



HASKELL HEIGHTS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister's Appreciation
TAILGATE
FELLOWSHIP

REPLY YOUR FAVORITE TEAM!

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FUN AND FELLOWSHIP!

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SERVICE

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YOUR TENTS AND LAWN CHAIRS

COME SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION TO OUR MINISTERIAL STAFF

Special Study: THE RAPTURE



We are currently in the study of the book of John chapter 13. A transitional moment in the ministry of Jesus is about to happen when He says (John 13:31b-33a):

“Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³² If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. ³³ Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer.”

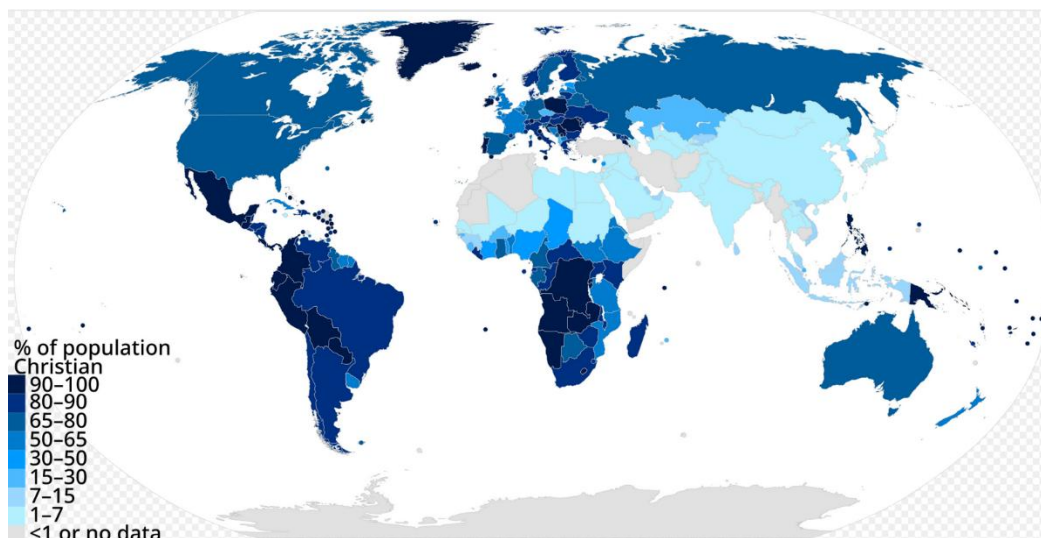
Jesus gives them a sense of timing regarding His ministry (“the Son of Man is glorified”) is a strong indication to them that they are at the end of this episode of the plan of God.

This leads us to a question that everyone seems to be asking: “Is all of this real? When will the rapture occur?” **Our Question:** “Why are people so concerned about when the rapture will occur?”

I call it an **END-TIME** consciousness. Several things seem to be factors in why there is such renewed interest in the rapture and end time events?

1. **R**ecent Social Media forecasts, podcasts, adverts that the Rapture will be on September 23, 2025.
2. **C**urrent world events, such as wars, famine, or political strife, as signs that the End Times are near.
3. **U**ncertainty about **salvation** (this is a BIG issue because of the strong concern that a lot of Christian teaching in today’s culture is closer to self-improvement than to sanctification). Look at the chart from Google and Map from Wikipedia below:

As of 2025, there are approximately 8 billion people in the world. Only about 2.6 billion (roughly 1/3rd) of them identify as Christian. That number includes those who simply “**identify**” but are not necessarily practicing Christians.



Key differences between self-improvement and sanctification

	Self-improvement	Sanctification
Source of change	Relies primarily on individual effort, willpower, and human techniques.	A supernatural work initiated and accomplished by God through the Holy Spirit. The believer cooperates by using the "means of grace".
Motivation	Driven by a desire for personal fulfillment, happiness, or a better life, often with a self-centered focus.	Motivated by gratitude for God's mercy and love. The ultimate goal is to glorify God and become more like Christ.
Theological basis	Often treats Christianity as a system for worldly success, which is a core feature of the prosperity gospel.	Grounded in the biblical understanding of justification (being declared righteous) and the new identity found in Christ.
Focus	Centers on improving specific behaviors, habits, and circumstances in the here-and-now.	Focuses on a deep, inward transformation of the heart and mind, which then manifests in outward behavior.
View of the self	Assumes the individual has the power to fix and perfect themselves. The focus is on "becoming a better you".	Recognizes that the "old self" must be put to death. The call is for self-abandonment, not self-improvement.

4. **Religious “skepticism”** among those who have not made up their minds to follow Christ yet. There is fear and anxiety about the end of time coming (just in case the church’s message is true).
5. **The estimated “hundreds of billions”** of message on SOCIAL MEDIA each day that influence the anxieties of people concerning every conceivable thing.
6. **WE AS CHRISTIANS ARE FIXATED ON JUDGMENT!!!** My question to us and to the culture is: “what was God’s original intention in creation and in redemption? **Genesis 12:3** – “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” God’s plan is to BLESS – not to curse! **Cursing** is only mentioned in this covenant about those who would potentially stand in the way of believers carrying the message of **blessing.**

One helpful approach to answering some of your questions about the end times is to study the Scripture (the themes and the content) of key passages that give us a picture of the end-time events.

There are several passages that talk about what happens at the end of life. Study the wording of the passages. Below is the thematic content of the passages – how it relates to the end times.

New Testament Gospels (Jesus' Olivet Discourse)

Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21: These parallel passages describe signs of the end, including wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution, and the abomination of desolation, leading up to the coming of the Son of Man.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

Describes the "rapture" or "catching up" of believers to meet Christ in the air.

1 Corinthians 15:52-54:

Details the resurrection and transformation of the living believers at the sound of the last trumpet.

2 Timothy 3:1-5:

Warns of difficult times in the last days with people characterized by selfishness, greed, boastfulness, and disobedience.

Revelation 1:1-22:21: Provides detailed symbolic visions of the end times, including the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, the rise of the Antichrist, and the final judgment and restoration of the earth.

Daniel 7-12:

Contains prophecies about successive kingdoms, a future ruler (often interpreted as the Antichrist), and a period of great tribulation and deliverance for God's people.

2 Peter 3:1-13:

Discusses false teachers, the certainty of Christ's return, and the destruction of the present heavens and earth.

Joel 2:28-32:

Foretells the pouring out of God's Spirit on all people and signs in the heavens and on the earth before the "day of the Lord".

Exercise: Each of the passages below relates to the end times. It is not a subject kept quiet. Many simply have not prepared. Read the passages below and indicate on the line what the subject matter of the passage is. Here are the topics:

Anti-Christ

The Church Age

The Tribulation

The Apostasy (falling away from the faith)

New Heaven and New Earth

The Judgment

Resurrection of the Dead

The Return of Christ

From Passages...

Acts 2:17	
Revelation 19:11–16	
Isaiah 65:17	
2 Thessalonians 2:3	
Matthew 24:29–31	
Revelation 20:11–15	
Revelation 20:11–15	
Matthew 25:31–46	
1 Corinthians 15:51–52	
Acts 1:11	
2 Thessalonians 2:3–4	
2 Peter 3:13	
John 5:28–29	

1 Timothy 4:1

Hebrews 1:2

Matthew 24:9–14

From Chapters...

Revelation 6–9

Revelation 13

Revelation 21–22;

WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE THESSALONIAN SITUATION

God could have simply said (therefore recorded) a bunch of statements that He wanted us to know and live by. Most people read the Bible just this way.

Instead, God put all of His word in **CONTEXT** to help us to

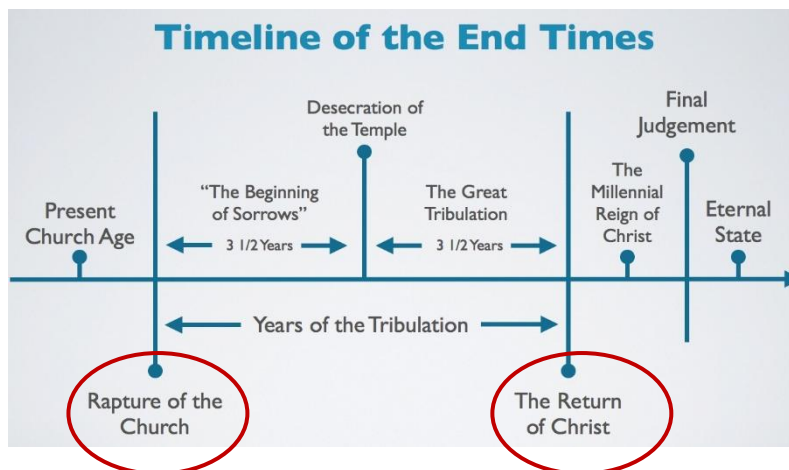
“CONTEXTUALIZE” His word through a bunch of different people, families, cultures, governments, officers, religious officials, nations, lands (and different designations of real individuals) so that we can connect His word to a particular situation-in-life when applying His word to our own! Paul wrote to the Thessalonians to address a rumor that Jesus had already come and that they had missed Him. This is very important context to the message He gives to the Thessalonians. We are dealing with some similar issues today. People are confused about the time of His coming. Paul clarified in the 2nd Thessalonian letter that Jesus had not already come and it will not come until the “falling away” comes first. It is this word that gives us our word “apostasy” (or great falling away or departure). Without getting TOO involved, this word has been also translated in some early manuscripts as “rapture” – making the **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4** verses read like this:



³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away (Gk.

“apostasia”- falling away, departure or ‘rapture’) comes first, and the man of sin (the Anti-Christ) is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sit as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

SO CONSIDER, THE CHURCH WILL LEAVE AND THE ANTI-CHRIST WILL BE REVEALED! There is also a rapture and then the



**“The Church”
(The Ministry of the Church)**



The Rapture



The Tribulation



The Second Coming



The Millennium



The Judgment

So, with this we can now look at **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:**

Consider the following sequence of events that will occur associated with the END TIME. The church must be knowledgeable about each of the events as well as the issues related to their order and timing.

In order for us to minister to others in the culture, we need to be aware of what we should expect.

Let’s make sure we can discuss some issues related to each of the events that will precede the New Heaven and New Earth and the Blessing of Eternity!

¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Also look at **Luke 17:34-37** (some call this the “selective” rapture – some taken and others not). But, this refers to one a believer and the other – not.

³⁴ I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.

³⁵ Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶ Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”

³⁷ And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?”

So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

Now, look at a Scripture we studied earlier this year - **Revelation 19:6-21**. This is very descriptive of the 2nd Coming.

⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the^[d] Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

⁹ Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Christ on a White Horse

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in

blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the ^[h]supper of the great God, ¹⁸ that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”

¹⁹ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. ²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

The prophecy of **Zechariah 14:1-5** forecasts this passage:

^{14:1} Behold, the day of the Lord is coming,
And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
² For I will gather all the nations to battle against
Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken,
The houses rifled,
And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity,
But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off
from the city.
³ Then the Lord will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.
⁴ And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount

of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
From east to west,
Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
And half of it toward the south.
⁵ Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee
As you fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
Thus the Lord my God will come,
And all the saints with You.