



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

The Rapture of The Church

Part 4
November 29, 2020

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1 JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

We ended our study last week looking at why the true church will not and cannot go through the Tribulation period and how, because of this, all believers must be removed from earth. This event is the subject of our study and is called The Rapture. **REV 3:10** teaches us this principle: *"Because you have kept My word of perseverance, I also will keep you from [take you out from] the hour of the testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who live on the earth."*

Now let's look at what the apostle John wrote about The Tribulation in **REV 13:1-8** (The Message Bible): *And the Dragon stood on the shore of the sea. I saw a Beast rising from the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads—on each horn a crown, and each head inscribed with a blasphemous name. The Beast I saw looked like a leopard with bear paws and a lion's mouth. The Dragon turned over its power to it, its throne and great authority. One of the Beast's heads looked as if it had been struck a deathblow, and then healed. The whole earth was agog, gaping at the Beast. They worshiped the Dragon who gave the Beast authority, and they worshiped the Beast, exclaiming, "There's never been anything like the Beast! No one would dare go to war with the Beast!" The Beast had a loud mouth, boastful and blasphemous. It could do anything it wanted for forty-two months. It yelled blasphemies against God, blasphemed his Name, blasphemed his Church, especially those already dwelling with God in Heaven. It was permitted to make war on God's holy people and conquer them. It held absolute sway over all tribes and peoples, tongues and races. Everyone on earth whose name was not written from the world's foundation in the slaughtered Lamb's Book of Life will worship the Beast.* Many people today love the sea, but many ancient Israelites regarded it as

untamed and frightening. In **REV 13:1-8**, John describes seeing a beast coming out from this place identified with evil and chaos. The ancient Greek word – “*thērion*” – is translated beast in this scripture. “*Thērion*” describes a wild, dangerous animal. Because John calls him a beast (not a dragon), this creature represents someone other than Satan (who is represented by the dragon in this verse). The beast is not the dragon (Satan), but he is just like him. This likeness to Satan is just one of the things that identifies this beast with the person popularly known as the Antichrist.

The word Antichrist only appears in the Bible five times in four verses **1 JOH 2:18 (The Message Bible)** is a good example: ***Children, time is just about up. You heard that Antichrist is coming. Well, they're all over the place, antichrists everywhere you look. That's how we know that we're close to the end.*** John was referring to The Rapture here. So, as you can see, the appearance of the Antichrist is an indication that The Rapture is close at hand.

Now, let's look more specifically at The Rapture. Since the church or Royal Family of God is the first spiritual building to be completed, it is resurrected after Our Lord and Savior at The Rapture. It's the second phase which follows the First Resurrection of Christ. Christ is resurrected, ascended, and seated at The Right Hand of the Father as part of the strategic victory of The Angelic Conflict. The church is resurrected later, as part of The Rapture.

As a reminder, The Angelic Conflict is the result of prehistoric creatures (angels) being in opposition to God. It began with the fall of Satan with all angelic creatures having to decide to be with God or with Satan. Satan decided he wanted to be like God, and he convinced one third of all of the angels to go along with him. These fallen angels are also known as demons. The Angelic Conflict refers to the two trials of Satan and the angels that followed him. One trial took place in prehistoric times when Satan committed the first sin in the universe – arrogance (see Teen Trees 12/30/18 to 1/20/19).

The first trial is taught in **ISA 14:12-17 (The Message Bible)**: ***“What a comedown this, O Babylon! Daystar! Son of Dawn [Satan]! Flat on your face in the underworld mud, you, famous for flattening nations! You said to yourself, ‘I’ll climb to heaven. I’ll set my throne over the stars of God. I’ll run the assembly of angels that meets on sacred Mount Zaphon. I’ll climb to the top of the clouds. I’ll take over as King of the Universe!’ But you didn’t make it, did you? Instead of climbing up, you came down—Down with the underground dead, down to the abyss of the Pit. People will stare and muse: ‘Can this be the one Who terrorized earth and its kingdoms, turned earth to a moonscape, Wasted its cities, shut up his prisoners to a living death?’”***

Satan's second trial will occur during human history: ***“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...” (MAT 25:41)*** God, in His Justice, has allowed Satan to appeal his first trial and we, as Christians, are witnesses for God as The Prosecutor. But only mature believers have the capacity to be presented as witnesses. Job is the perfect example of a mature believer! (See “Are You Having A Job Moment?” parts 1-6, February 3 to March 10, ,2019)

As we have studied, we're living in a dispensation (a period of time) called the Church-Age. The simplest way to understand dispensational truth is to contrast the Old Testament with the New Testament. The Old Testament includes the administration of Law. God handed down the ten commandments and the entire Law of Moses. This presented mankind with the responsibility to work to earn blessings. The end result, however, was to demonstrate that man cannot possibly fulfill such a high (perfect) standard. Man can't earn his way into heaven. We must be provided for in another way.

The New Testament includes the administration of Grace. God made provision through His Son, The Lord Jesus Christ, so that mankind could be restored to a relationship with Him. Jesus Christ performed The Perfect Work that mankind was incapable of doing and He paid the penalty for sin on our behalf. Man's responsibility in the Church-Age is to believe in The Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved: **"Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and everyone living in your house will be saved."** (ACTS 16:31 New International Reader's Version)

Let's now look at human history and look at the distinctions between the different groupings which existed – the Gentiles, the Jews, and the church. The Age of the Gentiles is the period of time prior to the calling out of Abraham, when all of humanity was treated as one grouping. All were descendants of Adam. God revealed Himself to various prophets (e.g. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Job).

The Age of the Gentiles was followed by The Age of the Jews. To understand this dispensation, let's look at **GEN. 12:1-5 (New International Reader's Version):** ***The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's family. Go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation. And I will bless you. I will make your name great. You will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you. I will put a curse on anyone who puts a curse on you. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you." So Abram went, just as the Lord had told him. Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Harran. He took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot. They took all the people and possessions they had acquired in Harran. They started out for the land of Canaan. And they arrived there.*** Following the calling out of Abraham, described in this verse, a distinction began to be drawn within humanity. Within the descendants of Adam, a particular group is called out that are the descendants of Abraham. A division is drawn between Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). It is to the Jews that God reveals Himself (e.g. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the prophets, etc.). This doesn't mean that God disregarded or ignored the Gentiles during those thousands of years – there are many notable Gentiles to be found throughout the Old Testament. The significance, though, is that the specific revelations, and the revealed Scriptures were given primarily to the Jews.

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