**Transcript**

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The Final Countdown – Rapture 10132024  
Play the Final Countdown song during the break and up to Announcements – Membership Class and Baptism  
Recap last week – Last week we started this series and I was a bit concerned that the teaching and details about Prophecy might be boring….boy was I wrong. We had the most views on our livestream ever, by triple, that we have ever seen. That sounds prideful Kathy – what does that mean to you? What it confirmed, is that people are hungry and want to know!  
Last week and each week I want to reiterate the time line every week so we understand.  
1) there is a definite sequence of events and it starts with what already happened: Jesus came to earth, born of a Virgin Mary, he was fully man, fully God. He did miracles, he taught his disciples, he told them things that would happen and they happened. He was crucified, a horrific death on the cross. He took on all sin, past present and future, he suffered more than we can wrap our heads around, he died and God raised him from the dead 3 days later. That is referred to as the first coming of Christ.  
2) Next the church age. That is what we are living in right now. The time between the first coming of Jesus and the second time. He will come again. But He hasn’t yet. And we are all living in this time  
3) Then the Rapture - that’s what our focus is today. Jesus comes for his church  
4) After the rapture there will be a period of 7 years – a period of great tribulation. We will talk about that next week. That is a difficult one to process.  
5) And then at the end of the tribulation, the second coming of Jesus takes place, when he comes with his church and we have the GREAT 1000 year reign, a great period of peace where we are all together with Jesus here on Earth.  
6) Then comes the great white throne judgment where Satan, demons fallen angels and unrepented sinners are eternally separated from God, and then the incredible new heaven and new earth.  
I was able to get this great pamphlet and I asked for more but they won’t send me more than 3. BUT you can get your own for free – The link is on facebook in the Joy Church Group. It really does a great job of outlining the events and linking the of all the Chapters and scriptures in Revelation.  
9/11/01 – 23 years ago - The world changed in a moment. Every year I watch the videos and like a lot of you I am sure, remember where I heard the news and how the day unfolded, how old my children were etc. Everything changed – we didn’t know what was happening. I heard about a man that was sealed in a soundproof walk-in refrigerator at ground zero, he had missed the initial impact of 9/11 – He emerged to discover a totally new world.  
Just like that, imagine with me people vanishing in broad daylight. Millions mysteriously missing. People all over the world disappearing in a split second. If you are still here, you will suddenly realize the world will never be the same. There has never been anything like this- not even close. Chaos, confusion will reign. Fear – What on earth just happened? Some people, people who have read the bible, but not given their lives to Jesus, made Jesus their Savior and King, some may have heard it in church, or possibly you are the one that told someone what was to come and now they assume this must be the Rapture. Others will attempt to explain it away – UFO abduction, some secret weapon that vaporizes people, but they will not be able to explain it.  
Scripture tells us. The only reliable source is God’s holy Word. The Word of God which predicted in detail by Jesus and his apostles 2000 years ago. The amazing fulfillment of biblical prophecy.  
The Rapture will take the world by surprise, but it has been anticipated and expected by bible believing Christians ever since Jesus returned to heaven after His death and resurrection. This event will mark the beginning of the end.  
What is this Rapture that the bible tells us will happen? Where do people go? Who will go? How does this relate to Jesus’s second coming? Is it too late for my family? Is there hope?  
These are all important questions and nothing is more important for us right now than understanding the Rapture because it is the catalyst for all the events that are coming upon the earth. As the bible tells us it sets in motion a series of disastrous calamities that can’t be reversed or stopped.  
What exactly is the rapture? Well - The word rapture is not used in the bible. But, a Greek word harpazo is and it is translated rapture which means to carry off by force, to seize or to carry away.  
1 Cor 15:51-53 & 1 Thes 4:13-18 NLT READ  
It happens in a twinkling of an eye – a moment. Very quickly.  
Jesus himself will come to get his people just as He promised. He comes with a commanding shout, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. Interestingly, no one on earth will see him or hear him. In Revelation, it says every eye shall see him when He comes back for the second coming, but when the rapture happens its going to be very quickly and quietly. In John 14 – When Jesus was about to go away after his disciples had understood his death, burial, and resurrection, at least a little bit, and Jesus was talking to them and trying to prepare them for what was to happen. They didn’t understand it and some of them said, Lord – where are you going? And Lord how do you get there.  
He won’t come all the way to earth but remain in the air 1 Thess 4:17 reminds us (as his followers were caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.) he comes to gather his people on earth and to bring them to heaven.  
First, the bodies of the dead believers (those who accepted Jesus as Savior) but have died will be resurrected and rejoined with their perfected spirits that Jesus brings with Him from Heaven. Scripture refers to those who died as those who are asleep. When Christians die, its as if our bodies are peacefully in a place of rest, just asleep and ready to be awakened by Jesus! That’s why we can understand death of believers in a different way then the world sees it or grieves it. When we bury our loved ones and they are believers its like they hang out in a hotel asleep until the resurrection. Until Jesus raptures them.  
So where is my mom? Oh she’s in the hotel at the cemetary. They will have a prominent place when Jesus starts the rapture. 1 Thes 4:15-16 The dead in Christ will rise first. Death for us that believe in Jesus know that its not the end, just a temporary separation of the soul from the body.  
That means those of us that are alive at the time of the rapture - go second.  
But even though those of us alive go second after those asleep (dead) it is just a split second after the resurrection of the deceased believers – in the time it takes to blink your eye we will meet Jesus and all those who died before us that believed in him.  
We will be totally transformed – inside and out. Our spirits perfected and we will be given new bodies fit for heaven – immortal, incorruptible. Romans 8:23 – the redemption of our body. Paul tells us in Phil 3:21 the moment when the Lord Jesus Christ will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.! 1John 3:2 – We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!  
What will our new bodies be like? Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum said this, It is possible that information as to the nature of the new body may be gleaned from a study of the nature of the resurrected body of Jesus…We know that His voice was recognized as being the same as the one He had before His death and resurrection (John 20:16). Also, His physical features were recognized, though not always immediately (John 20:26-29); 21:7). It was a very real body of flesh and bone and not a mere phantom body, since it was embraceable (john 20:17,27) The resurrected Messiah was able to suddenly disappear (Luke 24:31) and go through walls (John 20:19). It was a body that was able to eat food (Luke 24:41-43)  
A brand new body, like the resurrection body of Jesus awaits every single believer in Jesus Christ.  
Here is an image Dr. David Jeremiah gave to think about: Think about the rapture as a great magnetic process. Jesus came and hovered over the earth, and all those believers who had died and those who never died were snatched up like particles of iron, pulled right out of the population, suctioned off the planet. It will happen instantly. No time to get ready. No signs, nothing to let us know its coming and it can come any day!  
The bible also tells us in 1 Thess 4:17 Then we who are alive…..And thus we shall always be with the Lord”  
Here’s a recap:  
Deceased believers’ resurrected bodies are reunited with their spirits.  
Living believers are instantaneously caught up and transformed inside and out.  
Resurrected believers are reunited with living believers  
Resurrected believers and raptured believers meet the Lord in the air. This is the time when we will never be away from Jesus again and with our deceased family members and friends who believed – for eternity. What a glorious Day!  
Have you noticed how many times I have repeated the word believers. This is the most important part of everything we do here at Joy Church. It’s all about Jesus. It’s all about following Him. It’s all about helping people take the step to surrender their life to Him. Eternity is for believers! Our job here on earth is to continue sharing the good news so that everyone Hears and can take that step.  
  
I want to take just a minute to answer a couple questions that always come up regarding Children and then also cremation.  
People that will be eternally separated from God have to refuse the free offer of God’s saving grace. Children that are too young to understand the gospel cannot willfully refuse it. So your children will be raptured or resurrected if they died young. God loves children and refers to them many times as innocent, He has a tender heart and much compassion. He knows and loves every child from conception, in the womb and really before time began.  
And as far as cremation, 1 Cor 15 37 & 38 – And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases and to each see its own body. Whether we have a body in the grave to be resurrected or our body is to be destroyed by fire or some other disaster, an incorruptible body will be resurrected to join with Jesus in the air. Cremation does not, in any way prevent us from experiencing the fullness of heaven.  
I have many more scriptures on those things but just wanted to clarify quickly as I know our minds go to those things often.  
Back to the actual Rapture - So why is it that people will vanish? What’s the purpose. The Rapture ends this age, this time that we are living in now. The time between when Jesus came to earth the first time, suffered, died for all of us – took on the sins of the world and was resurrected and then ascended into heaven – the time between then and when He will come again. The final age of human history that you hear known as the end times. The rapture starts that – it’s a divine spark that starts the prophetic countdown to the end of time as we know it.  
Jesus will come and snatch us up so he can rescue us from the horrific devastation that is coming called the Tribulation. The Tribulation is a time of horror, agony, devastation like nothing ever before seen or imagined. And God will fulfill his promise that He made to His disciples that ALL true followers of Him will be rescued – snatched up in the air from earth and right into the presence of the Lord without dying and before the terrible time of tribulation is unleashed. We are promised deliverance from this Wrath (1 Thess 1:10) and I love this next verse that Jesus comforted His disciples with: - remember I said they didn’t understand and asked him where are you going and how do you get there?  
John 14:1-3 Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”  
The Rapture is the fulfillment of that promise. He has gone to heaven. He is preparing a place for us, and one day soon he’s going to come back and he’s going to take us up to meet him in the air and we are going to go to the place that he’s been preparing.  
Now if he was able to create the earth in 6 days and he rested on the 7th , he’s been working on heaven for several thousand years. Can you imagine what kind of a place its going to be. Like nothing we have ever seen.  
This is the hope of every believer – that before the great and horrible tribulation breaks out on this earth we will be taken to be with Him. We will talk about the tribulation next week.  
The final book of the bible, Revelation tells us that Jesus is coming, how He is coming, and what the condition the world will be in when He comes.  
The word Revelation means “the disclosure of that which was previously hidden or unknown. Rev 3:10 Jesus promised his followers, Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world.”  
The Rapture is phase one, or the first stage of the final event of the end of days. Many people know the end times as the Second coming of Christ.  
We want to be part of the Rapture – everyone of us and all of our families and friends. We don’t want to be left behind and be here, part of the next phase, the tribulation.  
Do you know Jesus? Have you surrendered your life to him? Have you Asked Him to forgive your sins and be your Lord and Savior. He never turns anyone down. Never.  
Pray – invitation – let’s bow our heads and if you would say today. I don’t know Jesus as my Lord and Savior. There hasn’t been a point in time where I have surrendered my life to him and as we talked today about Prophesy and what is coming – I am not sure about eternity. Today you can know for sure. I will lead you in a prayer in a minute and we don’t want you to feel singled out so at Joy Church we all pray together, but if that is you and you are making the decision today – pray after me Dear Jesus, forgive me of my sins, I surrender my life to you, be my Lord and Savior, fill me with your Holy Spirit, I give you my life today. Thank you Jesus for saving me . I want to spend eternity with you. Amen  
Just keep your heads bowed and eyes closed for a minute. If you just prayed that prayer for the first time would you just raise your hand so I can see it, just me, everyone else has their eyes closed. I want to pray for you specifically. Thank you God for those who just gave their lives to you for the first time, those in the room and those online. Thank you for filling them with your spirit and saving them from their sins and empowering them to live their lives fully for you. Amen!  
As we leave today, let's commit to living with joyful expectation and readiness for Christ's return. Let's share the good news, serve others, and live out our faith boldly, knowing that each day brings us closer to His coming." Right now, right here on earth as we wait for Him our job is to tell others about Him. To testify to His goodness, to invite others to hear his word and to know the truth because the truth will set you free!.  
This topic is super important – make it a point to be here each week and bring someone who needs to know.  
We love you and there is nothing you can do about it! The Best is Yet to Come.