

## Later Than It Has Ever Been

### Introduction

Welcome and Intro June 1974...summer band...Atwell Jr High School...Home of the Mighty Archers I found myself....clearly against my will...in the trumpet and horn section...in...of all places...the band I knew that I was out of place...You see I was on the football team The band in my mind only existed so that we could go to the bathroom at halftime

I came from a very musical family...a tradition of excellence My brother was first chair in the clarinet...I thought it was first come first serve...pick any chair you want My Sister was all city...all state...all country...all world in count them 5 instruments

Yet I was clearly a mutant.... I failed the recorder...the recorder in 3rd grade Was dismissed on a mercy clause from my first piano lesson Failed guitar...failed choir...

Yet there I was...the first day of summer band practice.... Sitting in the trumpet section...Holding of all things...a trombone I might have been a musical mutant...but I was pretty smart...or so I thought Mom and Dad...made me go to band camp that summer So I told the band director I could play the trombone

I figured I would just sit with them...and when the anticipated time came I would fake it..I could move my horn by watching the guy next to me move his

For a little while...it worked... I walked around that first day...telling everyone...I could play the trombone I looked like I was part of the band.... Some of the girls thought it was cool that a football player...had a softer musical side For a few minutes this actually seemed to work

But then it came time....and the trumpets blew... I will not bore you with the details of my band failure... But lets just say...when the trumpets blew...everyone knew I was not ready The Sound of the Trumpet....changed everything. When the Trumpet Sounded....my charade ended

There are a lot of parallels.... Between my experiences with the Might Atwell Archer Band and a day...on God's Prophetic Calendar...an Appointed Time Yet to Come When the trumpet sounds...and everything changes

There are Seven Jewish Feasts. We are not commanded to follow them, but we are to pay attention to their prophetic significance.

So let's look at the seven Jewish Feasts in the Bible designated by God Himself

When we think of feasts we think of food...but God's term really means a time appointed for us to be together.

The entire story of the Bible is all about God wanting a relationship with His creation. He created us in His own image. He designed us to commune with Him. To Share Life with Him. To share His creation with Him.

When that relationship broke because of Sin....God set in motion multiple reminders that our separation would only be temporary. He wanted to make sure that we knew that one day all would be restored. He would be our God and we would be His people....forever. But that day...is a day yet to come.

So in the meantime, God wanted to make sure that His Children knew they would one day come home. He promised it through the Prophets....Revealed it in Jesus...and manifests it in us through the Holy Spirit. We are His and He is ours.

For those in the Old Testament He reminded us that the Messiah to come would restore our relationship with Him. There was an appointed time for the Messiah to come. There is an appointed time for Jesus to return. Specific Holy Days ordained by God...promised by God....and are certain because of God. His love is displayed in many ways...but one of them was that He ordained the feasts...The Feast of The Lord...His feasts...Each one containing a promise. Pointing to a moment.

Galatians 4:4–5 (ESV) 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The feasts are the shadow....Jesus is the fulfillment.

For those in the Old Testament....4 Spring Feasts....Beginning with the Passover.

For those in the New Testament....3 Additional feasts....ending with the Feast of Tabernacles. The Final feast where we all share our eternal home together.

Appointed Times Seven Feasts 4 Fall..3 Spring All tell a complete story of the Messiah  
Spring feasts happened in Jesus' First Coming to Earth Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits and Weeks  
Fall feasts will happen at His second coming Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles

Across the ages, God has sought after the People of Israel... In order to bless them and through them bless others He gave Israel a sacred trust The bear His name The manifest His redemptive plan to the world That redemptive plan...is outlined in 7 feasts

Ultimately they provide a Biblical and Historical foundation for faith in Jesus.

There are seven feasts in the Bible. Four of them occur in the Spring and then there is a long summer during which there are no feasts and then in the Fall the final three feasts occur. God outlines all of these feasts in Lev 23. With each Spring Feast we clearly see major events in Jesus' life

foreshadowed and then fulfilled. Each Spring Feast first foreshadowed and then actually occurred in Jesus' life.

The Spring Feasts are Passover...fulfilled when Jesus the lamb of God was sacrificed and His blood was a covering for those who believed so that death would pass over. Passover, foreshadowed and then was fulfilled at the Cross. The next was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Jesus the Bread of Life, born in the city of Bread Bethlehem, the One with no leaven...no sin.. was hurriedly placed in the tomb. The Third Feast is the Feast of Firstfruits. Fulfilled on the day that Jesus walked out of the tomb and was the First Fruit of those who would conquer death. The Fourth Feast occurred 50 Days later. The Feast that we call Pentecost (actually Feast of Weeks ) which was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit descended upon those in the upper room.

We move into the Fall feasts The Three Remaining Feasts... Feast of Trumpets...Day of Atonement...Feast of Tabernacles

These 3 Fall Feasts point to events...foreshadow what is to come... in the life of the Messiah...Jesus By studying these feasts....we can paint a picture of the future... Just like the Jewish nation could use the Spring Feasts to point to Jesus' first coming. We can study the Fall feasts and begin to understand His Second Coming Jesus wanted to make sure we knew what in the world is going on.

Jesus said we should be able to read the signs There are signs everywhere....in the heavens....on earth....among people... In the hearts of people... there are signs in the Bible... Through the OT prophets The Red Letters of Jesus Himself... And the promptings of the Holy Spirit

I heard a story once of a little girl.... Daddy It is later than it has ever been before! That is how I approach those comments.... It is later than it has ever been in the prophetic clock Jesus warned us...not to be complacent. So let me share with you some signs...that should be a wake up call for us. A wake up call for all of us about the prophetic timing of the Fall Feasts..

Let me share with you some of the things God told us would happen... Things visible in our world...that shout to us... Jesus' return is very near. TIME OUT>>>> I know...It is at this point the rumblings start... "Every generation has thought He was coming back very soon..." Crazy people have even tried to predict the date....

But when it comes to the Fall Feasts...the ones yet to come... We have other signs...the fulfillment of prophecy.. Signs we can see...all around us... The predictions and truths of the Bible....being played out Right in front of us...in Headlines...on TV and in newsfeeds

Knowledge will increase without rest. We will have a cashless society based on microchips. A Rise in the interest of the Occult. Instant visual communication around the world. Marked Increase in Natural disasters, wars and pandemics. Christian Martyrdom (Charlie Kirk) will increase. There will be a lack of concern for the value of life. Rise in Spiritualism and New Age Religions. People will worship creation and not the creator. Disregard for the sanctity of marriage. World events will center around Jerusalem.

Israel will be its own independent nation. There will be fear and a preoccupation with the end of the world. There will be moral decline. Sexual confusion, rejection of family

and marriage, increase in practice and acceptance of perverted sexual relationships. Scoffers will be very popular and bring doubt to the masses. People will doubt the creation story. People will doubt Noah's story. There will be a complete rejection of moral truth. There will be a rejection of God and His truth. There will be worldwide explosion of antisemitism.

There are also prophecies of a one world government. One world military. One World Religion. Rebirth of the Old Roman Empire. An army of 20 million from East China. World Islamic armies turn against Israel. Alliances form between China, Russia, Turkey and other world powers. and that is just the top 25 or so.

All of that is in the Bible? Yep you should really read it...soon...and watch our previous series, What in the World is Going On?

Our world today is almost perfectly described in writings from over 2000 years ago. Hundreds of prophecies...each one correct. Not one wrong yet.

There is no way you can truly study this book... With an open mind... And deny that God wrote it. God went to great extremes to make sure that His followers would know What in the world is going on

Matthew 24:36–44 (ESV) 36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

No one knows the day and hour...only the Father

Jesus said that we should know the lesson of the Fig Tree. We should recognize the season... The Appointed Time

Matthew 24:32–33 (ESV) 32 “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

People will scoff.... But it is later than its ever been. Jesus said..He who has ears..let Him hear He said it would be like in the Days of Noah People scoffing and leading others astray.. While the sprinkles turned to showers I firmly believe...the waters of prophecy are sprinkling on us. Jesus is very near...at the very gates And we will see...that the Fall Feasts Add huge pieces to the puzzle..about Jesus' Second Coming

In a previous series, I covered in detail the 7 Feasts of the Lord and what they mean to prophecy. I encourage you to go back and watch them...the Series was called Appointed Times. But today we are just going to look at the first Fall feast....the next one to be fulfilled...The Feast of Trumpets.

Before we dive into the Fall Feasts... Let's consider the time between the Spring Feasts and the Fall Feasts...IMAGE 2 LEAVE UP PLEASE

As we have discussed....Feasts represented God dealing with the Jewish People as a nation Major encounters between God and His covenant People But during the long hot summer months...there were no feasts..

These summer months painted a prophetic picture for the Jewish People.... Of a time when God would not be dealing with them on a national basis. They had intimate fellowship with God....Passover....Unleavened Bread...Firstfruits...and Weeks....They have traveled to Jerusalem twice so far...almost back to back....The Barley Harvest...The Wheat Harvest....and now....nothing.

These three long summer months where there is no feast...are prophetically significant. We are living in them now.

It is the time prophetically between the First Coming of Jesus and the Second. A time when God would be turning away from the Jewish Nation for a while...A time when He is grafting in the Gentiles to the vine. Some call the time that we are living in right now...the Church Period or The Time of the Gentiles.

It is a time of God primarily calling the Gentiles into His Kingdom When the full harvest of Gentiles is complete...this era ends...

But on a future day...the day foretold by the Fall Feasts... The trumpet will sound...the Gentile period will close..... And God's attention will once again turn to the Jewish Nation As He fulfils the Appointed Times of the Fall Feasts

The Three Fall Feasts.... Like the 4 Spring Feasts....foreshadow major prophetic events... In the life of Messiah Jesus.

Lets take a broad overview of these Three Fall Feasts.

The First Fall Feast is the Feast of Trumpets. The trumpet sounds a wakeup call for Repentance. It signifies the first day of the month and sets the date for the Day of Atonment 10 days later.

The Day of Atonement. It is the Holiest Day of the Year. They have had ten days to think about and atone for their sins....Now the High Priest enters the Holy Of Holies to atone for those sins of the Jewish People. It prophetically points to the day when the Jews return to Jesus.

The Third Fall feast and final feast of the Year is the Feast of Tabernacles. When the work is done...The Harvest is over and everyone comes together to celebrate and live in tents. Prophetically it is the ingathering of all believers both Jewish and Gentile forever.

So I have outlined the entire prophetic picture given to us in the Appointed Times.

Passover= the Lamb of God is sacrificed for the sins of the world.

Unleavened Bread...He is sinless, buried and taken away.

First Fruits...He is risen and has overcome death.

Weeks...The arrival of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the mission of the new covenant and ushering in the Time of the Gentiles.

Trumpets...the Trumpet sounds...I believe the Rapture occurs. The Gentile period is over....The focus turn back to the Jewish People. Prophetically the Jews begin to realize the depth of their sins and begin to turn to Jesus. I also believe another trumpet will sound at Jesus' Second coming later after the rapture....we will cover all of this.

Day of Atonement...The Jews come back to Jesus...The repent and acknowledge Him as Messiah.

Feast of Tabernacles...The Gentile and Jewish Harvests are over. Everyone comes together to celebrate and live together.

So today we continue with the Feast of Trumpets

Leviticus 23:23–25 (ESV) The Feast of Trumpets 23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.”

Numbers 29:1 (ESV) Offerings for the Feast of Trumpets 29 “On the first day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a day for you to blow the trumpets,

The Blowing of the Shofar PHOTO SHOFAR Shofar blows Occurred at various times and for various reasons A call to assembly.....command for Israel to move out.... A Call to war....Preparation for an announcement A warning of judgment to come....a call to celebrate or worship Announcement of the arrival of a wedding party Whenever the trumpet blows..God's People are to stop and take notice

The Jewish author Ari Goldman, in his book Being Jewish, says, “... the sound of the shofar, the ram’s horn ... is a kind of spiritual alarm clock for the soul”

This Feast was very unique

1. It occurred in darkness

Each new month began with the new moon New Moon Picture 1 New Moon Picture 2

Out of darkness came a sliver of light 2 or more Priests had to agree that the New Moon had Come Sometimes it was hard to tell...other times clouds were an issue Each month the Priests would make a short blast from the Shofar to let people know the new month had started

But on the Last month of the year...the 7<sup>th</sup> Month They made a long and loud blast of the Shofar... To let everyone know...The light had penetrated the darkness And the Feast of Trumpets was beginning...A Holy Sabbath day

Every other feast occurred in the light...Photo 3 MOONS

## 2. No one knew exactly which day it would be

They were never sure...It was usually one of 2 days. The new moon always came 29.5 days after the last new moon It could be the 29<sup>th</sup> it could be the 30<sup>th</sup>

Those who lived in Jerusalem celebrate one day..because they could hear the shofar But those living outside of Jerusalem.. Were never quite sure when the holiday actually started

Those in other nations celebrated 2 days to make sure they got the right day The Feast of Trumpets became known as "The Day no one knows for sure"

## 3. It was a Sabbath...a Holy Day... but with no preparation day

They never knew when the actual day was going to be They knew the season...they knew within a few days... But they did not know the exact day and time

So they had to be ready...they had to prepare for this day in advance Each day of the month prior...after the morning prayers... The Rabbi would blow a short blast on the shofar It served as a call to repentance and a solemn reminder That the Holiest Days of the Jewish Year are approaching

So when we think of the Feast of Trumpets... Light breaking through darkness Expected...but time not certain No preparation day...had to stay ready Waiting for the trumpet blast

The Trumpet is a warning...a wake up call We are to be watchmen...paying attention

The Three Fall Feasts signal Jesus' Second Coming

The next event on our prophetic calendar is the shout of the trumpet

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (ESV) 16 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. 17 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. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 (ESV) 51 Behold! I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Let me share with you... Why so many, including myself, believe..... That there is strong Biblical support for the Rapture occurring at the Feast of Trumpets

1. All 4 Spring Feasts were filled specifically and intentionally in the Life of Jesus

It is reasonable to assume that the Fall feasts will follow suit It seems unlikely that God would appoint 7 times... With only the first 4 filled by the Messiah

2. The Phrase "on the day that no one knows" commonly referred to The Feast of Trumpets

Matthew 24:36–44 (ESV) 36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

3. While no one knows the exact day, time and year Paul tells us that the Day of the Lord should not surprise us

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 (ESV) 5 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

Paul said that Christ Followers should not be surprised..... Yet Jesus said...No one knows the day and time..only my Father

To understand completely What Jesus was saying... We need to better understand Jewish Wedding Feasts.

The phrase " No one knows the Day only my Father" Was the expected response when a Groom was asked When will your wedding be?

When a Groom became engaged to His Bride... He came to her and gave her a gift That gift was to sustain and provide for her while he as away....Then he would go away but he promised to return as soon as the Father said it was ok. He would leave to go to his father's house And build an addition to the home...where they could live Only his father could decide when the preparations were complete.

When everything was done and the Father said it was time The Groomsmen would assemble and lead the Groom to go get His bride

As they went through the streets...usually at night...to surprise the Bride They blew the ram's horn to tell the whole town that the Groom was coming And everyone should begin to get ready for the wedding.

These processions were usually in the dark of the night I suspect because the groom couldn't wait... So the Bride had bridegrooms who were to stand ready.. With lamps to light the way back to the Bride's new home The Bride was swept away by the wedding party To be taken to her Fiance for the wedding



The Wedding Ceremony was a great celebration Once they were married...the Groom would steal away the Bride And they would consummate their marriage and celebrate a honeymoon for 7 Days Then they would return to join the celebration on the last day.

Jesus constantly uses marriage language... To speak about His relationship with His followers He is the Groom...His followers the church...His bride They ask about the end times... He says No one knows the day...only my Father

He tells them He is going away To prepare a room for them in His Father's House He promises to return when everything is complete On a day that no one knows

He warns them to stay ready for his return He tells them that they will receive a gift He sends His Bride...His church... the Gift of the Holy Spirit.. A gift that will sustain them and provided for them until His return

His return is to be signalled by the blowing of the trumpets His bride..the church..His followers.. Will be swept away to be taken to Him For a great wedding ceremony He repetitively warns that this moment will come with surprise "Like a thief in the night"

After the rapture the bride is taken away for 7 Days On a honeymoon. Those 7 Days are what I believe the 7 years of Tribulation While followers are away with Jesus... The world will be in a time of tribulation Jesus returns at the end...to rescue Israel, and defeat Satan and his armies

With that context...listen to Jesus' parable Jesus told this parable in the middle of his discussion about recognizing end times

Matthew 25:1–4 (ESV) 25 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

Three main characters... Jesus the Bridegroom One group on prepared for the groom They were anticipating His return They not only had oil...they had extra oil... Just in case Another group not prepared for the groom They looked like believers...acted that way on the outside Claimed to be believers....may worship like believers... They are not truly prepared

Note that they were all virgins Usually 12-20 years old.. Bridesmaid in Jewish culture were not yet married.. They had one function in the wedding celebration... They were to be prepared for anything...to give the Bride whatever she needed. But their primary job was to light the way for the wedding processional

And they all looked prepared They all thought that they would be at the wedding One group knew their responsibility, prepared for it, and were anticipating it. The other group took shortcuts, did things their way, and weren't prepared

Matthew 25:5–9 (ESV) 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the

wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.'

The Bridegroom was delayed...all slept The Groom came in the night unexpected... All 10 are surprised... 5 awoke prepared...5 did not Not all were ready to come out and meet the Bridegroom

Those that were not prepared... Tried to use the preparations of others But without success.

As Christians we share generously with one another... But there is one thing we are unable to share Our own preparations for the coming of the Kingdom Each believer must stand or fall based on their own preparation and resources

Matthew 25:10–13 (ESV) 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Those who were ready went to the wedding Those who were not...were left behind  
Note that there is a door...and it will close "I do not know you"

Ok so lets get this right. One day...in a blink of an eye....people are going to just vanish....one minute here...next minute gone. Their clothes crumpled on the floor. No warning signs, No aura, just gone. And it will only be believers...right?

Think about what you are saying. Airplanes fall from the sky, surgeries stop mid cut, cars without drivers, family members gone. No explanation. No understanding. People just vanished.

According to a 2004 Newsweek Poll, 55% of Americans believe that the faithful will be taken up to Heaven in the Rapture. Today that number is supposedly 40%. Worldwide the number is about 12%. So why is there disagreement? Where does the idea of a rapture come from?

A recent poll of 1000 Senior Pastors indicate that 1 in 4 do not believe in a literal rapture. 1% believe the rapture has already happened and 4%....wait for it....say that they have no idea. No one surveyed me, but I am stunned how easily pastors dismiss the Word of God.

So where does this crazy idea come from? Did people just dream it up? Wishful thinking to get us out of sinful world? A grasp for hope of being rescued from this world?

1 Corinthians 15:50–51 (ESV) — 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

Paul is speaking to the Brothers- believers. He is saying that our bodies, our flesh, is dying away....it is full of disease and under the curse of sin...it has death as its destination. What is dying cannot inherit what is eternal.

In other words, we cannot go to heaven in our fallen state or our fallen bodies. When we accepted Jesus as our savior, we received the Holy Spirit and are now eternal spiritually. But our bodies are destined for the grave.

Paul says, I am going to tell you a mystery. A mystery Biblically is not a riddle and it is not something that you can figure out on your own. In the Biblical sense, a mystery is simply a thing to be understood by spiritual, rather than by merely human perception. Paul will tell the Corinthian Christians something they could not have known by reason or research. They could not have known this unless God revealed it to them.

Then he says we shall not all sleep. Sleep was a word used by Christians to denote those who have died as believers. Their soul went to heaven to be with Jesus, but their bodies are asleep. They are waiting to be awoken by Jesus when He returns. Paul is telling them that not all of us are going to die. We shall not all sleep.

There is no way we could know this if God had not revealed it to us. We can't figure this out on our own. It takes Supernatural revelation- thus I tell you a mystery.

You can imagine...Paul now has their full attention. People are being martyred....every believer at that time must have thought that their destiny was martyrdom. Death was almost expected. And then Paul says....there will be a final generation who will be transformed into their resurrection bodies before they ever face death.

You can almost hear them now....How is that going to happen?

1 Corinthians 15:52 (ESV) — 52 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.

In a split second....as fast a blink.....the last trumpet will sound....and the dead will be raised and other believers will be changed.

It will occur instantaneously in a flash....it will be unobservable to the human eye.

There will come a day when in God's eternal plan, He gives those dead in the Lord their resurrection bodies, and then in an instant He gathers all His people to meet Jesus in the air. All the redeemed on the earth at that time will rise up to meet the Lord in the clouds, and will receive their resurrection bodies.

Ok so lets make sure we don't get confused here. Those who are in Christ....those who have surrendered their lives to Christ. Those who have heard what Jesus did on the cross and accepted His sacrifice in their place. These are thus New Testament Believers.

Many of them have died...or fallen asleep.... Their life is not over they are just living in a new state. Their Spirit or Soul is with Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:6–8 (NASB95) — 6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight— 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Paul is clear that when our Spirit exits our human body we are instantaneously with the Lord. Either the present dead in Christ are with the Lord in a spiritual body, awaiting their final resurrection body; or because of the nature of timeless eternity, they have received their resurrection bodies already because they live in the eternal “now.”

Those who have died in Christ...will rise first. We see this further explained by Paul in a letter that he wrote to the Thessalonians. They were concerned about loved ones who loved Jesus but have died. They needed to know what happens to them. They needed hope

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (ESV) — 13 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.

Same context...what is going to happen?

1 Thessalonians 4:14 (ESV) — 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Paul reiterates that those who have died are with Jesus. For those who believe, to be separate from the body is to be present with Jesus. Paul says that there will be a day when Jesus along with all the believers who have died will come back.

The Thessalonians were concerned that when they died their loved ones may not be there to receive them. They thought that they may be in some kind of suspended spiritual state...but Paul says no. they are coming back and will be with Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 (ESV) — 15 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.

Paul says we declare to you a word from the Lord. In other words this is a mystery...a supernatural revelation from God...it is not what we think will happen or what we hope will happen....God has specifically revealed this to us.

He addresses two groups...those who have died and those who are alive on that day. Those who have died will be with Jesus and those who are alive will go to be with Jesus. And if we are alive at that time we will go after those who have fallen asleep.

So you can almost hear them again...How is that going to happen?

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (ESV) — 16 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.

Note the Lord will descend from Heaven with the voice of an archangel and the sound of the trumpet. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:17–18 (ESV) — 17 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. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

We who are alive...will be caught up. The word used in greek was Harpazo (Hapr-AH-zo) it means to snatch away, to seize away....

So word Rapture is not found in the ancient Greek Bible...at least until the Bible was translated into Latin. It wasn't until about 405AD that the Bible was translated into Latin. In this translation of the Bible called the Vulgate the word harpazo is rapturus...where we get the term rapture.

Notice that Jesus descended from Heaven but note where He is located....not on earth...not on the Mount of Olives as promised....but rather in the clouds.

Simply stated, the Rapture of the church, which is the first phase of Christ's coming, is the intersection of two events: the resurrection of the dead, specifically only believers, and the transformation of living believers. They will all be immediately together in Jesus' glorious presence,

When we speak of Jesus's Second Coming we are really talking about one event that happens in two phases. In both cases, Jesus will descend from Heaven. The Rapture is the first phase where Jesus will descend to the clouds. The second phase is the literal return of Jesus to earth...This second phase will occur at the end of the tribulation period when Jesus returns physically to earth, stands on the Mount of Olives and leads His army to destroy the Antichrist at Armageddon.

When the Rapture occurs, Jesus will descend from heaven, accompanied by the perfected spirits of believers who have died, now glorified, and clothed with their new bodies.

At the Rapture the soul and body, which “falls asleep” at death, will be reunited. The separation of body from spirit will be forever reversed. According to our verse, the Lord will bring the perfected spirit of each believer from heaven when He comes, and the body of each believer will be raised up incorruptible, immortal, and imperishable to meet his or her spirit in the air and be united forever.

To better understand this, lets make sure that we understand death. Death in the Bible always means separation and never annihilation. People when they die do not cease to exist. Their spirits go on.

The Rapture will occur in a split second. Suddenly, corpses all over the world will be raised and reunited with perfected spirits, and living believers everywhere will be caught up to heaven and transformed body, soul, and spirit. The Rapture will shock the world. It will change everything.

Crazy right? Many people find this idea- the instant disappearance of millions of people- difficult to accept. You will hear them say...nothing like that has ever happened before.

We speak all the time about foreshadowing in the Bible....How God gives us a glimpse of things that are like future events....For example I believe Hitler is a foreshadowing of the Antichrist...World leader, came from nowhere, thought he was a god, hated the Jews....The entire Old Testament is a foreshadowing of Jesus

So it is not surprising that we see glimpses of the rapture in Scripture...let me show you a few...

Genesis 5:24 (ESV) — 24 Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

2 Kings 2:10–11 (ESV) — Elijah speaking.....10 And he said, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.” 11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Speaking of Jesus and His ascension into Heaven..

Revelation 12:5–6 (ESV) — 5 She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, 6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days...

So by studying these episodes that foreshadow the rapture....we can know three things about how to look at the final rapture of the Church.

1) Literal. The Rapture of the church won't be a symbolic event. Given the literal fulfillment for the six raptures that have occurred, we can know the final, future one will be literally fulfilled as well.

2) Physical Transfer. In each of the historical raptures, people were physically transferred from one location to another. Five of the six involved a transfer from earth to heaven. Philip was moved from one place on earth to another.

3) Sudden. All of the historical raptures happened suddenly with little warning. Enoch is a perfect example. He was there and then “he was not.” This will be the case with the Rapture of the church.

Ok Enoch seems to have been in some form raptured. Elijah was caught up to heaven and later appeared with Moses to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Note that Elijah is in many ways a foreshadowing of our rapture. He did not die, He was caught up in Spirit to heaven. He appears in bodily form with Jesus and Moses as witnessed by Peter, James and John.

Paul spoke of the rapture to those who were worried about loved ones who had died. Jesus, Himself, was taken up to heaven and was the first fruit of the resurrection.

But did Jesus talk about the rapture at all? I mean something this unusual....this mystery Paul called it...Surely such an important event was foretold by Jesus too right?

The concept of believers being caught up to heaven without dying was a brand-new truth. It was a mystery. It was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but it was hidden in God until he revealed it through Paul. The Lord unveiled more details of His glorious mystery through Paul: an entire generation of

believers will be instantly transformed without tasting physical death and Yes, Jesus spoke specifically about it.

Matthew 24:36–44 (ESV) — 36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. 42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Two people then one. The Greek word here means to be taken into fellowship. Note that there were two...one was taken...and only one is left. Jesus says that just as in the day of Noah....validating by the way the historical truth of the Ark....but noting that they were unaware until it happened. Also note that Jesus is very specific here. The rapture is for all believers. Note two men in the field....Two women grinding at the mill.....very unusual to make a specific statement about women, but that is who Jesus is.

Millions of believers will be clothed in their new, glorified bodies in the time it takes to blink one's eye. This is the thrilling mystery of the Rapture. We may be the terminal generation. We may be the ones who experience this breathtaking event! Think what it would be for all eternity to be part of the generation that never experienced the sting of death.

Those who don't know Him, who don't share His life, will be left behind.

So what are we to do with all this? The Feast of Trumpets...will usher in the next great event..in the Appointed Times of God IMAGE

Every indication from Scripture is that the Rapture of the Church will occur during that Feast Jesus told us to know the signs...and to be ready.... So are you?

One day in our future...One Solemnly Appointed Day....Jesus will come for His bride.... I believe along with many others... That His return will occur during the Feast of Trumpets I don't know what year... But Paul says... You are not in darkness for that day to surprise you like a thief

Let me help shape your reflection time a bit The Feast of Trumpets...Rosh Hashanah... Will occur this year Tuesday Sept 23rd and then followed by the next High Holy Day Rosh Hashanah is on Oct 2nd. . If this is the year.....are you ready? What do you need to do between now and then? How is the oil in your lamp? Where will you be when the door closes? With the wedding party or on your own?

The Rapture of the Church...on our day planner Does that change your week at all? Does it amp up your urgency for sharing this message? Increase your desperation? Does it send you into a time of repentance..and self examination To make sure you have trusted

Jesus...and your name is in the Book of Life? That is the Whole Point of the Feasts...to prepare us...a Holy Day...an appointed time for something incredible to happen.

That reality changes everything doesn't it? No one knows when Jesus will return... But we are supposed to live...every day... With the thoughts you are having right now... Ready and watching I believe that this Feast serves as an annual reminder

A foreshadowing...of one day in the future.. The The light of the World..Jesus..Penetrates the Darkness.... The trumpet signals the Appointed Time for His bride... we will be caught up in the clouds with Him We are to stay prepared...and to be reminded It is later than it has ever been.

Many will discover.... Just like I did...pretending to be part of the band... That at the Appointed Time..when the trumpet blows It is obvious who is prepared and who is not Who has been faking it...and who really knew Jesus All ten looked the part..but only 5 were really ready

Jesus is at the gate...the conductor has started the music Soon it will be the Appointed Time for the Trumpets to play Are you sure that you and everyone you know are ready for that moment?

All you need to do...to join the Wedding Party of Jesus Is to know that God loves you and sent His Son Jesus as a gift for you God loved....God gave To believe that He took the punishment you deserved for your sins... That He died on the cross and was resurrected. He died your death...the one you deserved...so you could have life We believe To accept...to receive...to trust that what He did on the cross will save you.. We receive God loved...God gave...We believe...We receive

John 3:16–17 (ESV) For God So Loved the World 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

We are going to spend some time reflecting... Prepare yourself to meet God. It is later than it has ever been When you see the signs...He is at the gate

People ask me a lot... When do you think the rapture will come? When the only thing left that will get non-believers to turn to Jesus... Is the Rapture.

Is it really going to take the rapture....to get you to believe? Please bow your heads... God has brought you to this moment...right now.. And if you want to make sure...you are ready... Please pray this prayer with me right now..