

as their Messiah. Paul states this very clearly in Acts 13:46. With this in mind, it is evident that God told Paul about another part of the second coming; that Christ will first come and 'rapture or catch up' his Church to heaven at the completion of the church age, before his return seven years later to earth, to be King over Israel and the world.

Therefore, the Bible indicates that there are two events related to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. One is called **the Rapture** and the other **the Revelation**. We believe the Bible presents both the **Rapture** and the **Revelation** of Jesus, as two separate stages of his future Second Coming. **Here's why!!**

**The RAPTURE** is found in 1Thessalonians 4:16-17. *"After that, we [church age believers] who are still alive will be caught up — 'RAPTURED' (from the Latin Vulgate version) together [with the raised dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."*

**The REVELATION** of Jesus Christ is found in 2Thessalonians 1:6-10. *"This will happen when the Lord Jesus is REVEALED from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."*

Based on these two Bible passages alone, we can see there is a distinction between the **RAPTURE** and the **REVELATION** of Jesus. Both of these are different events and we need to recognise this or we will live with confusion.

Here are 5 comparisons of the two comings:

**1. TIME** – When will they take place?

**A) RAPTURE** - will occur before the tribulation. The Church will be delivered from the 'wrath' to come (1Thessalonians 1:10).

**B) REVELATION** - will take place **after** the tribulation or day of God's wrath (Matthew 24:29-30; Revelation 19:11-16).

## 2. QUICKNESS OR SUDDENNESS

**A) RAPTURE** - It will happen in a "moment", like the blink of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:52).

**B) REVELATION** - It will take place eventfully for people to see and realise what is happening (Psalm 2:2; Matthew 24:27; Rev. 1:7; 19:19).

## 3. THE DAY IT WILL TAKE PLACE

**A) RAPTURE** - It is an UNKNOWN DAY.

**B) REVELATION** - It will be a recognisable or KNOWN event with signs (Matthew 24:30).

## 4. PRECEDING SIGNS before Christ Comes

**A) RAPTURE** - there are NONE (Titus 2:13).

**B) REVELATION** - MANY prophetic signs will precede the return of Christ to earth (Matthew 24 and Revelation chapters 6 -18).

## 5. VISIBILITY – Who will see his coming?

**A) RAPTURE** - Only Church believers will see the Lord in the air (1Thessalonians 4:17).

**B) REVELATION** - The Revelation, or Return of Christ to earth, will be seen by everyone. The Bible says, "Every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:24-27).

We have presented five contrasts between the two distinct and different phases of the Second Coming of Jesus. Keep looking up because Jesus is coming soon.

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# The Twofold Plan of God

1Thessalonians 4:17 and  
2Thessalonians 1:7

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## The Twofold Plan Of God For Mankind

1Thessalonians 4:17—2Thessalonians 1:7

In recent times national and worldwide news has featured certain church pastors as setting dates for the Rapture and even the end of the world. These so called Christian prognosticators make fools of themselves and bring ridicule upon the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible. They cause the Media and people to mock Christ and Christianity. We who are trying to be faithful to Christ are lumped with these false teachers. Their repetitive use of Bible as their authority reflects badly on us who believe the Bible is the authoritative Word of God.

Bible prophecy is a huge topic and needs to be studied carefully (2Timothy 2:15); it must be interpreted literally for the Scripture to make sense. As you read your Bible you will discover that there is a twofold plan of God for the people of this world.

### THE BIBLE PRESENTS A TWOFOLD PLAN OF GOD FOR MANKIND

One is an earthly plan involving Jesus as a King, ruling from Jerusalem over the world for at least 1,000 years (Revelation 20:6). The other is a Heavenly plan where Jesus takes his Church family to live in heaven (Colossians 1:5, Philipians 3:20-21).

The Old Testament deals mainly with Israel; most of the New Testament deals with the Church. The Old Testament records unconditional covenants God made with the nation of Israel and some aspects of them are yet to be fulfilled. They will be fulfilled with Israel and not with the Church of the New Testament as they have nothing to do with the Church! (Ephesians 3:5, Colossians 1:26). God promised Israel a Messiah; a Saviour; a land; a nation; a kingdom and a king. For

example look at this passage in Isaiah, written under inspiration of God, through the prophet Isaiah, some 700 years before Jesus was born.

**For example Isaiah 11: 1-10** is an important passage in which the twofold ministry of Jesus' First and Second comings are prophesied.

**1. Isaiah 11:1-3a - His first Coming or Advent.** Jesus is born as the son of David with the promise he would be King (Luke 1:31-33).

**2. Isaiah 11:3b-10 - His Second Coming or Advent.** This second part of Isaiah 11: 3b-10 refers to what will happen when Christ returns and is crowned King of the Jews and King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will be seated on the throne of David in Jerusalem reigning over the whole earth (Psalm 2).

*(Note that there is a **GAP** of over 2000 years between verse 3a and verses 3b to the end of the chapter. Historically, the Church age fills this gap between the two comings of Jesus.)*

Jesus said he was going to reign **ON** earth. He told his disciples, *"I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Matthew 19:28).

This was Christ's direct appointment of the 12 apostles to their role of leadership in his future earthly kingdom. God says that the people saved during the coming Tribulation time will live with Jesus on earth for at least a 1,000 years. *"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and **they will reign on the earth**"* (Revelation 5:10).

This is not to be spiritualised to mean they will reign in heaven. This must be taken literally, as when Jesus told his disciples they would sit on twelve administrative seats judging the twelve

tribes of Israel in his future Kingdom on earth (Matthew 19:28). To Israel, God had his prophets and disciples preach what the Bible calls "the Gospel of the Kingdom". It is the message about God's future kingdom yet to come on earth (cp. Matthew 6:10, 24:14).

In Bible prophecy you must keep Israel and the Church separate and distinct; God has a unique and different program for each. **The Church age 'fills the GAP' in God's timetable for the world.** It is a parenthesis between the First coming and Second coming of Jesus to earth.

God's program for Israel includes a whole list of future events that will take place upon the earth. In contrast, the Church is called by God to be a special people with the promise of a heavenly home. The New Testament proclaims this plan of the Church age as a secret - a mystery - known only to God, until first revealed to the apostle Paul who was the servant of God to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3).

What God has planned for the Church is not part of his plans for Israel. We do not believe the Bible teaches 'replacement theology' - that the Church is 'spiritual Israel'. The Church did not take the place of Israel and Israel will become '*spiritual Israel*', when Jesus returns to earth (cp. Jeremiah 31:31-40, Isaiah 66:8).

Recognising God's plans for this world, the restoration of Israel and the establishment of the Davidic kingdom on earth with Jesus, we see that God's plan for the Church is different and distinct (cp. Romans 11).

If we were to take the book of Acts and Paul's 14 letters out of the Bible, we would know nothing about the Church age program of God. The 'predominantly' Gentile Church began after the Jews rejected Jesus Christ