

THE RAPTURE, PART 12

This morning, I want to close out this precursor sign on the great moral decline that will happen prior to the rapture. One of the key verses that we addressed in the last message was [Colossians 3:4-7](#).

Col 3:4 (NKJV) **When Christ *who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**

⁵ **Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things (WHAT THINGS?) the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.**

What we should all clearly understand is that moral compromise always leads to spiritual decay in the life of the believer and the life of the church. We have to figure out what happens to an individual and a nation when the biblical understanding of guilt disappears. What happens to the conscience, and how can someone even know that their conscience is even working? Today people use drugs, therapy, pleasure, and entertainment to ease their guilty conscience. If someone is eat up with guilt, they are going to do whatever they have to do to ease the pain of that guilt in their life. In essence, however, a person's conscience is the key to spiritual freedom in their life. I think of the story that I read about regarding an airline crash in 1984 in Spain. When they recovered the "black box" cockpit recorder, several minutes before the crash, the plane's automatic warning system told the crew to "*Pull up, pull up!*", to which the pilot who thought it was malfunctioning said, "*Shut up Gringo*". Minutes later the plane plowed into the side of a mountain and everyone on board the plane died. In some ways, I think this illustrates what happens to a people that refuse to listen to their conscience. Even the very worst of sinners has a conscience so that people know when they are doing something that is wrong. It is God's warning system for our life. [1 Timothy 1:9](#) warns,

1Ti 1:19 (NKJV) **having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,**

[Titus 1:15](#) says,

Tit 1:15 (NKJV) **To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled**

For someone who is a Christian, their conscience reacts to the convictions of their mind, and therefore can be encouraged and sharpened in accordance with God's Word. That is why we want to master the Word of God because it strengthens a weak conscience and restrains one that is overactive. The problem for the lost person is that if they lean to wrong moral influences, those influences will fill their mind and literally cripple and corrupt their conscience.

Moral decay can spiritually be compared to something that is rotting away on the inside. I bought some bananas last week that looked really good on the outside, but when I got home and went to eat one, I found that they were all very rotten on the inside. One of the judgments of God on a people that are morally rotten is that He gives them over to "**uncleanness**". [Romans 1:24](#) says,

Ro 1:24 (NKJV) **Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,**

The word “**uncleanness**” literally means “*the contents of a grave*”. It is the idea that God literally allows men to rot on the inside so that they always find themselves inclined to sexual sins and sexual vice. This kind of spiritual rotting always results in them dishonoring their body in a sexual way. So, we want to ensure that we fully understand that when any nation continues to willfully reject both God and His Word, that God eventually exercises His judgment against that nation. It is as if God says “*If you enjoy sin that much then I am going to let you experience the full brunt of its ravaging consequences. If you want to be immoral, just indulge yourself, just go ahead, but do not blame me when you stand before me on your judgment day.*”

Many great nations have fallen, but generally they had no idea of their impending demise and decease. When they fell, they fell hard, and for the most part never recovered. The Babylonian empire lasted less than a century. The great Persian empire lasted two centuries. There are many other examples, but in each case, the one common denominator was a gross increase in immorality. Just think of all of the areas that our own nation is experiencing today – pornography, premarital sex, homosexuality, lesbianism, same-sex marriage, the transgender movement, over 60 million abortions, divorce, the disintegration of the family, the redefinition of marriage, and a growing hatred of Christianity and those who are committed to it. From a very practical perspective, do you think that America has a chance of missing the judgment of God. I doubt it. What I believe has happened is that we are like the frog that got slowly boiled in a pot of water. We, the church of the living God, seem utterly helpless in the wake of this immoral onslaught. In some ways, we are like the ostrich that just buries its head in the sand and thinks everything will just work itself out.

Several weeks ago I gave you a copy of the Equality Act and since that time I have decided not to go over it. You can read it and do your research on it yourself. If it actually passes the Senate, it will have very far reaching social and moral consequences that frankly are very difficult to imagine. What this legislation represents is where we as a nation and a culture are, and once all of this becomes law, it is just a matter of time before our entire culture collapses under the weight of gross immorality.

As Christian parents, you are probably the only advantage in our culture that your children may have. It seems apparent that church youth groups are not working. 70% of SBC teenagers involved in church youth groups stop attending church within two years of their high school graduation. Because of what we call the sexual revolution, what your children will face in the future is not very encouraging. The clear statistical evidence is that the majority of professing Christian young people today are quickly abandoning Biblical values in lieu of cultural values, and I imagine that that reality is only going to get worse. I did some research that indicated the following statistics. I am only touching the tip of the iceberg on a number of issues.

1. Nearly one third of the American population has sexually transmitted diseases (STD) – 110 million people. That is one out of every three people.
2. The USA has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the industrialized world, as well as the highest divorce rate in the world.
3. Nearly 40% of young adults ages 18-29 say they have left the church because of negative teachings against the LGBTQ movement, as well as the church’s stance on abortion. I find that staggering to say the least.

4. The Southern Baptist Convention has stated that they are losing nearly 80% of their youth after their first year in college.
5. The SBC has also stated that 88% of children in evangelical homes leave church at the age of 18.
6. Current statistics indicate that at least half and possibly two-thirds of Christian young people will step away from the Christian faith while attending a non-Christian college or university.

Obviously, pastors like me and many Christian parents may not have had as much of an impact on their children when they were growing up as we thought we did. I deeply am grateful for all of those young people and children who are anchored in a real and living faith in Jesus Christ, but my heart grieves for the many more who actually abandon their faith in Christ for some intellectual / cultural lie into which they have bought.

I taught you [1 Peter](#) for over 3 years with the emphasis from that epistle that you need to be prepared for suffering that may come in our lifetime. I taught you to be prepared and not surprised because in our culture, suffering for your Christian faith seems increasingly inevitable. Honestly, we should see it as a badge of honor to suffer for Christ, but I am sure that it will not be pleasant when it begins. Jesus willingly suffered for us, so why should it be a surprise to us if we have the opportunity to suffer for Him? Churches will be closed down by the government and many individuals may be heavily fined or thrown into jail for non-compliance to the onslaught of liberal agendas being forced on people. We may be just days or months away from the beginning of this reality. [Luke 6:22](#) says,

Lk 6:22 (NKJV) **Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.**

[2 Timothy 1:8](#) declares,

2Ti 1:8 (NKJV) **Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,**

[1 Peter 4:12-13](#) says,

1Pe 4:12 (NKJV) **Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.**

Now, what I have decided to do at this point is to just briefly mention the last four pre-cursor signs so that we can move on to other topics related to the end times. You can do further research if you desire to know more.

Precursor Sign 9: Scoffers – [2 Peter 3:3-4](#), [Jude 1:17-18](#)

2Pe 3:3 (NKJV) **knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴ 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."**

In the Greek Interlinear, the word “scoffers” is translated as “mockers”. These are those people who deny Biblical truth and live very ungodly lives. Much of this can be seen in our current education system

which is utterly hostile to Christian values, and as a part of its mockery of Christianity has removed any semblance of respect and recognition for it. This past week I read the following:

“The California Education Department has proposed a brand new curriculum which would encourage children to chant the names of ancient Aztec Gods that were frequently involved in human sacrifice before contact with European explorers.”

This is beyond insanity. This is simply God giving a nation over to its rejection of Him and His Word.

The word “**scoffers**” is actually translated as “**mockers**” in [Jude 1:18](#),

Jude 1:17 (NKJV) But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: ¹⁸ how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

Precursor Sign 10: A one-world religion – [Revelation 17](#)

The false prophet who will ascend in power during the seven year Tribulation period will enforce a one world religion on the world in which he demands that all of the world has to worship him by taking the mark of 666 on either their forehead or their right hand. [Revelation 13:16-18](#) speaks of this event that happens after the mid-point of the Tribulation.

Rev 13:16 (NKJV) He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

I read this week that the Pope has written a new book in which he has called for a “New World Order”, what others are referring to as the “Great Reset”. Whatever all of that means, I think that we can clearly say that much is in place for that kind of event to take place.

Precursor Sign 11: A one-world government – [Daniel 2:40-43, 7:23-24](#)

Obviously, we do not have time to address the prophecies of Daniel, but the bottom line is simple – the one world government that is addressed is simply paving the way for the antichrist of Revelation. The Scriptures are not clear relative to all of the events that will lead up to the one-world government, but we do know that in the last days there will be a one-world government led by ten kings or heads of various regions. It is often referred to as the United States of Europe, and is seen as the revival of the old Roman Empire. It will be in the form of ten units (probably nations) that will be joined in a unique political union. This last times political entity is generally referred to as the United States of Europe simply because the old Roman empire was largely a European empire. It is not fully clear who all of the nations will be, but whoever they are, they will have great political power. It appears from all of the prophetic elements dealing with it that this coalition of nations will fully come into its authority immediately following the rapture of the church, which means that its political structure already had to be in place. It is into this new order of government that the antichrist rises. He is called “**the little horn**” of Daniel ([Daniel 7:8](#)), “**the man of lawlessness**” ([2Thessalonians 2:3](#)), “**the ruler who will come**” ([Daniel 9:26](#)), and “**one of the heads of the beast**” ([Revelation 13:5](#)).

Apparently, this new European government will have fairly exclusive control over all of the commerce of the world – probably through a one-world currency. In all likelihood, the antichrist will become the head of this one-world government. [Revelation 13, 17, and 18](#) also addresses this future reality.

Precursor Sign 12: The gospel will be preached in all the world – [Matthew 24:14, Revelation 14:6-7](#)

Mt 24:14 (NKJV) And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

In the midst of all of the deception, false messiahs, false teachers, and false prophets, not to mention the great apostasy that will be taking place in the end times, what this verse tells us is that the gospel will be proclaimed. The real question, however, is how? I think it would be naïve to think that the church will be doing this prior to the rapture, and if we take this verse in its context of the [Matthew 24](#), then obviously this preaching of the gospel is something that is taking place **after** the rapture, not before it. It is my opinion only that the church age that precedes the rapture, the one in which we currently live, will not be preaching the gospel in all the world to the extent that it makes any kind of major impact. Obviously, we have mission organizations, and I am grateful for missionaries and for mission organizations, but the real work of evangelism belongs to the church. The problem is that the last days church is much more interested in itself than it is in the spreading of the gospel. The neat part to me personally is that God will not leave Himself without a witness, and [Revelation 14:6-7](#) speaks as to how this gospel will be preached to all the world when it says,

Rev 14:6 (NKJV) Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people--⁷ saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Just prior to the pouring out of the bowl judgments, God sends an angel from heaven with “**the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.**” Unfortunately, it appears that many who hear the gospel will continue to turn a deaf ear to the angel’s message. After the angel has completed his preaching to all of the world, as [Matthew 24:14](#) declares, “**...and then the end will come**”. The day of salvation for humanity living at that time will simply end, and “**the end will come**”. God’s patience, God’s longsuffering, God’s forbearance will finally have been spent, and He will unleash His holy vengeance on all those who have both knowingly and willingly refused to come to Him. The “**beginning of sorrows**” is over and the final few stages before the Second Coming of Christ will be set in motion.

In a day of great immorality and confusion, I find amazing comfort in the gospel. It changed my life forever. It gave me hope when I had no hope. It gave me peace when my life was very confused. It gave me strength when I had no strength. [Romans 1:16](#), provides the greatest hope that anyone could ever have when it says,

Ro 1:16 (NKJV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The gospel is such a simple message. [Acts 4:12](#) says,

Ac 4:12 (NKJV) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Everyone eventually arrives at this spiritual crossroad in their life, and when they do, they have to make a decision. If they choose to ignore the spiritual truths of salvation, nothing awaits them but the worst possible ending that they could imagine. If they choose to place their trust in Jesus Christ, what awaits them is the most remarkable ending they could ever even imagine. Jesus is the most wonderful, the most glorious, the most compassionate, and the most powerful being in eternity. He is the One who created you. He knows you, and He loves you beyond words. My prayer for you is that Jesus Christ will become more and more real to you every day, and that you will do everything in your power to become one of His fully devoted followers. You will never regret that decision.