

HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER

TEXT: LUKE 1:26-38

Introduction:

1. In Luke 1, we have the announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel that she would become the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:31-33).
2. Though she was a virgin, Mary would conceive a child who would be “the Son of the Highest” (1:32-35).
3. Gabriel told Mary to name her son JESUS (“Saviour,” cf. Matthew 1:21).
4. Furthermore, Gabriel told Mary the Lord God would give her son “the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (1:32, 33).
5. We know from the rest of the New Testament that this part of Gabriel’s announcement has not yet been fulfilled.
6. Neither has Isaiah’s prophecy – “and the government shall be upon his shoulder... Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever” (Isa. 9:6, 7).

I.WE MUST DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE RAPTURE AND THE REVELATION

1. Just as we need to differentiate between the first coming and the second coming (Isa. 9:6, 7; Luke 1:31-33), we must also learn to differentiate between the rapture and the revelation.
2. The rapture is when Jesus Christ returns to remove the church (all believers in Christ) from the earth (cf. John 14:1-4; I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:50-54).
3. Believers, who have gone on before us, along with believers who are still living, will all meet the Lord in the air.
4. The rapture will all occur in a moment, “in the twinkling of an eye” (I Cor. 15:52).
5. The revelation of Christ is when the Lord returns at the end of the tribulation to defeat the Antichrist and all the enemies of God, and to establish His millennial kingdom (cf. Rev. 19:11-16).
6. There are several important differences between the rapture and the revelation. At the rapture, believers meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:13-18). At the revelation, we will return with the Lord to the earth (Jude 14, 15; Rev. 19:14).

- A. Or – first our Lord comes for His saints; later He comes with His saints.
 - B. The revelation will occur after the great and terrible tribulation (Revelation 6–19). The rapture will occur before the tribulation (I Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10).
 - C. The rapture is the removal of believers from the earth as an act of deliverance (I Thess. 4:13-17; 5:9). The revelation will remove the wicked as an act of judgment (Matt. 24:40, 41; Jude 14, 15).
 - D. The rapture will be secret and instant (I Cor. 15:50-54). However, the revelation will be visible to all (Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:27-31).
 - E. The revelation of Christ will not occur until after certain prophecies are fulfilled (II Thess. 2:4; Matt. 24:15; Revelation chapters 6–18).
 - F. However, the rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment (Titus 2:13; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:50-54).
7. It is important to keep the rapture and the second coming distinct.
 8. Those who confuse the rapture with the revelation teach that believers will have to go through the tribulation (I Thess. [5:9](#); Rev. [3:10](#)).
 9. The church is prominent throughout the epistles and the first three chapters of the book of Revelation. However, there is no mention of the church in Rev. 6-19 because these chapters describe the tribulation.
 10. There are many prophecies which must be fulfilled before the Lord will return to establish His kingdom (Daniel 2:44; 7:13, 14; [Matt. 24](#):1ff).
 11. If the rapture and the revelation are the same event, the return of Christ could not be imminent (cf. I Cor. 1:7; 4:5; 15:51, 52; 16:22; Phil. 3:20; 4:5; I Thess. 1:10; Titus 2:13; James 5:7-9; I John 2:28; Rev. 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20).
 12. I know of no greater motivation for godly living than the imminency of the return of Christ (cf. I John 3:2, 3).
 13. Jeremiah 30:7 refers to the tribulation “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”

II. WHEN WILL CHRIST RETURN TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM? (ACTS 1:4-8).

1. God’s program today is not building the kingdom, but the church.
2. Therefore, the promise in the angel Gabriel’s announcement to Mary in Luke 1:32, 33 will not be fulfilled until after the coming tribulation (cf. Matt. 24:29-31).
3. The whole world is in a state of fearful expectation.
4. The United States invented the atomic bomb in 1945, and then later on, the more powerful hydrogen bomb.
5. Since then, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan and Israel have all built nuclear weapons.

6. Unstable countries such as North Korea and Iran could soon have nuclear weapons as well.
7. Despite treaties designed to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, the nuclear arms race continues. In fact, it seems to have accelerated.
8. Many people are wondering if “Doomsday” is upon us.
9. For those of us who interpret the Bible literally believe God has a definite program for the future, and that program is laid out in the Bible.
10. According to Scripture, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to meet His church in the air (the “rapture”).
11. Following this event, while the church is in heaven, a world government will come into being here on earth. In its early stages the political leader (the “antichrist”) of this government will enter into a covenant with Israel providing for Israel’s protection (Daniel 9:27).
12. As the world government becomes stronger, and the antichrist comes to the peak of his power, absolute control will be exercised over the news media, business, and religion as well as the political sovereignty of all the countries in the world government (Rev. 13:16-18).
13. The antichrist will deify himself (Rev. 13:8), and all will be required to worship him. Those who resist this order will be put to death in great number (Rev. 13:7-8, 15; 20:4).
14. During this time (“the great tribulation”), there will be a series of great catastrophic judgments which God will pour out upon the earth, and which will destroy most of the earth’s population (Rev. 6—19).
15. All of this will culminate in a tremendous world war with Israel as its vortex. All the armies of the world will converge at the Battle of Armageddon.
16. Then the Lord Jesus Christ will return from heaven to set up His kingdom (Rev. 19:11-21).
17. The Lord will return from heaven with His church and the holy angels to judge the world in righteousness and to destroy all the wicked.

III. WILL OUR LORD’S KINGDOM BE A LITERAL KINGDOM?

1. Some people teach the kingdom will not be literal.
2. Our Lord taught His disciples to pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:2).
3. Our Lord said to His disciples, “And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29, 30).
4. In Luke 13:28, 29, our Lord said that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be in the kingdom of God.

5. Furthermore, He also said many will be “thrust out” of the kingdom (Luke 13:28).
6. In Luke 21:31, our Lord said that the kingdom would not be established until after the Great Tribulation.
7. Our Lord said He would not drink the fruit of the vine with His disciples “until the kingdom of God shall come” (Luke 22:18).
8. These Scriptures (and there are many, many others) all teach a literal kingdom here on earth.
9. Jesus told Pontius Pilate that His kingdom is not of this world at this time (John 18:36). But His kingdom will surely come when He returns in power and glory to establish it (cf. Psalm 2; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).

CONCLUSION:

1. One preacher put it this way, “The trends of our time toward the fulfillment of prophecy sound a clarion call to attention. The march of these stirring events is about to begin” (John Walvoord).
2. The hope of our Lord’s return presents us with an impelling challenge. The task is large and the days are few.
3. It is time to get right with God.
4. To the unsaved: it is time to get saved. Jesus said, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7).
5. To the Christian: It is time to get the Gospel out.

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