

# In A Moment

## INAM-01 “THE MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS”

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**1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18** *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.*

<sup>15</sup> *For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

<sup>18</sup> *Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

Our course will be a study of the “DOCTRINE OF THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS” as presented by the **NEW TESTAMENT** Scriptures. The **NT** is not silent on this issue. Although mostly found in **PAUL’S LETTERS**, it is supported by other writers, and by statements made by Jesus. As we will see, it was to be taught, understood, and believed by the **NT** Saints.

The passage, above, in **1 THESSALONIANS**, is one of the most direct statements about the certainty of the Rapture. Also, in Paul’s **1ST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS**, he writes very clearly about the character of the Rapture. We will consider these passages, and many others, in depth, and often return to them to support or reveal sometimes overlooked truths they present or support.

Our study is NOT a survey of the many “*Prophetic insights*” that are, and have been, presented in this day as well as the past. I will concentrate on **what the Scripture says**, and what we may be able to understand by a closer, and in-depth look. There are times when some scriptural teachings must be compared with and defined by others. In all of this teaching, my desire is to answer the question, “*What does the Bible Say?*”

### **THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH” IS A “MYSTERY”**

**1 COR 15:51-53** *Behold! I tell you **a mystery**. **WE** shall not all sleep, but **WE** shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **WE** shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*

#### ➤ **A MYSTERY:**

The word “**mystery**” is used in a number of passages in the **NEW TESTAMENT**, especially by **JESUS** and **PAUL**, and then of course by **JOHN** in the **BOOK OF THE REVELATION**.

**Mystery** – *Something that is presented openly/ publicly but **only known** to those who **have specifically been informed**... “Secret Knowledge”*

**MATT. 13:11** – *Mysteries of the Kingdom*

**ROM. 11:25** – *Mystery of the Olive Tree*

**ROM. 16:25** – *Mystery of the Ages*

**1 COR. 15:51** – *Mystery of the Rapture*

**EPH. 1:9** – *Mystery of God’s Will in Christ*

**EPH. 3:4** – *Mystery of Christ*

**EPH. 5:32** – *Mystery of Christ and His Church*

**EPH. 6:19** – *Mystery of the Gospel*

**COL. 1:27** – *Mystery of Christ In You*

**2 THESS. 2:7** – *Mystery of the “Man of Lawlessness”*

**1 TIM. 3:9** – *Mysteries of the Faith*

**1 TIM. 3:16** – *Mystery of the Incarnation*

These are all Biblical truths that cannot be understood without the assistance of the Teaching of the Holy Spirit; and Knowledge of other Scripture, and/or the Teaching of those anointed by Jesus Christ to present Biblical knowledge.

It is the same with the understanding of the “Mystery of the Rapture of the Saints.” It was not taught in the Old Testament (*although there are some passages where it may be implied or hinted at*). It was not understood nor taught during Jesus’ ministry on earth (*although He did mention some things that refer to the Rapture*).

We must look to Paul as the greatest source of the “Revelation of this Mystery” (*just as we do with so many of the other Doctrines that are essential to the Saints*)

### ➤ CONFUSION... DENIAL... ERROR:

Of ALL the “Mysteries of the NT” there is none that has been such an object of Confusion, Denial, and Error as that of “The Rapture of the Saints.” It is not just that it is “under-taught”, but it is totally ignored by entire Denominations, rejected by Schools of Theology, and filled with confusion by “False Prophecies” from those who **do** believe it.

But Paul’s first words regarding direct teaching on this subject are, “We would NOT have you unlearned...” Therefore, it is imperative that we examine Scripture to gain a proper understanding of this subject. This is no different than the reality that the Believer must “search the Scriptures” to understand the Grace of Salvation; the Work & Ministry of the Holy Spirit; the Doctrine of Christ in You; principles of Prayer; the Life of Sanctification; and more. Study, teaching, meditation, and revelation are all essential to the life of the Believer.

### THE MEANING OF “RAPTURE”

There are many Denominations and Teachers that deny the “Rapture” because they say the word is NOT found in the Bible. This denial, and the resulting confusion, lead many to reject teaching on the subject. What IS the truth? I personally have been told by Pastors to NOT mention the subject when ministering in their Church or Conference. They say it is “too confusing” and leads people to become “lazy in their walk of faith.” Although I have confronted some of them, I will accept their limitations in order to keep peace... *unless the Holy Spirit directs me otherwise.*

#### ➤ The “RAPTURE” is indeed mentioned in the Bible... *just not like we think*

a. “RAPTURE” is the Latin word for “caught up” in 1 THESS 4:17

*<sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up (“raptured”) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...*

b. The LATIN word, is “rapio” we get: “rape – raptor – rapture” –to be seized, taken away... implying it is done to them without their “approval” or it is “done by force” – Both apply to our subject...

If you had a LATIN BIBLE (*which was all that was available to the Believers from the 400’s until the Reformation*) the phrase would read, “will be raptured...” (*using an English translation of the LATIN BIBLE*)

c. The GREEK word used by Paul was “harpazo” – this word carries the same basic meaning as the LATIN word – *It is a Passive Indicative verb meaning it will happen to us – The subject is NOT in control... Not only will this happen TO us... but it is “irresistible”- neither by US nor by ANY OTHER entity...*

d. Our word “rapture” is from the LATIN translation of the GREEK word – THAT is why “rapture” is not found

e. This word, “harpazo” is found in other places in the New Testament in relation to other subjects: MATT. 13:19 *The birds snatching the seed from the hardened path*; JOHN 10:12 *Wolves snatching away the sheep*; JOHN 10:28, 29 *The inability of anyone snatching the Believers from Jesus’ / God’s hand*; ACTS 8:39 *Phillip being “caught away” in the desert*; 2 COR. 12:2 *Paul being “caught-up” into the 3RD HEAVEN...*

- The **"RAPTURE"** is *the sudden arrival* [Parousia] of Jesus to **"take away"** the Church to be forever with Him – At His **"arrival"** the Believers whether they are *"asleep or alive"* will be **"seized – taken away / out"** – by a force which cannot be resisted or hindered

(See the **CHART OF THE END TIMES**: page 4)

- The **RAPTURE** ends the CHURCH AGE – **"THE LAST DAYS"** – *which began at PENTECOST*
- The **RAPTURE** signals the beginning of **"THE TRIBULATION"** – the time of **JACOB'S TROUBLE / TRAVAIL**
- **"THE TRIBULATION"** lasts for **"7-Years"** and ends with **"THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD"**
- The **RAPTURE** is **"before"** the **2<sup>ND</sup> COMING OF CHRIST**... which precedes **THE MILLENNIUM**

### **Paul's Emphasis On The Rapture:**

Paul considered it **essential** for the Believers to know about **"END TIMES"** and especially **"THE MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS"**. Although the **CHURCH AT THESSALONICA** was only a few months old, it is evident that Paul considered it important to teach about the End Times to these **"New Believers."**

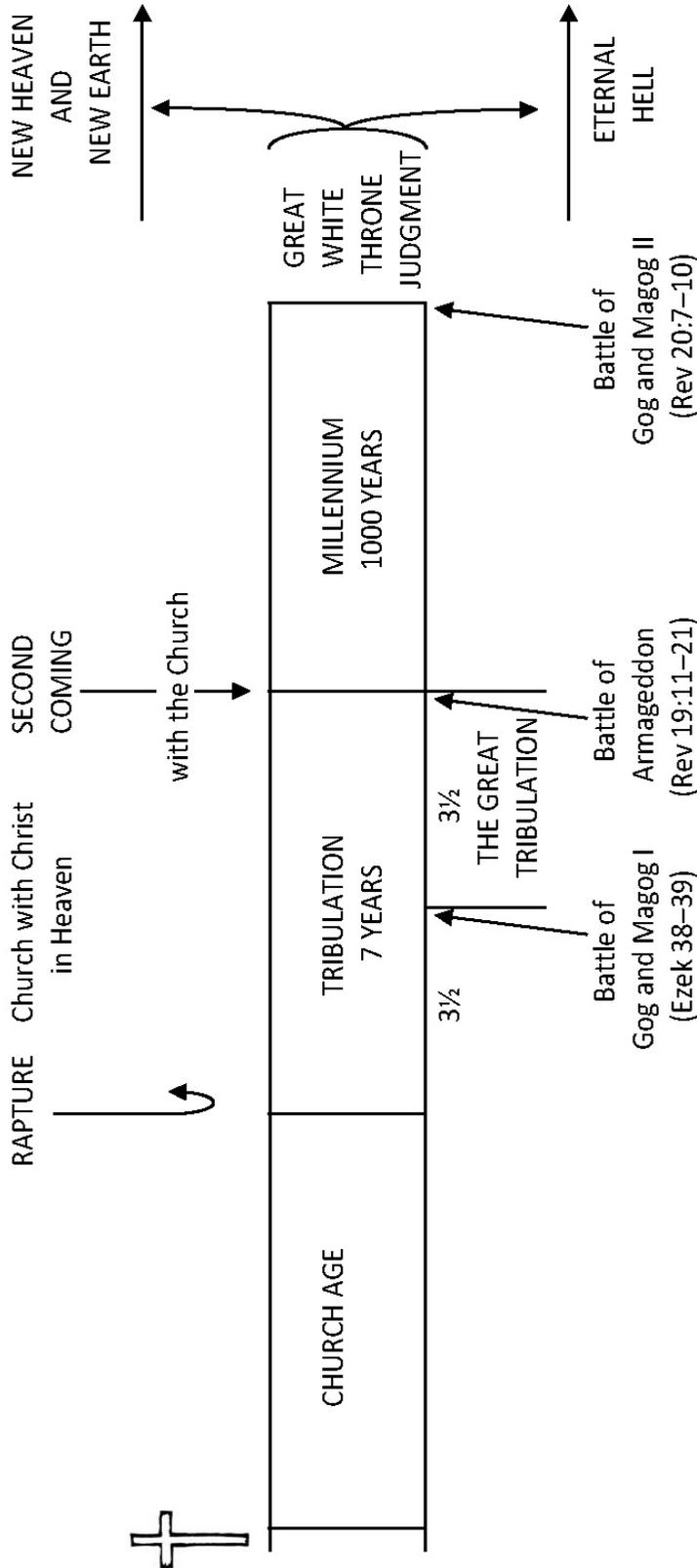
- Paul spent **2-3 weeks teaching in the Synagogue** in Thessalonica, before he left and continued teaching to the Believing Jews, and the Greeks, and the Women... **This can be seen from:**
  - (1) The Philippian Church sent money to Paul at least twice during this visit (**PHIL 4:15-16**), implying a longer period of time than three weeks
  - (2) In addition, Paul supported himself by manual labor (**1 THESS 2:9; 2 THESS. 3:7-10**). This may indicate that considerable time elapsed before the aid from Philippi arrived
  - (3) Most of the converts at Thessalonica were not from the synagogue but were Gentiles who were steeped in idolatry (**1 THESS 1:9**) – they would need necessary education to first of all understand the OT promise of Salvation through the Messiah, Jesus Christ (*they had NO New Testament*)
  - (4) Plus, there is the evidence from the **LETTERS OF 1&2 THESSALONIANS** of the great amount of material Paul had taught them: *The work of the Holy Spirit in the Believer; Faith, Love, and Hope; the importance of the Scriptures; the evil opposition of Satan; the purpose of sanctification for the Believer; principles of Christian conduct; the importance of submitting to spiritual leadership; the operation of the Gifts of the Spirit... WOW!*

### **AND the Rapture... the Tribulation... and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming**

- Paul HAD already taught them on the subject of the **"catching away"** of the Saints...
- It WAS a subject Paul included as **"basic instruction"** for New Believers...
- There was already growing **confusion** on the issue brought by false Teachers attempting to undermine Paul ...
- Paul **INSISTED** that the Believers have **a proper understanding** of this subject...
- The purpose was **Not Only** to **"educate"** them, **But Also** to **"encourage"** the Believers as they faced the uncertainty of the days ahead, and the persecutions that were already arising (**1 THESS 2:14-16**)

# InAM-01-Appendix: The End Times Chart

“THE PRE-TRIBULATIONAL ... PRE-MILLENNIAL VIEWPOINT”



**Fellowship**  
BIBLE CHURCH