

Left Behind



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Introduction

The Bible says that Jesus Christ will one day return to this earth. Listen to what the angel said to the men of Galilee just after they saw Him ascend into heaven.

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11

Here’s what Jesus told His disciples, “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” **John 14:2-3**

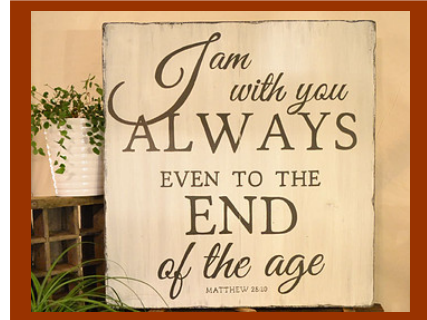


Here's what the apostle Paul told the Thessalonian church. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." **I Thes. 4:16-17**

The three scripture references above tell us that Jesus ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us and is coming back one day. I think it is about time that we look at what life will be like before His return and who actually will be caught up in the clouds in the rapture of His church.

When Will Jesus Return?

No one knows when Jesus will return, only God the Father. Attempts have been made before to guess the exact date but the dates have come and gone and we are still here. So are, or were those who made the predictions.



Listen again to the scriptures.

1. **Mark 13:32** - But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.
2. **I Thes. 5:2** - For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
3. **Matthew 24:42** - Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
4. **Luke 12:40** - Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.
5. **Matthew 24:26-27** ²⁶ Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. ²⁷ For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.



The Condition of The Church At Jesus' Return

The apostle Paul did not want us to be deceived. He wrote to the church answering their questions..."Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, *except there come a falling away* first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **II Thes, 2:3-7**

The Condition of Society At Jesus' Return

According to Matthew 24, here's what will happen as we draw closer and closer to the "Big Event" which is the end of all things. These are the signs of the times that tell us if we are really in the last days before Jesus comes back and whether or not we are fast approaching the end of days.

1. Many shall come on the scene saying, I am Christ;(or I am a Christian) and shall deceive many.
2. We will hear of wars and rumors of wars.
3. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
4. There will be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
5. Many will be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.
6. Many false prophets will rise, and shall deceive many.
7. The love of many shall wax cold.
8. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations.
9. As the days of Noah were, so will be the days before Jesus returns.



The Cause And Effect Scenario

One powerful example of cause and effect occurred in the time of Noah. The book of Genesis makes clear that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually” (**Genesis 6:5**). The world then was “filled with violence,” as humans corrupted themselves and God’s creation (**Genesis 6:11**).

This disobedience to God’s beneficial laws caused automatic pain and suffering to the point that God was “grieved in His heart” and decided to start all over again through Noah and his family (**verses 6, 18**).

Even though, from God’s perspective, the storm clouds of the impending flood were obvious, the people of Noah’s day ignored Noah’s warnings and lived as if nothing were wrong. Jesus Christ made this point in His warning to people about the signs of the end time. He said...

“For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (**Matthew 24:38-39**).

Year after year, human opinions about sin have changed. Actions recognized as wrong in the past are increasingly accepted, whether premarital sex, cheating, lying, swearing, lusting or homosexuality. Jesus warned that we must not fall prey to the apathy of Noah’s day.

Two Key Signs One For You & One For Them

It’s important to see that life is as usual before and up to the great tribulation. There are no signs or are there? Hear what the Apostle John says, “even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last

time.” **1 John 2:18** **This is how we know that we are living in the last time/days...because of the many “Anti-Christ” that are in the world.**

The other sign is the revelation of the Son of Man in heaven. The Unveiling of His Shekinah Glory to this world. After the tribulation came the Sign of His coming, being the glory He exhibits in heaven and will here on the earth.

There are signs everywhere but the two mentioned above are the most important because of what they tell us.

Sign #1...Multiple Antichrists...The earth is full of antichrists that are hard at work trying to mislead the human race and Christians in particular. Have you noticed any antichrists lately? The one thing they do that gives them away as being an, “antichrist” is...well I’ll let John tell you, “**1 John 4:2** “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **1 John 4:3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” **2 John 1:7** “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

Sign #2... Shekinah Glory..., which is the full glory of God. However, note that sign #1 is for us along with all the other signs. Sign #2 is a warning to those who are alive after the tribulation. This is pictured in **Revelation 6:16**, “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:”

Who Goes And Who Is Left Behind?

The children of God that have been “Born Again” are the folks that will be raptured from this earth and spared the wrath of God. “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁰ who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. ¹¹ Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” **1 Thessalonians 5:9-11**

The 1st century Saints were admonished to take comfort in the fact that God had not appointed them to wrath. That would be His wrath that will be

poured out on the ungodly. The great tribulation is when God pours out His wrath upon the earth.

Here is another few passages to look at from **II Thessalonians**, chapter two.

“That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. ⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? ⁶ **And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.** ⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: **only he who now letteth (Restrains or hold back) will let, until he be taken out of the way.**

⁸ And then shall that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹² that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Note: God’s wrath is to be poured upon those who take pleasure in unrighteousness, not those that love and serve the Lord. God will even send them a strong delusion to be sure they will not repent.

One More Thought...” For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” **II Thessalonians 2:7**

He that letteth (or Restrains) is the Holy Spirit of God. Until He is taken out of the way, He will continue to restrain the full expression of evil in human flesh from appearing. Because Jesus said He would never leave us comfortless but would be with us even to the end of the age, it only makes sense that when He, the Holy Spirit, is taken, we will be taken with Him.

To leave us and take Him would be abandonment and contrary to what Jesus said. So, we will go with the Spirit when He goes and that will be before the Antichrist is revealed. This qualifies us to receive a Pre-Tribulation Exit. The wrath of God falls only after the Man of Sin is revealed.

So Who Will Be Left Behind?

If you are not, "Born Again" you will be left behind when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way. You will have to face the anger of the "Antichrist" as he takes over the world and dominates the human race. It will be a full manifestation of evil that the world has ever seen. You will be left to go through the 7-year tribulation and be forced to receive the mark of the beast or die.

However, these free will choices to accept Jesus and possibly die for your faith is only offered to those who realize what has happened and repent. Those that rejected God to follow false gods, and those that would not submit to the will of God but follows after wickedness...the scripture says God will send them a great delusion so that they might be damned.

The prevailing notion is that all believers will make it to heaven. But is this theory really grounded in Scripture? I'm convinced that not all believers will be in the rapture. Here's why:

1. The word, "believe" is defined as relying upon, adhering to and trusting in. You can say that you believe but if you are not relying on, adhering to and trusting in, you are not believing. You're just saying you are and fooling yourself.

Example...I can believe that a chair can support my weight but until I sit down in it, I haven't really believed at all. I had the head knowledge but not the practical relationship. So it is with many Christians. They have head knowledge but no relationship. They do not really believe at all.

2. Many Christians are Christians because they belong to a church and are relying on their church membership to save them. They do not really know Jesus.

3. Yet other Christians do not follow the doctrine of “Salvation By Grace”. They believe in salvation as a result of being good and doing the right things in live. They are never sure of their salvation because it is based upon works, not grace, which is not Biblical. (see Ephesians 2:8-10)
4. Some Christians have fallen for false doctrine that comes from Satan that denies Jesus as the Son of God and say that the cross has no bearing on salvation. In effect, they say there are many paths to heaven and eternal life.
5. Other folks start churches based upon false doctrine and capture the souls of those that refuse to follow sound biblical teaching. Among these churches are The Universal Church, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witness, The Church of Satan, The Gay & Lesbian Church and many others.

I am sure you will come across more than what I have listed. The point is...not all who call themselves Christian will be saved in the rapture of the church. That experience is reserved for true believers that are, “Born Again” and are walking with the Lord. I believe that these true Christians are found in every walk of life, in most every church.

The Pew Report Tells Us Who Will Be Left Behind

This report says that 78% of all Catholics do not identify themselves as being, ”Born Again”. 51% of all Methodists, 55% of all Presbyterians, 63% of all Lutherans, 29% of all Adventists and 29% of all Restorationists. These folks will not see the kingdom of God because they are not, “Born Again” by their own admission.

All the wicked; all the false religions and all the Christians that claim a church affiliation but have never been Born Again...will be left behind when Jesus comes to take His church to heaven. That’s a lot of folks.



The, Born Again” Christian

Listen to what Jesus said as recorded by the apostle John. “Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot* enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” **John 3:3-6**

Those that are not Born Again cannot see the Kingdom of God. This means they are not Christian, even if they claim to be. They may be a member of a church or not but religion doesn't count. Being “Born Again” counts.

The Pew Research Organization also reports percentages of folks in certain denominations that identify themselves as, “Born Again” or not. Protestant denominational families are quite divided on this measure, including Methodists (45% born-again or evangelical vs. 51% no), Presbyterians (42% yes vs. 55% no), Lutherans (33% yes vs. 63% no), Adventists (63% yes vs. 29% no), and Restorationists (66 yes vs. 29% no).

The question is, Are non “Born Again” Christians really children of God? I think it is important to examine why Jesus said, “You Must Be “Born Again”. He was talking to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews of that day.

So What Does It Mean To Be, “Born Again”?

To be “Born Again” is to undergo a "spiritual birth", or a regeneration of the human spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is contrasted with the physical birth everyone experiences. It refers to being converted to a personal faith in Christ which cause the new birth to occur. It requires repentance from personal sin and accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior.



Deception Rules The Day

Sixty-five percent of all Christians say there are multiple paths to eternal life, ultimately rejecting the exclusivity of Christ teaching, according to the latest survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Even among white evangelical Protestants, 72 percent of those who say many religions can lead to eternal life name at least one non-Christian religion, such as Islam or no religion at all, that can lead to salvation.

Surprisingly, Christians also believe atheism can provide a ticket to heaven. Forty-six percent of white mainline Christians, 49 percent of white Catholics and 26 percent of white evangelicals who believe many religions lead to salvation say atheism can lead to eternal life.



The Bible Tells The Truth

Here's what the bible says:

1. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12*
2. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6*
3. *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. John 10:9*
4. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20*

Jesus said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Matthew 7:13-14

Just "One Way"

It is hard for most folks that are not "Born Again" to understand why there is just one way to God, yet it is true. There is only one way and that is through Jesus Christ. The Bible is our source to prove that the one-way doctrine is valid. **Acts 4:12** says, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*"

Here's why it's so important. Adam sinned against God and died spiritually. "*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat: ¹⁷ But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" **Genesis 2:16-17**

His creation account shows him being made of clay and God breathing into him the breath of life. He thus became a living soul. "*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*" **Genesis 2:7** When he sinned, the breath of life was taken from him and he became a dead soul. He was truly the first of a race of the walking dead.

Life is always in relationship to God. It is His breath or Spirit that makes us alive. So, death passed upon all men for all sinned. **(Romans 5:12)** Their nature was now sinful. We see this in all of us and in our society.

The 2nd birth experience is by the Spirit. The Breath of Life is given to each repentant heart and their souls become alive to God. They become His children by birth.

Jesus is the only way to attain salvation. All the world religions cannot save us. Joining a church or specific faith cannot save us. It must be an acknowledgment of our sin, our cry before the throne of God for forgiveness, and our invitation for Jesus to come into our hearts and save us. His name is the only name that can get us through death into eternal life.



Conclusion

The scripture tells us that the children of God experience the witness of the Holy Spirit, telling them that they are the children of God. ***“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”*** Romans 8:16

If you are a true Christian, you’ll know it. There is no guesswork. God’s Spirit is continually witnessing to your spirit that you belong to God. You will begin to hear His voice and that voice will become, “The Voice In Your Head” telling you what to do or not to do so you will stay on the path to eternal life.

Yes, you’ll make mistakes, fail in your faith at times, and even be disobedient now and then. But there will be a cry in your spirit for the living God and a reverence for Jesus. You will make Him your Lord and follow His teaching the best you know how. He will be your very best friend and when He comes for His Saints, you will be caught up to meet Him in the Air to ever be with Him. The names of all Born Again folks are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

If you are not truly saved and have never heard the Holy Spirit talking to you to confirm your destiny, I suggest you read **John 3:16** and allow Christ into your heart and be, “Born Again” by His Spirit.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that Whosoever Believeth In Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

