



# MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

SERMON NOTES | VOLUME 4

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## THE RAPTURE #1

### RECAP

So many questions surround the end of this age. In particular, a lot of people don't fully understand the rapture of the church. When will it happen? What exactly should we expect? These are questions that are important to address, for the rapture of the church is the next mystery of God's kingdom that we are going to study. Yes, the rapture is coming. Yes, you can be a part of the rapture—and yes, it's coming soon!

### DIVE DEEPER

The end of this world is coming. That's not a doomsday statement. That's a statement based on the Bible. The end of this age is coming close. The signs God has given us are pointing to the truth that the next steps in God's eternal plan will soon be unfolding. One of those next steps is the rapture. The rapture is the moment Christians leave this temporal world behind. We will step into eternity and meet our Lord and Savior. It's the moment where the pain of this world truly moves behind us and we enter into the eternal ages to come.

You can look for, expect, and hope for this moment. You can cultivate your expectation of Jesus' soon return. When exactly will it happen? Well, we can't know an exact day or time, but we can learn about the season in which it will take place—and everything is pointing to that season being right now!

Throughout the Word, we see prophecies and parallels that show us after Jesus is on this earth the first time, around two thousand years will pass. Those two thousand years are part of the church age. That is when the church will flourish on this earth, spreading the good news of the Gospel around the world. Toward the end of that two thousand years or so, that's when Jesus will return.

Soon, we will hear the trump and the shout and know that we are going up in the air to meet our Lord!

### READ MORE

1 Corinthians 15:51–57 KJV

*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Titus 2:13 KJV

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

2 Peter 3:8 KJV

*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

Matthew 24: 3–13 KJV

*And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. What signs of the end times stand out to you the most right now?
2. What excites you the most about the rapture?
3. Why do you think God has kept the time and day of the rapture hidden?

## THE RAPTURE #2

### RECAP

What happens after this life? The Bible has provided us with a lot of information about what eternity holds in store for Christians. Eternity begins when this life ends. The only exception is if you are taken up in the rapture of the church. What will that look like? How should it affect your life today? The rapture of the church doesn't have to be a mystery. Throughout eternity, the body of Christ will rule and reign with Jesus over the vastness of universal creation—and that all starts with the rapture of the Church! Stir your expectation for big things lie ahead for those who follow Christ!

### DIVE DEEPER

We cannot live eternally in the body that we are in. The corruption of this world cannot live in the eternal ages to come. However, God can—and will!—provide His church with glorified bodies to accomplish the purposes He has for us throughout eternity.

What will we do throughout eternity? The body of Christ will rule and reign with Jesus over all universal creation. We will be equipped to do this with our glorified bodies, which will come in the rapture of the church. Jesus' post-resurrection body was glorified. With it, Jesus could both eat with His friends and He could walk through walls! The corruptible parts of our bodies will be set aside for the incorruptible.

You see, this earth is our bootcamp for the eternal ages to come. We are learning how to obey the Lord and follow His leading and love other people without condition. We are learning to hear God's voice. These lessons are preparing us to serve Him throughout eternity.

Let these glimpses of eternity motivate you to strengthen your spirit and let the voice of God become clearer in your heart and head. Let your thinking expand beyond the needs of today and consider your future serving Jesus. Eternity will be better than we can ever imagine—and we are part of the generation that will usher in this new end of the age!

### READ MORE

1 Corinthians 15:51–57 KJV

*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

#### 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 KJV

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. What excites you most about eternity with Jesus?
2. How do glimpses of heaven and eternity provide us with good reasons to serve God here on this earth?
3. What can you do today to prepare for a future serving Jesus?

## THE RAPTURE #3

### RECAP

Who will be going to heaven in the rapture of the church? That is a great question that everyone in the body of Christ should be able to answer in their own lives, for what we expect God to do in the coming age matters! Now, what should people do who miss the rapture? This is also good to consider, for the rapture leads directly into seven years of tribulation here on this earth, and persecution of those who believe in God will occur.

### DIVE DEEPER

As children of our Heavenly Father, we have a great hope and expectation that we will one day be with our Lord. After a trump and a shout, we will meet Him in the air before He brings us to heaven.

Let your heart be stirred knowing that Jesus is bringing all who believe that they will be taken up in the rapture to be with him in heaven prior to the next dispensation of time: the Tribulation.

For those left behind, they should get away from the cities. They should band together with like-minded people and get away from any metroplex. There will be a need to be self-sufficient throughout the tribulation.

One reason this is true is that people will be martyred for their faith during the Tribulation. Living self-sufficiently will put you farther away from their notice and able to minister to those who need Jesus!

### READ MORE

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 KJV

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

#### Revelation 7:9 KJV

*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 7:13-14 KJV

*And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

#### Proverbs 22:3 KJV

*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. What can you do today to prepare for the rapture?
2. Why does it matter what we believe?
3. Are you getting excited about being taken up to heaven after a trump and a shout? Praise God!



## THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL

### RECAP

“All Israel shall be saved.” These words come directly from Romans chapter 11. What do they mean? How should they affect our relationship with Israel? We will not always understand everything in the Bible. In fact, we will have questions about what the Bible means, particularly in passages like this. How can all Israel be saved if they have been blinded to the truth? That’s why we should not use questions as the basis for our beliefs, but turn to the Word. Believe what it says first. Trust God that He will handle the things you don’t understand.

### DIVE DEEPER

Paul writes a lot about Israel in his letter to the Romans. He tells us that Israel’s eyes have been blinded to see the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. God did this so that the Gospel could be opened up to the Gentiles, which includes us. We would not be part of God’s kingdom if Israel had always believed that Jesus is the Son of God.

So if God blinds Israel to the truth, does that mean they are destined to hell? No. That’s why Paul states that all Israel shall be saved. That means redemption isn’t peculiar to our New Testament covenant. Jews who believe in their God-given, everlasting, Old Testament covenant will be saved.

This doesn’t mean that they are saved outside of knowing that Jesus is the Son of God and it doesn’t mean that we are to be the ones who bring the Gospel to the Jews. God will take care of them seeing and understanding the truth about Jesus in order to be saved. Their covenant with God is everlasting, so He will find a way to bring them the truth they need to know about Jesus. Our job isn’t to determine how God does His job. Our job is to believe that He will save Israel, and that they have a covenant with God that has not been wiped out or changed because of our covenant with Him.

God told Abraham that those who bless Israel will be blessed. This particular blessing isn’t tied to a covenant with God but will be given to anyone who blesses Israel. That means our focus should not be salvation of the Jews, but our focus should be on blessing them!

### READ MORE

Genesis 12:1–3 KJV

*Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will*

*make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

#### Romans 11:1–36 KJV

*I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.*

*Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.*

*I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.*

*Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still*

*in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*

*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

*For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

*For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

## **DISCUSSION PROMPTS**

1. Have you ever considered Israel and your relationship to it?
2. Why does the Jews' covenant with God matter to us today?
3. What's one way you can bless Israel?
4. How can we be vocal supporters of Israel as a church and individually?

## ONE FLESH—ONE MARRIAGE

### RECAP

God created humanity to have dominion here on this earth, but individuals weren't intended to have dominion alone. God created male and female to come together through marriage to become one flesh. In that union, God's intended characteristics for humankind unite. Male and female work together to have authority and dominion on this earth; it's good to better understand this mystery of a godly, one-flesh marriage.

### DIVE DEEPER

The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus about marriage, and he specifically noted that marriage between a male and a female mirrors the relationship with Christ and the church. So what does that mean? Well, the degree to which you become one flesh in your marriage defines the degree to which you can become one flesh with the Lord.

You see, God has a position for male and female within a relationship. Both are equal partners and equally valuable. When a decision comes where both spouses are not in agreement, the husband is ultimately the one whom God has given the final authority in that area. The goal, however, should be that decisions can be agreed upon in unity.

This unified place comes when both spouses choose to love each other without condition. Now, if that feels impossible to you, know that you can bring your spouse up to the level where you wish your spouse would be through your expectation. If you only expect your spouse to act the same way that he or she has always acted, nothing will change. If you, however, choose to pray for your spouse, and then expect your spouse to become all God has called them to be, your spouse will be drawn to become that person.

Remember that choosing to love your spouse without condition is what makes a marriage work well!

### READ MORE

Genesis 1:27–28 KJV

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion*

*over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

#### Genesis 2:20–24 KJV

*And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

#### Ephesians 5:22–33 KJV

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

*So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. If you are married, how is your marriage right now? If you aren't married, what qualities does this message encourage you to look for in a spouse?
2. Have you seen how your expectations of the people in your life can set the stage for them to stay where they are or become a better person?
3. What is the difference between equality and submission within a marriage?

## ONE FLESH—CHRIST

### RECAP

There's a unique connection between the mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory and the mystery of a one-flesh marriage. We see in Ephesians chapter 5 that a one-flesh marriage between a husband and a wife mirrors the relationship between Christ and the church. That means just as two spouses grow to become one flesh within a godly marriage, we can become one flesh with Christ. When this is true and Christ is evident within you, the world sees Christ through your actions and your deeds.

### DIVE DEEPER

When you are saved, you are immediately brought into the kingdom of God. Beyond that, you have a choice. You can choose to grow in your relationship with Christ and become more and more like Him. You can also choose to let your flesh rule and ignore the leadings of the Spirit.

In which of these scenarios will the world see Christ in you?

The first one, of course! When we choose to change our ways and follow Christ, the world notices something different about us. Christ becomes our hope! He becomes our future, our expectation. We start to see things through His way of thinking and operate with Bible-based thought patterns. We confidently expect that God will show up in the direst of circumstances and deal with whatever issue we're facing. There's no room for condemnation to undermine this expectation when you prioritize God in your life.

So how does this happen? Christ formed in you is a product of prayer. You can get beyond the dictates of the flesh through prayer and allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through you. You can also pray that Christ would be formed in others. When Christ is formed in you, that's when you will make a spiritual difference in this world.

### READ MORE:

Ephesians 5:31–32 KJV

*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

#### Romans 7:15–25 KJV

*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

#### Romans 8:1–6 KJV

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

#### Romans 8:26 TPT

*And in a similar way, the Holy Spirit takes hold of us in our human frailty to empower us in our weakness. For example, at times we don't even know how to pray, or know the best things to ask for. But the Holy Spirit rises up within us to super-intercede on our behalf, pleading to God with emotional sighs too deep for words.*



## DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. How do our words and our actions create a picture of who Christ is to those who don't know Him?
2. When facing difficulty, how does Christ in us make a difference in our perspective?
3. How can praying in the Spirit dramatically impact our lives and the lives of the people around us?
4. When Christ lives in us, how do our desires change?