died, so also in Christ shall all, not all people, but all His people, all His people will be made alive. So when is all this happening? But each in his own order. Christ, the firstfruits, now notice this, then at His coming, when Christ comes, those who belong to Him.

Okay, then comes the end. Did you capture all that? At His coming, those who belong to Christ, what? They get raised. That's what He said.

I'll raise them up on the last day. Then comes the end. The end is the last day.

So when does Christ come? He comes, He raises, it's the end. He comes on the last day. He comes when the resurrection takes place.

That's the idea here. You can see that. He comes, and those who belong to Christ are raised, and then the end.

The end of what? Well, the end of this age. That's the only end. Because the eternal age has no end.

The only end is for this world as we know it here. And then He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. Now let's see it again.

1 Corinthians 15, jump down to verse 51. We're going to see it again. I hope you all see there's no rapture anywhere.

The rapture is absent. It isn't in Paul's theology. It's not in Jesus' theology.

It isn't there. Two ages, no rapture. We end up being raised... Well, anyway, just follow with me here.

1 Corinthians 15, verse 51. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

Again, he's not talking about all human beings, all mankind. He's talking about all Christians. Paul is talking to the Corinthian Christians.

He's not talking about every man, woman, and child who's ever lived. And he says we shall not all sleep. In other words, we're not all going to die before we get to the last day.

Obviously, there's going to be a whole generation of Christians alive when Christ comes. But even though some will have died already and some will not have died already, we're all going to be changed. That's really the teaching that we saw in 1 Thessalonians.

We're all changed. It doesn't matter if you've died ahead of time or if you're alive when He comes. We're all going to be changed, right? In a moment.

In the same moment. All of us. In the twinkling of an eye.

When? When? What does it say? At the last trumpet. The last trumpet. You see, the last day, the last trumpet.

Then comes the end. It's the end. It's the last trumpet.

It's all over. It's the trumpet that sounds the end. That's why you call it the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound. And we already saw what happens at the end. Resurrection.

The dead will be raised. Imperishable. And we shall be changed.

For this perishable body must put on an imperishable. This mortal body must put on immortality. You see, that's what happens here.

This is the age of mortality. That's the age of immortality. Death is swallowed up in victory.

That's what we read. They can't die anymore. There's no death there.

Death in this age. There's no death in that age. That age, there's never death.

They can't die. Oh, death, where's your victory? Oh, death, where's your sting? Okay. So now we can go right back to the place where we all started.

We can go to 1 Thessalonians 4. And now we can read this. Now that we have all of this very clear, very plain teaching. Now that we've got it all behind us, let's go back to 1 Thessalonians where we started.

The verse where supposedly they find this rapture, which the church for 1,800 years never knew anything about, by the way. Let's dive in at 1 Thessalonians 4. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. There's that trumpet.

Paul called it in the Corinthian letter the last trumpet. And there it is. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive, who are left, we will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. You see it. Those who are dead when He comes

and those who are alive when He comes, they're all made alive.

And it's over. It's the trumpet, and we're with Him forever. And so is ushered in that age.

You have this age. You have that age. Now, just as we end, just so you're clear, I want you to see how judgment day fits into this whole outline, this whole structure.

So look at John 12, verse 48. John 12, 48. The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has a judge.

The word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. So we see it. It's clear.

We're in this age. This age is coming to an end. At the end of this age is the last day and the last trumpet.

When the last day comes, we have clearly seen. Jesus says if you're a child of God, He will raise you up on the last day. If you've rejected Christ, that's what it says, the one who rejects Me and does not receive My words, you're going to be judged on the last day.

You see, take that thought. You're going to be judged on the last day. Now with all of this that we've looked at, go to Matthew 25.

Matthew 25 is in the portion of Matthew that's speaking about the second coming and it also speaks about judgment. And we've already laid down that the time of resurrection is the last day. The time of judgment is last day.

The time Christ returns, the last day. That's when the last trumpet sounds. That's when dead and living in Christ alike are raised forevermore to be with Him forevermore, to be sons of resurrection forevermore.

They cannot die forevermore. They're going to be like the angels forevermore. No marriage.

Marriage to Christ forevermore. And so now, when you look at Matthew 25, just look with me here. Take the parable of the ten virgins.

Matthew 25, verse 1. Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish. Five were wise.

Now what Jesus is teaching is what the kingdom of heaven is like. He is the bridegroom. When the bridegroom comes, it's the second coming.

And notice, you have these virgins that they all look alike. Problem is that five are foolish and five are wise. Five are ready.

Five are not ready. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them. But the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

As the bridegroom was delayed, that means this age is long. This age is delayed. It doesn't happen.

They expected Jesus to come right away. But He said the bridegroom is delayed. They all became drowsy and slept.

That doesn't mean they were lazy. It's part of the parable. It means that basically they got going on with life and they got doing their things and a lot of time went by.

And you can kind of lose a sense of the fact that He's coming. But at midnight, there was a cry. Well, we heard about that.

There was a trumpet. There was a cry of an archangel. And here's the cry.

Here's the bridegroom. He's come up. Come to meet Him.

And then all those virgins rose, trimmed their lamps, and the foolish said to the wise, give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves. While they were going to buy, the bridegroom came.

You see, the problem is they weren't ready. And the bridegroom came when they weren't ready. And those who were ready went in with Him.

That's what Jesus said. He said those that died in the Lord, those who are alive in the Lord, they'll all be taken up with Him to be with Him forevermore. But if you're not ready, notice what happened.

Those that were ready went in with Him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Do you see the finality? You get to the end of this age and you're not ready. The door is shut.

You get to the end of your life, which is the end of your ability in this age, and you're not ready. The door is shut. It's all over.

Afterward, the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered, truly I say to you, I do not know you. Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

What day or hour? When it's going to be the last day, and all your hours are going to be up. That's what He's talking about here. Do you see any rapture here? There's no rapture here.

You know what they do with the rapture? Oh, well, when Christ raptures the church, then everybody has a second chance. No way. There's no second chance here.

The door is shut. There's finality. It's over.

You get to the last day. It's over. There's no rapture.

There's no seven-year tribulation when you can get things right. There's no thousand-year kingdom when you can get things right. Thousand-year kingdom only shows up in one chapter of our whole Bible, and it is in a highly symbolic book.

Don't take that literally. Things in Revelation are not to be taken literally. They are symbolic.

It is a highly figurative book, highly symbol-laden. You want to be very careful about how you handle Revelation. The truth is that if you just simply take a parable like the ten virgins, there's no rapture.

What they're doing is they're going along through life, and then bang! Christ comes, the door is shut, and it's over. It's over. It's done.

It's sealed. Brethren, this is one of the reasons why this theology that these folks are teaching concerning the rapture and all this dispensational pre-millennial thought is so dangerous. We need to tell people this.

Today is the day of salvation. While it's called today, you need to not harden your heart. This is the day.

You may not have tomorrow. You need to be prepared now, because if you're not ready when that door is shut, it doesn't matter how much you plead on the other side. You'll not be let in.

Same thing, parable of the talents. Keep reading. Verse 14.

For it will be... What will be? The kingdom, the second coming of Christ. What's it going to be like? It's like a man going on a journey. That's Christ.

He came the first time, then he ascended. He went on a journey. He's far away now.

His servants, they're here. They've been entrusted with his property. Everyone who's here, who has anything, we all have something, and it's been entrusted to us by Christ.

And you know what happened. He gave certain things to one and certain things to another, and he left. And he wants us to be faithful with what he's given to us.

And now notice verse 19. After a long time. Well, that's just like with the virgins.

He delayed. You see what we're being told here is this age is going to go on a lot longer than people originally thought. It's a long time.

But he's coming. Just because it's a long time doesn't mean he's not coming. He's going to come.

And when he came, he settled the counts. See, that's judgment. When does he come? He comes at the last trumpet.

He comes on the last day. And that's judgment day. We saw that.

His word is going to judge us. Those that reject him, his word is going to judge those who rejected him on the last day. And here they're brought to account.

And some here, well done, good and faithful servant, and they're told to enter into the joy of their master. That's the eternal kingdom. But those who were not faithful, the master says to the unfaithful one in 26, you wicked and slothful servant.

You see, here's the harvest. And they're being separated. That's what the angels do on the last day.

They separate. Here's the separation. The ones were invited into the joy of their master.

And this one, notice verse 30, cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And then you go on, verse 31, when the Son of Man comes in His glory.

Here's the second coming. This is the end of the age. This is when we get to the end.

There's this age and there's the age to come. At the end of this age, this is what separates the two. Christ comes.

When He comes, notice what happens. Before Him will be gathered all the nations and He will separate. Here's the separation.

This is the harvest time. This is where you separate the good and the bad. Those that are worthy to enter into that age over against those who are not worthy.

And He'll place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. And then He's going to say to those on His right, come you who are blessed by My Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

This is the age to come. It's the time of inheritance. See, now is the time to do the works.

Now is the time of sacrifice. Now is the age that those in this age who have money, who have wealth, who have ability. What does He say? I was hungry and you gave Me food.

When did that happen? That happens in this age. When do you inherit the kingdom? That's that age. You get the rewards in that age.

But this is the age when Christ was hungry and we gave Him food and thirsty and you gave Me drink and a stranger and you welcomed Me. And this all works out here. The separation of the two.

And then at the end in verse 46, these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life. There's the separation. When does it happen? On the day of judgment.

When is that? When Christ returns. When is that? That's the last day. The time of the last trumpet.

This is the time of resurrection. This is when all are brought out of the graves. In fact, if we could go to John chapter 5. We'll just end with this one.

But in John 5, Jesus is saying that... Notice John 5, verse 25. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. Now hear what He's saying.

He's talking about now when He was saying this. This is this age. This age is when people hear the voice of the Son of God in the Gospel.

Those who have ears to hear and respond to it will live. That's what He's saying. That's this age.

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. And He's given the Son authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this.

For an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. I hope you can all see it. There's two ages.

And you see what divides the two ages. It's very clear. Brethren, what is the next thing on redemptive timeline? Christ's second coming.

And then it's over. And the door is shut. And that's it.

And it's judgment. And those who are worthy, those who are righteous, those who are ready. Brethren, the only way to be ready and to be righteous is to surrender to Christ.

It's to trust Christ and in the power of His Spirit to do those good works. I mean, that's what He said. He gave Himself to make a people zealous of good works.

He gives us His Spirit to empower us to that kind of life. A life where we pour ourselves out. A life where we can have stuff, but we're always looking for opportunities to do good works and to use the wealth that God has given us.

This is the time. And this is the opportunity. But here's the thing.

Those who reject Christ and those who reject His Word, the Word's going to judge them in that last day. Brethren, do you realize what is going to happen? Maybe I will take you just one more. Revelation 1. Just to finish on this note.

I mean, we could look at 2 Thessalonians 2. We could actually keep going and keep going. And we could keep looking. But Revelation 1 gives us also a picture here of this coming.

If you look at Revelation 1.7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds. That's what the angels told the disciples in Acts 1.11 That just the way you saw Him go, He's going to come again. It's visible.

It's not some secret rapture where He secretly comes. It's none of that. Every eye's going to see Him.

That's what it says. Even those who pierced Him and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him. Even so, amen.

And you need to remember this, brethren. Jesus said that the way... He said that the gate is narrow. And He said that the way is narrow and the way is hard.

And He said, few there be that find life. Do you recognize that when Christ comes, the response of the world, all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him? Because the vast majority of this world is not going to be ready for His coming. You know what it would be like for Manchester if that sky broke open right now when Christ came? It's Friday night.

Can you imagine? Everybody camped in front of their TVs, watching their movies, watching the game. Suddenly, bang! It's all over. It's like, wait.

They're going to wail. We don't get to see the end of the movie. We don't get to do what we were going to do tomorrow on Saturday.

Wait, this doesn't work for me. I mean, this is disruptive to my life. You're telling me everything is over? All my life is done? Life ceases right now? Do you see why the response of the world is mourning? And then they're going to see Christ.

And they're going to recognize they're not ready. They're going to recognize they've been absolutely foolish. They're going to wail.

The Scripture says they want the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of Him, the Lamb. He comes with the wrath of God. Brethren, those of us that are ready, He's going to take in and

shut the door.

I mean, can you imagine? Brethren, can you imagine? Like I look at your faces on the screen and I often imagine Christ on that day of judgment saying to those that we lived at the same time. We ran the race together. We served the Lord together.

And can you imagine watching the Lord say to each other, well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord. I mean, those of us that go in, we are going to be jumping.

That's what Christ said. Christ said you ought to jump for joy. I mean, if they persecute you the way they did the prophets, you ought to jump for joy.

Brethren, we have a kingdom. We have an inheritance. There is a paradise out there.

It hasn't even entered into our minds. What we're going to be has not even... We don't get it. There is... If you take all the pleasures and all the greatest beauties of this world, an eternal weight of glory is out there.

And this is eschatology 101. So there you have it. That's a good video title.

Tim? Yes. I was thinking how is going to be the judgment. Is it going to be that the Lord will come and then is he judging we as people together or we as individuals? Because all eyes will see, but also our works will be judged.

So I'm just thinking about the relationship between individual and being judged as a people. Oh no, we're judged individually. If you look at 2 Corinthians 5. 2 Corinthians 5. You see, our works are going to be judged just the same as the lost people's works are judged.

In fact, judgment... Let's read 2 Corinthians 5 and look at verse 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each... You want to get that word. Each one is going to receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

And so you have to recognize that the different verses we're looking at sometimes focus just on certain aspects or they're kind of pictures that are meant to show us certain truths. But clearly, you don't want to take like... I mean, the thing is, just think about the parables that we looked at in Matthew 25. In one, he calls each servant one by one.

And the one servant says, Look, Lord, your five talents made ten talents. Well done, good and faithful servant. The other one can say, Look, Lord, your two talents made four talents.

Okay, well done, good and faithful servant. There you have individually. Whereas when you get the last part of Matthew 25, it says that... You kind of have this picture of all the righteous being on his right hand.

And it's like he's almost summarily... But you don't want to lose the individuality because that isn't really meant to teach us as to how judgment is exactly going to fall out on each of us individually. I mean, the thing is, in 1 Corinthians 3, it says that men's works are going to be tested so as by fire. And some men and some women are going to be saved so as by fire, but they're going to suffer loss.

Now that's... I mean, every one of us is in a different place. Every one of us has done different things with our life. And what 2 Corinthians 5 is saying, verse 10, is that each one is going to receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Now look, as Christians, there's no condemnation. As Christians, no one can bring an accusation against God's elect. Why? Because our sins are paid.

All the wrong, all the blemish. But listen, our works are going to be tested. And if our works are wood, hay, and stubble, they get burned up.

There's only certain things that abide the fire. That's gold, silver, precious stones. We're all building.

I know that text is speaking very much about guys that are in the ministry, but the reality is we're all building. We're all accumulating certain works. And for the Christian, if the works are bad, they get burned up.

We're not condemned for them. But listen, the scripture says some are 30-fold fruitful, some are 60-fold, some are 100-fold. And so we're in different places.

But let me show you something. I've already been talking about the fact that this is the age to work. That is the age when what we've done now ends up being treasure for us then.

Look at Revelation 14. I love this verse. It should impact every single one of us.

Notice Revelation 14. I heard a voice from heaven saying, write this, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.

You want to see what that age is like? It's an age of rest. But notice this. This is not an age of rest.

This is the age where we work. And in that time of rest, the deeds we do now follow them. Listen to that.

Blessed indeed, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them. Now brethren, think with me. I'm going to ask the church to consider supporting... But you know what? Let's say the church agrees.

Let's say the church agrees and you agree to give them 250 pounds a month. Let's just say that happens. In the days and months and years ahead, do you know that if we do that, some of you will give more sacrificially to that endeavor than others.

Some of you won't hardly think about it. Some of you will think about it a lot. Some of you will make sacrifices in your own life to be able to give.

Some of you will pray for Dan. Some of you will remember him in your family devotions at home far more than others will. And see, what happens in the end is God isn't going to just... Christ, when He judges us, He's not just going to look at the church in Manchester as one unit and say, well done, good and faithful servants.

You supported Dan. No, He's going to specifically look at what each one of us did. Because that's what it says there in 2 Corinthians 5. What each one of us did.

Our deeds are going to follow us. Our own deeds. Not the deeds someone else did.

And so, out into the future... Brethren, if you can really grasp this, you want to run hard. You want to work. You want to labor.

You want to sacrifice. You want to give yourself for Christ and for the Gospel. Did you not hear Jesus? He said don't lay up treasure here.

Lay it up there. Why? Because you've got this age, and this age comes to an end. Whatever you lay up here, it comes to an end.

You build a house here, it comes to an end. You buy a car here, it comes to an end. You invest in stuff here, it comes to an end.

You invest there, it follows you out there. Now listen, you say, but I don't make as much. That is such a wrong thinking.

Do you remember what Jesus said of that widow that threw in her two coins? She gave more than all the rest. God isn't just interested in what the monetary amount was at the bottom of the bank statement. He's interested in how much of a sacrifice it actually was to you as an individual.

There is a widow somewhere out there in glory that we're going to meet who gave more than all those wealthy givers. And she was very poor and she put in her two coins and you know what? It was more than all the rest because it's all she had. Brethren, I'll tell you this.

Give. And some of you, it doesn't have to be giving money. Intercessory prayer is one of the greatest ways we can give ourselves.

Fasting for other people. Fasting for the Lord's kingdom. Brethren, seeking a harvest of souls.

If you're praying for Dan and they're...think with me. If you give a cup of cold water to a prophet, what do you get? What do you get? What does Scripture say? You get a prophet's reward. I'll tell you this.

Maybe many of these others that we begin to look at, John Seitzman, these people in all these different places. If you throw in and you stand with them and behind them in your money, in your prayers, in your fasting, in your life, what you're going to find in the end is you're going to receive a missionary's reward. You're going to receive a prophet's reward.

I am telling you, don't waste your life. Don't waste your resources. Don't waste... Don't waste it.

You only get one opportunity to live in this age. This is the age when you stockpile for that age. That is not carnal thinking.

That is exactly what Jesus said. Jesus said you want to make friends for yourself in those eternal dwellings. You want to store up for yourselves money bags.

He actually talks that way, but brethren, we're talking a spiritual kingdom, the eternal kingdom of God, that eternal age. You have the ability to store up now for then. Don't be foolish.

Amen.

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