

## THE RAPTURE, PART 9

So far we have looked at a total of seven (7) precursor signs relative to the rapture. The first four in [Matthew 24](#) were (1) a rise in what are called “antichrists”, (2) wars and rumors of wars, (3) nation rising against nation, and (4) famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. The next three were (5) Israel becoming a nation in 1948, (6) the rise of Russia as a world superpower, and last week we looked at (7) a one world monetary system. They are what are called the “**beginning of sorrows**” or the “**beginning of birth pangs**” where the majority of them increase in their intensity and their frequency. Now, before we look at the next sign, I do not want you to be saying to yourself that all of these have happened before, so what is the big deal. Actually, that is simply a fulfillment of [2 Peter 3:4](#) which says,

**2Pe 3:4 (NKJV) and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation."**

No one is going to debate the issue that the first four signs in [Matthew 24](#) have all happened before, but the last three that I mentioned are not events that happened in the past. They are events that have unfolded in our lifetime and will continue to unfold. Just as an example, it is no accident that the whole world seems to hate Israel and everything about her, but if God is going to gather all the nations of the earth to Armageddon for the final battle of all of the world powers as prophesied in [Revelation](#), then Israel had to be established. Look at [Revelation 16:12-16](#) and what it says. Be assured that what I read is going to happen, so God is both sovereignly and providentially working out all of the details so that this event happens just as He has described.

**Rev 16:12 (NKJV) Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. <sup>13</sup> And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup> For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. <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." <sup>16</sup> And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.**

As I go over these remaining signs over the next several weeks, it would be utterly foolish on our part not to place them in their proper perspective as events that must be in place or developing to take place prior to the rapture.

8. [Daniel 12:4](#) – An increase in searching for biblical answers to end time events

**Da 12:4 (NKJV) "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."**

Many teach that this verse is speaking of the fact that as we get closer to the end that there will be a remarkable increase in both the speed of travel, as well as an exponential increase in knowledge. Obviously, in both cases that is happening with every passing day. When the Wright brothers first flew at Kitty Hawk, they flew for 12 seconds and 120 feet in 1903. In 1947, Steve Yeager broke the sound barrier for the first time going 662 mph. In 1967 Pete Knight flew an X-15 aircraft 4,510 mph. In space,

the astronauts have travelled as fast at 24,791 mph. I doubt the Wright Brothers ever dreamed of such a thing.

Relative to knowledge increasing, the computer technology that we have relative to acquiring knowledge is staggering to say the least. I have with me today the hard drive that Ed removed from my computer a couple of weeks ago. Do you have any idea of how much information is on this, and it was only about half full. Your iPhone is one million times more powerful than the computer that first sent men to the moon. Apple's A8 chip architecture can hold about 1.6 billion transistors which are capable of processing 3.36 billion instructions per second. That is 120 million times faster than the Apollo 11 computer that placed men on the moon.

However, as interesting and fascinating and actually true as all of that may be, that is not really the idea that Daniel is providing in this verse. Contextually, the more plausible interpretation relative to Daniel's prophecies is that this verse is referring to the rise in individuals who are going back and forth in search of knowledge related to the end times. Certainly, that will happen after the rapture, but it is also happening before the rapture as well. It is amazing to me how much interest there has been in end time events since Israel became a nation in 1948. In the early 1960's, books on end time events began to surge. Hal Lindsey wrote The Late Great Planet Earth, Countdown to Armageddon, and The Apocalypse Code (whatever that is). There were prophetic projections coming out continually on when Jesus would be coming back. Jack Van Impe and his wife began to host a television program and all they would do is read information found in newspapers and television reports and try to relate them to end of the world events.

Then we have some like Pat Robertson who prophesied that Donald Trump would be re-elected, then told him to just move on after the election outcome. He spends most of his time on the 700 Club recanting his false prophecies, yet people still send him money. His net worth is only \$100 million. We had the Left Behind series which had 16 best-selling novels that later became four movies between 2000-2014. The thrust of the novels was about members of what were called The Tribulation Force who were an underground network of people who were saved after the rapture. They were fighting against the New World Order organization called the "Global Community" whose leader was the antichrist and just happened to be from Romania. He rises to power and becomes the secretary general of the United Nations.

The point is that what Daniel is saying is that as we move closer and closer to the end time events that the rise in interest in these events will begin to increase dramatically – which they have. In just my brief dialogue about all of this, I have not even touched the surface of all of the issues and personalities that surround this phenomena. The problem that the false self-proclaimed end time prophets and teachers create is that they undermine the actual understanding of what and how these events will unfold. Look at [Daniel 12:4](#) again and what it says. Daniel is told in the verse to actually "**shut up the words, and seal the book** (with its understanding about the end) **until the time of the end**".

Da 12:4 (NKJV) "**But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.**"

The reason that people are running to and fro and searching is to find answers as to why all of the very cataclysmic events are happening leading up to and actually occurring during the Tribulation. There

will be great distress and tribulation during the seven year period, and people will be looking for answers. Obviously, the governments of the world will not be able to control the deluge of devastation and destruction that God unleashes on the planet. Listen to how the Amplified Bible actually translates what Daniel said. It is like a mini-commentary on the verse.

Da 12:4 (AMP) **But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the Book until the time of the end. [Then] many shall run to and fro *and* search anxiously [through the Book], and knowledge [of God's purposes as revealed by His prophets] shall be increased *and* become great.**

The idea that knowledge is increasing is not that of the exponential explosion of human knowledge created with the Internet and computer technology, but rather it describes a general increase in the desire to know more about end time events as they begin to unfold. I.e., as we get closer to the end, we will have a greater understanding of the prophecies of Daniel regarding the last days. Stated another way, those who will profit the most by Daniel's prophecies will be those who will actually be living in the last days that Daniel is describing that lead up to God's wrath being poured out on the world. This is what it means that Daniel's words would be sealed. I.e., the full meaning of what Daniel wrote would not be entirely understood until "**the time of the end**".

Hopefully, as we continue to look at the rest of the signs, it should become obvious that we cannot and will not make foolish predictions and set times for fulfillment of any of the end time events. However, what all of the signs we are addressing actually do "collectively" is to simply provide a basis for our belief that the time of the end is somewhat close. Obviously, "close" is a relative term – 5 minutes, 5 days, 5 years, 5 decades, so that is important to understand. After reading [1 and 2 Thessalonians](#), it seems apparent that Paul thought that the Second Coming was close. At the time of Paul, [Revelation](#) was still nearly 30 years away before it would even be written, so he was at somewhat of a disadvantage. Nothing that Jesus taught provided a concrete date.

#### 9. [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#) – Apostasy

2Th 2:3 (NKJV) **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,***

Paul fully knew and understood that the best defense against deception is the truth. In this passage, he is trying to clarify the confusion and false teaching that existed among the Thessalonians regarding "**the Day of the Lord**". They thought that they were actually in "**the Day of the Lord**" and had missed the rapture. They believed that the persecution they were experiencing was actually the evidence of that reality. So, the first area that we have to address is to what in reality is "**the Day of the Lord**" referring. If you will look at v3 again, it is obvious that there have to be two events that precede the Second Coming – there has to be "**the falling away**" and "**the man of sin**", or antichrist, has to be revealed.

In the Greek text, the word for "**falling away**" is "*apostasia*" which simply means a defection from truth, hence where we get the word "apostasy". In the context of [2 Thessalonians 2:1](#) Paul speaks of our "**gathering together to Him**" which I personally take as a clear reference to the rapture. Why? It is because in the Second Coming, we are actually coming with Christ, not being "**gathered together to Him**". So, this "**falling away**", this apostasy, is something that happens prior to the Second Coming. I taught previously that I did not want you to think of the great apostasy as people actually leaving the

church – which certainly may happen, but to think of it more in terms of a defection from the truth, a departure from actually believing God’s Word. I called it a “doctrinal defection”. Even in the day in which we live, there has been this tremendous ground swell of false teaching, much of which has come through TBN. They have so watered down strong biblical teaching with all of their emphasis on healing and miracles and entertainment, that it is mind-boggling to me how people still watch the nonsense and send people money. The gospel has been depleted of its power with all of the “easy-believism” teaching that is prevalent. We rarely, if ever, hear really strong expository teaching and preaching because doctrine simply bores the people that sit in the pews. We have the gospel of pragmatism where if something works, then it must be good. Obviously, if that were the case, then Jesus would be considered a complete failure. We have the Emergent Church with its magnetic appeal of praise bands and entertainers. We have very liberal seminaries that deny the truthfulness and inerrancy of the Word of God and are constantly challenging biblical truth. [1 Timothy 4:1](#) says,

**1Ti 4:1 (NKJV) Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,**

[2 Timothy 4:3-4](#) says,

**2Ti 4:3 (NKJV) 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.**

Once again, I want to emphasize that the word “**apostasy**” does NOT refer to genuine Christians who depart from Christ and leave the Christian faith, but it refers to those who are simply mere “professors” of Christ, but not “possessors” of salvation. Those who fall away will not be true believers, but people who were just casually accepted as “members” in order to add to the roles of the church. They have become the goats among the sheep, the tares sown among the wheat.

[Matthew 24:9-13](#) gives a glimpse into what will be happening during the seven years of Tribulation.

**Mt 24:9 (NKJV) Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But he who endures to the end shall be saved.**

You have to appreciate that when the rapture actually happens, that there will be many individuals who were “church goers”, many false believers, and many people who have convinced themselves that they are saved, but are not, and they all will be left behind. They felt protected by their religion, but now find it to be of utterly no value. I am sure that there will be many unsaved pastors and teachers left behind who will be trying to find theological ways to explain everything that has happened. V11 says that “**many false prophets will rise up and deceive many**”. Most of these people will be confused, afraid, but will remain unbelieving. During the Tribulation, obviously there will be people who are saved, but what will happen to them is found in v9 which says that they “**will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.**” Death and martyrdom will be the almost immediate lot for most of the people who are saved, so you can just imagine how reluctant people

will be in identifying with Christ during that time, and especially if people are being beheaded. That is not uncommon today with extreme Islamists. As recently as November 2020, in Mozambique many people were taken by militant Islamists to a soccer field that was turned into an execution ground and were decapitated and then chopped up into pieces. Today we have martyrdom happening in many Muslim countries where when someone becomes a believer, they are disowned by their family, and often persecuted and killed. So you can just imagine the impact of these kind of events on a false believer when they see what is happening to people who actually do come to Christ and confess His name. You can be assured that they will not want to lose their life. This certainly gives an added dimension to what Jesus said in [Luke 9:24](#),

**Lk 9:24 (NKJV) For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.**

That one verse is repeated 6 times in the gospels.

Then to make it worse, v10 says “**And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.**” It was amazing to me that after the Capitol riot that family members and friends were being turned into authorities by sons and daughters and so-called friends for having been there. V10 should not be any trouble for any of us to both accept and believe. [Mark 13:12](#) which is a parallel passage to [Matthew 24](#) says,

**Mk 13:12 (NKJV) Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.**

The point is that if you are left behind and are fortunate enough to actually get saved during the Tribulation, that once that happens those who you thought were still the closest to you may very well betray you and actually be the cause of your death.

Today, anyone can go on pretending to be a believer and a follower of Christ, but until you actually become one, you are simply fair game for Satan destroying your life. Genuine faith in Christ must be a reality in your life, and not just some kind of masquerading veneer. There are so many people, so many young people who have all of the outward markings of faith, but who stop short of a genuine and full commitment to Christ. God accepts nothing less, so please do not be deceived. Obviously, this is an age of ever increasing apostasy, of ignoring true biblical faith and commitment, of watering down the gospel, and of chasing after emotional highs. So, in the Tribulation, those who never truly came to Christ and knew that they should have will be swept up in both the “**strong delusion**” of [2 Thessalonians 2:11](#) that God sends and the great fear that if they do come to Christ that they will be brutally martyred. I guess the obvious question would be “*Why would anyone even want to take that chance?*”

The scenario is clear. As people come to Christ during the Tribulation and are arrested and killed for their faith, the pseudo-believers will quickly defect and become the actual persecutors of those who are being saved. The clear message of [Matthew 24:9-10](#) is that for many the cost of being a follower of Christ will much too high for them, and when they realize that they will be the target of brutal persecution, they will simply not come to Him. On top of all of that, there is the spiritual deception that will be forthcoming in the Tribulation will overcome people. It appears that the whole world will run after the antichrist. [Matthew 24:11](#) clearly says,

**Mt 24:11 (NKJV) Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.**

Then there is the lure of sin during the Tribulation. You can just imagine what it will be like when the Holy Spirit has removed His restraining influence and men can do whatever they want. [Matthew 24:12](#) says,

**Mt 24:12 (NKJV) And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.**

We have already reached a point in the American culture where modesty and morality have almost become a thing of the past. The LGBTQ movement seems to have much more influence than does the church relative to public policy. Abortion is rampant. We have laws being passed to allow women to go topless in public. So many people are proud of those things in their life that are an utter abomination to God, and they have no reservations about flaunting who they are and what they are doing. They have failed to read [Revelation 21:8](#) which declares,

**Rev 21:8 (NKJV) But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."**

They have forgotten the truths of [Romans 1](#) where what they are and the lifestyles that they live are simply a form of judgment from God where He simply “gives them up” to their sin. [Romans 1:26-27](#) says,

**Ro 1:26 (NKJV) For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. <sup>27</sup> Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. <sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;**

I guess the real statement that I need to make is that if you really ever want to be a part of God’s kingdom, you better make sure you do it before the rapture. Your chances after the rapture do not look that promising.

Okay, I will complete this sign after my surgery when we talk about “**the Day of the Lord**” and what it is and when it actually happens. Properly defining this term is very important, so we will spend some time defining it.