

THE RAPTURE

Pastor Grant Williams February 14, 2018 Part 6

1 Thessalonians 4:17 KJV

17 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.

Tonight, I want to begin in Zephaniah chapter one and continue with the revelation of this passage from our study last week. Zephaniah is called a prophet which means: a person instructed by God to announce future events (foretell) and is never wrong.

Zephaniah 1:18 - 2:2 KJV

18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

2:1 Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;

2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you.

Last week, we looked at the Lord's anger which is going to be poured out and that is confirmed in the Old and New Testament. In this passage in Zephaniah, God is telling you and I that His people will be ***gathered together*** and He is specific in who is to be ***gathered together*** in His Word. He says that this ***gathering together*** will be this undesirable nation or ***nation not desired***.

Some people say that this undesirable nation alludes to the nation of Israel but this is a future prophecy. The Bible prophetically tells us or foretells to us that the Church is the holy nation.

1 Peter 2:9 KJV

*9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, **an holy nation**, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;*

1 Peter 2:9 AMPC

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, [God's] own purchased, special people, that you may set forth the wonderful deeds and display the virtues and perfections of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9 GNT

*9 But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, **the holy nation**, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvelous light.*

We as a church, are called a holy nation. This is not referring to Israel exclusively. Remember, in the book of Revelation, chapters 4-19 contain the 84 months of the Tribulation. The first half of the Tribulation this holy nation will be receiving their rewards in the great throne room in heaven around the Bema Seat. This holy nation and who comprises this nation is given in detail in Revelation chapter 7.

Revelation 7:9 KJV

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Revelation 7:9 AMPC

9 After this I looked and a vast host appeared which no one could count, [gathered out] of every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. These stood before the throne and before the Lamb; they were attired in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.

Also, in the book of Deuteronomy it prophetically speaks of a future nation that God will raise up that will provoke Israel to jealousy, a foolish nation that has no reason to be ashamed.

Deuteronomy 32:21 KJV

21 They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

This foolish nation in Deuteronomy 32:21 is speaking of when Jesus grafts in the Gentiles for this New Testament church in the book of Acts. He is foretelling how the Jewish people and the world in general would look at the Gentiles who would follow Christ.

These stories of the grafting in of the Gentiles to the Kingdom of God are chronicled all throughout the New Testament and specifically in the book of Acts. This is one of the obstacles that the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul had to overcome with the Jewish people. During this time of the Gentiles (starting from the time of Christ) these new followers were ridiculed and shamed by their actions in beliefs in Jesus the Messiah.

Romans 10:11 KJV

*11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him **shall not be ashamed.***

Romans 10:11 AMPC

*11 The Scripture says, No man who believes in Him [who adheres to, relies on, and trusts in Him] **will [ever] be put to shame or be disappointed.***

Isaiah 46:9-10 AMPC

9 [Earnestly] remember the former things, [which I did] of old; for I am God, and there is no one else; I am God, and there is none like Me,
10 Declaring the end and the result from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure and purpose...

In the parable that Jesus gave in Matthew chapter 21, He spoke of a vineyard that the Lord would lend out to another nation to bring forth fruit to the Lord in its season.

Matthew 21:1-46 AMPC

1 And when they came near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples on ahead,

2 Saying to them, Go into the village that is opposite you, and at once you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie [them] and bring [them] to Me.

3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall reply, The Lord needs them, and he will let them go without delay.

4 This happened that what was spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

5 Say to the Daughter of Zion [inhabitants of Jerusalem], Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey [a beast of burden].

6 Then the disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.

7 They brought the donkey and the colt and laid their coats upon them, and He seated Himself on them [the clothing].

8 And most of the crowd kept spreading their garments on the road, and others kept cutting branches from the trees and scattering them on the road.

9 And the crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed Him kept shouting, Hosanna (O be propitious, graciously inclined) to the Son of David, [the Messiah]! Blessed (praised, glorified) is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna (O be favorably disposed) in the highest [heaven]!

10 And when He entered Jerusalem, all the city became agitated and [trembling with excitement] said, Who is This?

11 And the crowds replied, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.

12 And Jesus went into the temple (whole temple enclosure) and drove out all who bought and sold in the sacred place, and He turned over the four-footed tables of the money changers and the chairs of those who sold doves.

13 He said to them, The Scripture says, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers.

14 And the blind and the lame came to Him in the porches and courts of the temple, and He cured them.

15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He did and the boys and the girls and the youths and the maidens crying out in the porches and courts of the temple, Hosanna (O be propitious, graciously inclined) to the Son of David! they were indignant.

16 And they said to Him, Do You hear what these are saying? And Jesus replied to them, Yes; have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and unweaned infants You have made (provided) perfect praise?

17 And leaving them, He departed from the city and went out to Bethany and lodged there.

18 In the early dawn the next morning, as He was coming back to the city, He was hungry.

19 And as He saw one single leafy fig tree above the roadside, He went to it but He found nothing but leaves on it [seeing that in the fig tree the fruit appears at the same time as the leaves]. And He said to it, Never again shall fruit grow on you! And the fig tree withered up at once.

20 *When the disciples saw it, they marveled greatly and asked, How is it that the fig tree has withered away all at once?*

21 *And Jesus answered them, Truly I say to you, if you have faith (a firm relying trust) and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, it will be done.*

22 *And whatever you ask for in prayer, having faith and [really] believing, you will receive.*

23 *And when He entered the sacred enclosure of the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came up to Him as He was teaching and said, By what power of authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this power of authority?*

24 *Jesus answered them, I also will ask you a question, and if you give Me the answer, then I also will tell you by what power of authority I do these things.*

25 *The baptism of John—from where was it? From heaven or from men? And they reasoned and argued with one another, If we say, From heaven, He will ask us, Why then did you not believe him?*

26 *But if we say, From men—we are afraid of and must reckon with the multitude, for they all regard John as a prophet.*

27 *So they answered Jesus, We do not know. And He said to them, Neither will I tell you by what power of authority I do these things.*

28 *What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He came to the first and said, Son, go and work today in the vineyard.*

29 *And he answered, I will not; but afterward he changed his mind and went.*

30 Then the man came to the second and said the same [thing]. And he replied, I will [go], sir; but he did not go.

31 Which of the two did the will of the father? They replied, The first one. Jesus said to them, Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the harlots will get into the kingdom of heaven before you.

32 For John came to you walking in the way of an upright man in right standing with God, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots did believe him; and you, even when you saw that, did not afterward change your minds and believe him [adhere to, trust in, and rely on what he told you].

33 Listen to another parable: There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a hedge around it and dug a wine vat in it and built a watchtower. Then he let it out [for rent] to tenants and went into another country.

34 When the fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his [share of the] fruit.

35 But the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first time, and they treated them the same way.

37 Finally he sent his own son to them, saying, They will respect and give heed to my son.

38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, This is the heir; come on, let us kill him and have his inheritance.

39 And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes back, what will he do to those tenants?

41 They said to Him, He will put those wretches to a miserable death and rent the vineyard to other tenants of such a character that they will give him the fruits promptly in their season.

42 Jesus asked them, **Have you never read in the Scriptures: The very Stone which the builders rejected and threw away has become the Cornerstone;** this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

43 I tell you, for this reason the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce the fruits of it.

Matthew 21:43 KJV

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and **given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**

44 And whoever falls on this Stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom It falls will be crushed to powder [and It will winnow him, [w]scattering him like dust].

45 And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables (comparisons, stories used to illustrate and explain), they perceived that He was talking about them.

46 And although they were trying to arrest Him, they feared the throngs because they regarded Him as a prophet.

This other nation once again is the church which was raised up to bring forth spiritual fruit for the Kingdom of God. This undesirable nation is referring to the Church, which is the holy nation, which is ***gathered together*** before the Lord's fierce anger and gathered together before the time of the Lamb's wrath.

From the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament writers we can see that they are revealing a pre-wrath catching away or rapture. The wrath of God happens 42 months into the Tribulation which would be the time of Jacob's trouble or Great Tribulation. In Revelation 6, this time period which we know is revealing the events that are taking place in the first 42 months of the Tribulation, is called the wrath of the Lamb.

Revelation 6:16 KJV

*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:***

This is part of the breaking of the seven sealed book that the Lamb opens up at the Judgment or Bema Seat of Christ in Revelation chapter 5. Later on in Revelation chapters 14-19 it speaks about the wrath of God.

Through my studies of God's Word, the first 42 months of the Tribulation is called the wrath of the Lamb and the last 42 months is called the wrath of God. We will talk about this and the theology behind it in detail in the future but tonight I don't want to get sidetracked from our main subject.

Let's go back to Zephaniah chapter 2 and continue reading...

Zephaniah 2:3 KJV

*3 Seek ye the Lord, **all ye meek** of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be **ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.***

***The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed;
the Old Testament is in the New testament revealed...***

This verse says it very clear, that the meek will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger. Jesus spoke about this as well, remember there is nothing new under the sun, the New Testament is revealing what was hidden in the Old Testament. This is what Jesus said about this...

Luke 21:36 KJV

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Luke 21:36 AMPC

36 Keep awake then and watch at all times [be discreet, attentive, and ready], praying that you may have the full strength and ability and be accounted worthy to escape all these things [taken together] that will take place, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man.

Let's look at this idea of hiding on the day of the Lord's anger, hidden away or protected from the wrath/anger of the Lord.

Psalms 27:5 KJV

5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock.

This idea or concept to be ***hid in the day of the Lord's anger.*** (***Zeph 2:3***) is also found in Isaiah 26:19-21.

Isaiah 26:19-21 KJV

19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

20 Come, my people, **enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.**

21 For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: **the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.**

This is another Old Testament scripture revealing protection from God's wrath and indignation for the righteous. Remember, in the book of Revelation, the martyrs in chapter 6 say 'how long will it be until you avenge our blood'?

Revelation 6:9-10 KJV

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not **judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**

Revelation 18 reveals Mystery Babylon will be destroyed because it shed the blood of the prophets and the saints. The identity of Mystery Babylon is in chapter 17-18: the false prophet comes from the apostate Christian religion (Catholic Church) and the antichrist from the political headquarters (Babylonian Empire) of the 7th kingdom found in Daniel.

Revelation 18:21-24 KJV

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Many of the judgments in the book of Revelation when you study it thoroughly are related to the shedding of righteous blood that has happened all throughout scripture. From the time that Cain killed Abel and over the last six thousand years.

Genesis 4:8-10 AMPC

8 And Cain said to his brother, Let us go out to the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

9 And the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?

*10 And [the Lord] said, What have you done? The voice of **your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.***

Let's go back to the passage in Isaiah chapter 26 where the prophet said that he will be raised along with all the other dead. The Prophet Isaiah is speaking about the resurrection of the saints which is what Paul is revealing to the Church in the Epistles.

Isaiah 26:19 KJV

19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*

So, when is this resurrection planned? Remember, the first resurrection was Jesus when He was raised from the dead as the first fruits of the dead. This is not the resurrection that the Prophet Isaiah is prophetically foretelling in this passage...

1 Corinthians 15:20 KJV

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

The next resurrection is ***the dead in Christ who shall rise first*** which is revealed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Thess. 4:16-17. This is the resurrection that the Prophet Isaiah is speaking about as well in Chapter 26.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 KJV

*16 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:***

*17 **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.*

Those who have died in Christ or obedient to His Word, their soul and spirit are in Paradise in the Third Heaven.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:14, the Apostle Paul wrote that when Jesus comes for the catching away or the Rapture of the Church, He would bring those who died in Christ with Him.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 KJV

*14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so **them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.***

Jesus is going to bring the soul and spirit of those who have died righteous, out of paradise in heaven, and then they have a resurrection. The Apostle Paul calls this a mystery...hard to explain, hard to wrap our natural minds around.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 KJV

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

*52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, **and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,** and we shall be changed.*

Once again, this is the resurrection of the dead that were righteous. This is what Jesus, Paul, John, Peter...were giving revelation to which was spoken by the Old Testament prophets.

Isaiah 26:19 KJV

19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

The Prophet Isaiah is speaking of the resurrection of the dead who were righteous in verse 19 and this event is called the Rapture. Then, in verse 20 the Prophet Isaiah continues...

Remember, a prophet means: a person instructed by God to announce future events (foretell) **and is never wrong.**

Isaiah 26:20 KJV

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

The word **door** here is very interesting. When you go to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 you will find that five were wise and five were foolish.

Matthew 25:1-13 KJV

25 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 **While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.**

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut (to the chamber).

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. **13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.**

The five that were wise had additional oil because the bridegroom delayed His coming. They didn't know the day or the hour of his arriving so they were prepared all the time.

2 Peter 3:9 AMPC

9 **The Lord does not delay** and is not tardy or slow about what He promises, according to some people's conception of slowness, but He is long-suffering (extraordinarily patient) toward you, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance.

Matthew 24:36 KJV

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Note: We don't know the day or the hour but we can know the season of His return (1 Thessalonians 5). We are commanded to know the signs of His return so we are not caught unaware. (Matthew 24:33 and Luke 21:36)

The five that were foolish or unwise, ran out of oil. They were told to go out and buy it and while they were out the bridegroom came suddenly (like a thief in the night to them that are unaware of the signs are not ready/righteous).

In verse 10 of Matthew chapter 25, the bridegroom then takes the five wise virgins *that were ready went in with him to the marriage (chamber for a marriage feast): and the door was shut*. This marriage or marriage chamber has a door on it.

Remember, Revelation chapters 4-19 deal with the seven year Tribulation period. Chapters 2-3 of the book of Revelation deals with the seven churches or time periods or time frames of the dispensation of the church age.

Immediately following the church age, the Apostle John writes in Revelation 4:1-2 that he heard a voice saying *come up hither*, and immediately he was in the spirit up in heaven.

Revelation 4:1-2 KJV

*1 After this I looked, and, behold, **a door was opened in heaven:** and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.*

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

A transition takes place from chapters 2-3 revealing the church age to chapter 4 which is the scene of the Temple in heaven. In verse one, John says, I saw a *door was opened in heaven*.

The word *door* in the Greek means: *a literal opening or portal*. John saw an actual opening, a door and was caught up into that opening into a chamber. Once you pass through that door, that door is shut. In the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25, when the wise virgins enter into the bridal chamber, the door shuts as well.

Let's go back to the book of Isaiah and see what the apostles and the prophets are both talking about...

Isaiah 26:20 KJV

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee:...

Why are they coming into the chamber and why is the door being shut behind them?...*hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.*

The word *indignation* is a word that is also used in Daniel 11:36 representing the wrath of God, indignation of God or the Judgments of God that will be poured out on the earth. We have found this in several passages proving the Rapture and the seven year Tribulation was revealed in the Old Testament.

Daniel 11:36 KJV

36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

The Prophet Isaiah says you will be hidden for just a little while.

Isaiah 26:20 KJV

*20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; **hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.***

This hiding or protection is taking place during the judgments that will be poured out on the earth during the wrath of the Lamb and the wrath and indignation of God during the seven year Tribulation. The 5th, 8th and 16th chapters of Revelation deal with these judgments (bowls, seals, and trumpets etc.) that will take place on the earth.

Then, after the judgments are poured out on the earth from heaven, at the end of the seven year Tribulation, this is what the Prophet Isaiah said would take place.

Isaiah 26:21 KJV

*21 For, behold, the Lord **cometh out of his place** to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: **the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.***

This is what the Apostle John is speaking about in Revelation 6:10, Revelation 20:4, Revelation 18:21-24.

Revelation 6:10 KJV

*10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, **dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?***

Revelation 20:4 KJV

*4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and **I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,** and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

Revelation 18:21-24 KJV

*21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.
24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

The judgments of indignation that God will hand out during the Tribulation are based on more than anything else, the shedding of innocent or righteous blood.

