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3 Reasons for the Rapture – Ep. 5

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It's time for The Biblical Prophecy Program with your host, Alan Kurschner of Eschatos Ministries.

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The bible gives at least three reasons for the rapture. In last week's episode, I made a case establishing that the bible does teach the rapture contrary to some voices out there that are denying the clarity of scripture on this issue that the bible teaches an eschatological rapture. You can find that episode at AlanKurschner.com/four. Having demonstrated that the bible teaches the rapture in today's program, I want to explain what God's purposes are for the rapture. Kind of logical makes sense there, right? Establishing that the bible does teach something and then explaining what is the purpose for it.

First of all, just to quickly summarize what the rapture is. When Christ returns, he is first returning to the sky in the clouds, not on the earth yet. As he returns in the sky, in the clouds, there's going to be a resurrection on earth of all of God's people who have died before the resurrection. They will be joined with the remnant of Christians who survived up to the second coming. I Thessalonians 4:15 describes that as well. "Those who survive up to the second coming," Paul says. Both groups will be called up together to meet the Lord in the air. That's the rapture, plain and simple.

Okay. I believe that the bible does teach at least three purposes, functions, reasons for the rapture. More could be cited, but I think these three I want to highlight in this show. The first purpose of the rapture is for Christ to be glorified. Have you ever thought of why did God choose this mechanism, i.e. the rapture. This means to accomplish his purposes. He could have chosen any other method, right? He is God. For example, why have Jesus stop right at the clouds in the air to receive his people? Ever think about that? Why won't he just bypass the clouds in the air and go straight to the earth and meet his people? Why does he vent in the air? Well, I think there's a few passages that give us the answer especially for this first reason - for the glorification of Christ.

We can find that in Revelation 1:7. Revelation 1:7 opens up the apocalypse of Jesus. The last book of the bible opens up giving this reason of the glorification of Christ. The verse reads, "'Look, he is returning with the clouds,' and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced him'; and all the tribes on earth 'will mourn because of him.' This will certainly come to pass. Amen." Revelations 1:7 clues us into one of these reasons and that is, it's just that this chosen mechanism of rapture with Jesus in the air is to make his return universally visible. This would contrast to his first coming where Jesus' glory was-- it was concealed.

Luke 2:12 reads, "This will be a sign for you; You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a

manger." In contrast, the second coming of Christ Jesus - his glory - it will be revealed. It won't be concealed but revealed universally so that as Revelations says, every eye will see him. There's other passages and scripture that collaborate this. For example, Matthew in the Olivet discourse in Matthew 24:27 and 30.

It reads, "For just like the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so the coming parousia of the Son of Man will be." Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven and which I believe that that sign can only be the Shekinah glory of the Son. All the tribes of the Earth will mourn. They will see, they will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with what power and great glory. Here, we have again the universal visibility. Of what? Christ's Shekinah glory. In fact, it says explicitly at the end of this passage, "They will see the son of man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Psalm 97:4 reads, "His lightening bolts light up the world and the earth sees and trembles." Do you catch that? Yet the Shekinah glory lighting up the world and the earth sees and trembles. This is not going to be a "secret rapture" as pretribulationism teaches. The universal visibility of the eternal Son's glory contradicts this notion. In fact, pretribulational theology, I am convinced, it robs God of his glory because it hides the glory of Christ that will be displayed to the whole world at the rapture. I always have said this that the rapture is not going to be a dog whistle rapture - only believers are going to hear it. No, the whole world is going to see the glory of Christ when he comes in the clouds in the air. Jesus will be the divine cloud rider. His atmospheric epiphany, it will be the par excellence of all theophanies.

Now, just touching base on another aspect of what we're still on that the first reason for the rapture and that is in Jesus coming in the air is for Christ glory. What I think another aspect to this is mentioned by Jesus in his Olivet discourse when he warns the false messianic claimants. In Matthew 24:23-27, it says, Jesus says, "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe him. For false messiahs, false prophets will appear and perform great signs." Remember that. Great signs are going to appear. "And wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Remember, I have told you ahead of time. So then if someone says to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. 'Look, he is in the room,' do not believe him.

Then verse 27, "For just like the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so the coming of the Son of Man will be." There's another function to this Shekinah glory. Yes, the universal visibility. But it's also going to function to contrast with deceptive attempts of the false messiah claimants on earth. The false signs are on earth, but the true authenticating sign to the genuine messiah would be in the air. It will require that it will happen in the air universally.

In other words, it's going to be unmistakable where the signs of the false claimants - messiah claimants - are deceptive. To accentuate the brilliant sign - the Shekinah glory - it's going to be revealed against the backdrop of the dark celestial disturbances. I devoted an entire episode to this biblical event - the celestial disturbance event - entitled Four Reasons the Biblical Celestial Disturbance Events Supports the Pre-Wrath Rapture. That was in episode two, you can go to alankurshcher.com/two to listen to that episode.

That's the first purpose is the glory of-- Christ is going to be glorified. He's not going to come back secretly or concealed like his first coming of Christ. No, it is going to be-- by the way, the rapture is not disconnected by from the second coming of Christ. I've explained that in previous episodes that the rapture is one of the first divine purposes of the second coming. I Thessalonians 4:15 explicitly states that. Paul says that those who remain alive up to the coming, that's parousia, that's the term we use for the second coming. Then he goes on to explain that they will be raptured. Jesus is consistent with Paul.

More accurately, Paul is actually drawing from Jesus' teaching, Matthew 24. Jesus teaches the same thing, that this gathering of the elect will happen at the beginning of the parousia. The resurrection, rapture, all that, that's one of the first divine purposes of a more of a larger complex whole second coming of Christ. In contrast, the false teaching or pretribulationism disconnects the rapture from the

second coming and you can't do that. They're not the same event. They're not doing the same event. It's just that the rapture is a smaller event of the larger second coming of Christ as both Jesus and Paul teaches.

The first reason is - for the rapture - is that Christ will be glorified. The second purpose for the rapture will be to rescue the persecuted church out from the midst of the Antichrist persecution, the Antichrist great tribulation. That's because the church at that time - when Christ arrives in the clouds in the air - it would be at a time when the church is a remnant, it's a surviving remnant from or during the Antichrist persecution. Antichrist of course is possessed by Satan as Paul teaches in II Thessalonians Chapter 2. It is Satan's goal to exterminate every single living believer who confesses Christ during the great tribulation. But God, in his wisdom, in his power, will see to it that that will not happen. He [retort?] the purposes of Satan.

The second purpose, to rescue the persecuted church is -well, many of you know, I've written an entire book demonstrating what the bible teaches - that the last generation of the church will face the Antichrist great tribulation. The book is entitled-- for those of you who may not know, we're receiving new listeners every week. I wrote a book entitled the Antichrist or just Antichrist Before the Day of the Lord: What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Return of Christ. There I argued that the church will not be raptured before the end of Christ persecution but will be raptured afterwards. Well, Matthew 24 , we have-- in certain verse 15 talks about the abomination and desolation that will happen. The Antichrist will initiate an unprecedented persecution against the people of God. This great tribulation as it is called, it's going to be cut short.

In Mathew 24:22 it says, "If those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved." But a better rendering is delivered because sometimes we associate the word "save" with spiritual salvation. But here in this context, it's clearly speaking of a physical deliverance. Obviously, we shouldn't disconnect physical deliverance from spiritual deliverance. Because what it resurrection by the way? It's kind of both, right? I mean it's both, not kind of. It's both a physical, right? The body, we get new bodies. But it's spiritual. It's the apex of salvation. It's to be delivered spiritually from our sinful bodies.

Matthew 24:22 says this great tribulation is going to be cut short and it gives the reason why. For the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. It goes on, talks about otherwise, no-- again, no flesh that is believing flesh would survive. In other words - what I mentioned before - Satan's intention is to exterminate the people of God. We will see that in Verse 31. Then it speaks of how the mechanism, by how is the great tribulation cut short? Well, it's cut short by a gathering of the elect. The angels will gather.

In fact, let me read Verse 30-31, "Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man. And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man," there it is again, "will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." First purpose there for the rapture. Second purpose here, "And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

The cutting short, the mechanism, is going to be this gathering. Now, Jesus does not describe as detailed as Paul by the way as a certain snatching happening, but it's implied here. In fact in my book Antichrist Before the Day of the Lord, I have a substantive section in the book where I devote explaining four reasons why the rapture, why the expression - the gathering of the elect - is the rapture in Matthew 24:31. I'd refer you to that larger discussion.

In another account - Luke's account of the Olivet discourse - he has-- in Luke 21:26-28 reads, "And when they will see the Son of Man," there it is again, "when they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now, when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Okay. There's going to be a deliverance here. Listen, again, it's not as explicit as Paul's teaching on the details of the snatching up to the clouds, but again it is implied. By the way, in Matthew 24, Luke's account, this corresponds with the account in Revelation

7 of the innumerable multitude.

In Revelation 7, Revelation 6, at the end of Revelation 6, you have the sixth seal is opened, you have the celestial disturbances. Before the seventh seal is opened which allows the scroll to be opened, before this last and seventh scroll is broken and opened, there's two groups of people who are delivered. There is a 144,000 Jews on earth that are protected. Then you have those innumerable number of God's people who are praising God for their deliverance or they have resurrected bodies and they're in heaven and they're praising him.

It's fascinating because it says that-- we're told that this innumerable multitude, they have come out of the great tribulation which is perfectly sequential with Jesus' account in the Olivet discourse. Because you had the persecution, and then you had the deliverance, and then of course the wrath of God. Because once the seventh seal is opened, then the trumpet and bold judgments will be unleashed. This corroborates our second reason for the rapture is for the deliverance of God's people. They came out of the great tribulation.

In Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, II Thessalonians Chapter 1:7, we see this as well. It says, "And to you who are being afflicted to give rest together with us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." Here again, one of the purposes of when Christ returns at his revelation in the sky is to give rest to God's people who had been afflicted. The second purpose or function of the rapture is to remove the remnant church physically from the earth away from Antichrist persecution. Another passage I should mention actually is a classic rapture passage in I Thessalonian Chapter 4 because it talks about, again, those who survived up to the coming. Then it talks about, they will be raptured.

Well, the term for those who are alive and remained indicates-- the [great?] behind that indicates a surviving remnant. That would be consistent with all these other passages. The first purpose is that Christ is going to be glorified. The second reason is that the rapture will be a means to rescue the persecuted church out from the hands of the Antichrist persecution. The third purpose for the rapture is to remove the church from the earth before the day of the Lord's wrath. This third purpose is really a natural result of the second purpose. Because as God physically removes the church that has been experiencing the Antichrist persecution on earth, that would otherwise eventually be extirpated from the face of the earth. At that time, at the same time - kind of a dual function there - God raptures them to protect them from the ensuing day of the Lord's wrath that will be poured out on the wicked on this planet.

Certainly, God could physically protect them on earth just as he did with Israel during the plagues on Egypt, just as he will with the 144,000 Jews mentioned in Revelation 7. He could do that and he's God, right? But in this instance, he has his own - in his wisdom, his purposes - he has chosen the rapture as that mechanism to protect his people from divine wrath by actually physically removing them from earth. Of course, again, we see this truth especially narrated in the classic rapture passage of I Thessalonians 4:13-18. I'm not going to read that. We're all familiar with that passage. The rapture passage mean, caught up in the air, in the clouds to meet Christ.

This is immediately followed by the account of the day of the Lord's wrath in I Thessalonians 5. Chapter breaks are not inspired, right? Don't let chapter breaks mislead you. There should not be any chapter breaks here. Unfortunately, there are or is a chapter break. Beginning in I Thessalonians 5:1, what's beginning there - that section on the day of the Lord wrath - should not be disconnected from what comes before. Because the first section, they're both dealing with the return of the Lord, they're just dealing with two different aspects of it. You have the classic rapture passage in I Thessalonians Chapter 4. Then in I Thessalonians 5, you have the account of the day of the Lord's wrath.

I Thessalonians 5, let me read a few verses from here, 3-4 and then 9. "Now, when they were saying, 'There is peace and security.' That is the world is saying, they're going to be saying, 'Hey, there's peace and security.'" "Then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on pregnant women or on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for

the day to overtake you like a thief would. For God did not destined us for wrath but gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." This text teaches that the deliverance of God's people in Christ returns is also going to-- they will be delivered away from the wrath of God, and that's going to be poured out.

We see that in Paul's next epistle to the Thessalonians, I Thessalonians Chapter 1:10. It says, "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-- Jesus, our deliverer from the coming wrath." Okay. That's very explicit right there, one of the purposes for the rapture. Matthew 24:31, "And he will send all his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Then what we have in-- coming after this, that that teaching what we have in account of the day of the Lord's wrath.

Jesus uses certain analogies or illustrations and uses the illustration of Noah, of Noah's day in the flood. In Matthew 24:37-41, it says, "For just like the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. For in those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing until the flood came and took them all away. It will be the same as the coming of the Son of Man. There will be two men in the field; one will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding grain with the mill; one will be taken and one left". Here, it explicitly teaches that one of the purposes of Christ return is to deliver his faithful people. So his faithful people will not experience punishment, divine punishment.

There's a text in Isaiah, Isaiah 26. It actually comes from one of the most explicit resurrection passages in the Old Testament. Also one in Daniel 12:1-3 or 1-2. But this one in Isaiah 26 - though it's not well-defined in terms of the rapture event - but it's certainly implied of that when Christ returns. Of course, the connection here is the resurrection and then we'll see there's this ensuing judgment.

Isaiah 26:19-21 reads, "Your dead will come back to life; your corpses will rise up, resurrection. Wake up and shout joyfully, you who live in the ground. For you will grow like plants drenched with the morning dew, and the earth will bring forth its dead spirits. Go my people..." Now, listen to this. In case you have the resurrection, deliverance. "Go, my people. Enter your inner rooms, close your doors behind you. Hide for a little while until his angry judgment is over. For look, the lord is coming out of the place where he lives to punish the sin of those who live on the earth. The earth will display the blood shed on it; it will no longer cover up its slain."

Then Revelation 7, I mentioned this text before. Remember that in Revelation 7, the innumerable resurrected people of God, they're in heaven and they are delivered before the seventh seal. It's fascinating because the seven seals - if you read the account of the seven seals - you have the first seal is opened, and then the second, and then the third, and then the fourth, and then the fifth, and then the sixth. Then before the seventh is opened, you have two groups of people being delivered. Why the conspicuous break of the narrative between the sixth and the seventh seal? It's because the seventh seal, once the seventh seal is broken, that's when the day of the Lord's wrath begins with the trumpets, judgments, and the bold judgement. Then we have a battle, of Armageddon that toward the end of the bold judgments.

Revelation even, the Book of Revelation argues for this purpose for the rapture in Christ returning to deliver his people before he unleashes the wrath of God on the wicked. There has been three purposes for the rapture as been highlighted. First, Christ will be glorified in his power and deliverance - both spiritual and physical - of his people. Second is to rescue his persecuted church as they are suffering during the Antichrist great tribulation. Third purpose for the rapture is to remove the church physically from the earth just before Jesus unleashes the day of the Lord's wrath.

Many people - believers and unbelievers - unfortunately, when they hear the term rapture, what they associate with it is the pretribulational notion that people are going to secretly be disappearing and leaving behind their underwear and pantyhose. Then their unbelieving friends are left there just scratching their heads, right? Yeah. The rapture event as described in scripture is nothing of the sort.

This is going to be a time when God intervenes in a unique way with humankind. It will be the divine

human collision is when the eternal Son of God is disclosed to the whole world in stunning glory to his people, but frightening appearance of course to the wicked. In that event, Jesus in the clouds, in the air will cause his angels to rapture his people to be united with him. As the apostle Paul writes, "When he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed."

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