

The Bridegroom Cometh

(December 22, 2021)

I've been wanting to update my articles on the Rapture and eventually, I'd like to update the book I've already published on the subject. For now, this article should suffice. I'm not going to be dealing with timing of the Rapture itself (Pre, Mid or PreWrath), except to point out that I do not believe the PostTrib Rapture position is even an option and I'll explain why.

The title of this article, while not including the Rapture, has everything to do with it, in my opinion. I realize there are some within the Normative Dispensationalist camp who believe and teach that the Second Coming has *two* parts; the Rapture and then the actual Second Coming. In my opinion, the two are not related to one another at all and are completely separate events. The Second Coming is directly connected to the Tribulation, actually bringing the Tribulation to its end. I believe the Rapture is a separate event and will occur at some point *prior* to the Tribulation beginning. I'd like to state unequivocally though that for me, this is *not* a hill to die on. Unfortunately, it has become that for many people and it's unfortunate.

Generally speaking, for those who believe the Rapture is part of the actual, physical Second Coming which clearly occurs at the end of the Tribulation (PostTribber), they tend to believe it goes something like this, based on Scripture:

1 Thessalonians 4:17:

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Most people understand that in the Latin Vulgate, the word "rapturo" is where we get the word "rapture," translated to English, means "caught up," or to "catch away." So for those who say the word "Rapture" is not in Scripture, they are wrong as it's clearly in the Latin. The word "trinity" is not in Scripture either, yet the doctrine of the trinity can be clearly understood from the Bible itself.

The PostTrib Rapturist will argue that in ancient days and even during Jesus' day, when a dignitary would arrive to a town, city or location, it was common for the people of that area to go out to meet that dignitary and accompany that individual back to that town, city or location, which was their intended destination. This was part of the culture of those days and in some parts of the world, it is still expressed. So when I read commentaries or articles by individuals who apply this to Jesus' Second Coming, I pause and consider. They state that when Jesus returns physically to this world at the end of the Tribulation, the verse here in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians I just read explains what happens.

Now, first I notice that Paul does not include these words in the above text, "after we are caught up to be with the Lord, we will accompany Him back to earth." This is not in the text at all, and I would argue, not necessarily implied, but PostTribbers tend to read that *into* the text, based on their understanding of an approaching dignitary to a specific location and how that person is

greeted then accompanied back to that final destination. What the PostTribber is doing is called *eisegesis*, though of course, they will deny that this is what they're doing. They say they are simply extending the action as they believe it will happen based on the cultures of Jesus' day and how royalty and dignitaries were received. I get that, but I still say they are missing something and it is *huge*.

John 14:1-3

I believe the words of our Lord in the Gospel of John help us flesh out what He means and what He will be doing.

1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. 2 In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.

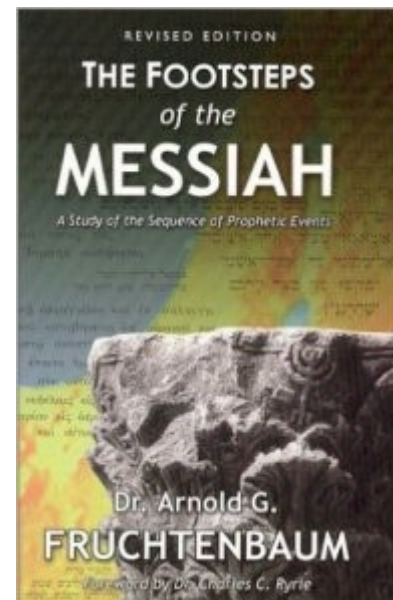
Jesus is talking to His disciples here as they are part of the Bride, the Church. He is telling them several things that are extremely important:

- don't be troubled or upset that I'm leaving
- My Father's house has many rooms
- I am going there to prepare a place for you
- I'm going to come back to get you
- When I come back to get you, I will welcome you into My presence
- You will then be with me always and will be where I am going
- You know where I'm going

Now in the situation regarding dignitaries arriving to a location, the people are the ones who *welcome* that dignitary to them. In Jesus' case, please note that He is going to welcome us into His presence. This makes all the difference in the world because we will be joining Him in His Father's house.

Jesus is speaking to His disciples very much like the Jewish Bridegroom speaks to his Bride. In fact, the Church *is* the Bride of Christ (**Ephesians 5:24-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2**). Jesus has betrothed Himself to the Church, His Bride and we to Him. Okay, so what?

Well, in order to fully understand **John 14:1-3** and other sections of Scripture that deal with the Rapture (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54**), we must understand it from the perspective of the Jewish Wedding Ceremony and process. Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum in his book *Footsteps of the Messiah* deals with this in detail. Here is a [PDF excerpt](#). I highly recommend this book.



In the Jewish wedding process, the Bride and the Groom become betrothed in a public ceremony. They literally enter into a covenant of marriage, which is legal and binding. Following this public ceremony, the two *separate* because the Bridegroom goes away. *Where?* To his father's house. *Why?* For the purpose of adding on a room for when he brings his Bride to him at some point in the future. Often, this process can take a year or more with the Groom gathering materials to physically add on to his father's home, other materials to furnish their place in this new addition and in general, making everything prepared and ready for that day when it finally arrives when the Bridegroom can physically go and get his Bride, bringing her back to his father's house with their newly prepared living quarters.

At the right time, the Bridegroom will go to his betrothed's home, his Bride, and as he is going to her home, he will sound his shofar to announce that he is on his way (just as was re-enacted in *Before the Wrath*). This blowing of the horn is celebratory and is used to notify his Bride that he is on the way to get her. This is reflected in the **1 Corinthian** passage noted above when Paul was explaining it to the Corinthian believers.

Okay, so what happens when the Bride hears the shofar and realizes her Bridegroom is on the way to get her? She is extremely excited because she has been waiting, working and watching for this day to arrive and it finally has arrived! So what happens next. The Bride (and her entourage), go out to meet the Bridegroom as he approaches. So far, we are right in line with what PostTribbers believe about the Rapture. However, this next part is where we differ completely from them.

As I've stated, the general PostTrib Rapture position is that just as a dignitary arrives to a geographical location and the people of that area run out to meet him/her, they then accompany that dignitary back to where *they* came from because that is the intended destination of the dignitary. This fits perfectly with the Second Coming of Jesus because He is a dignitary returning to earth, but it doesn't fit the situation concerning the Rapture.

The problem with this view - that PostTribbers say applies to the Rapture *as the* Second Coming - is that as far as the Church, the Bride of Christ is concerned, we do not see Jesus as a *dignitary*. We see Him as our *Bridegroom*. Because of this exceedingly important fact, it changes everything.

In the parable of the 10 virgins, we see this clearly played out with additional information provided by our Lord (**Matthew 25:1-13**). In this parable, the 10 virgins are all gathered together to wait for the coming of the Bridegroom. They wake at midnight to the cry of the Bridegroom that He is on His way to them, and trim their lamps. However, five of these virgins were foolish because they really did not have enough oil. In essence, Jesus is telling us that these five were not authentic believers because they lacked the Holy Spirit. The other five virgins were fully prepared. The five foolish virgins tried to get the wise virgins to share their oil, but that is not workable, so the five foolish virgins went out to buy some oil and during that time away, something strange happens.

Note that the text tells us, "*But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut*" (v10).

Please notice that the wedding banquet takes place in a separate place from the Bride's quarters. In other words, the Bridegroom in the parable has blown his shofar and called to his Bride to come out to meet him. *Before the Wrath* talked about that in the Galilean wedding culture, the bride sat on a litter which was held aloft by others as they "caught her up" to go to her Bridegroom. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, the producers did not provide the actual evidence of this alleged fact.

Nonetheless, what is important from Scripture is that the Bride goes out to meet her Bridegroom and he then receives her to himself and she joins him *where he is*, which is at the banquet room in preparation for the official wedding ceremony. This will be followed by the Bride and Bridegroom going to the room(s) the Bridegroom has added onto his father's house.

If Jesus told us in **John 14:1-3**, that He has gone to His Father's house for the express purpose of preparing a place for us and will come back to get us so that we may be with Him forever, how can this even remotely mean that we are going to go out to meet him, then return to stay on this earth at the Second Coming?

Is Jesus preparing a place for us *on this earth*? Absolutely not. He is in the third heaven now where the throne of God exists and it is *there* that He is preparing a place for us. So when the Rapture occurs, He will re-enact the Jewish wedding ceremony by simply stepping out of the third heaven, to come toward us, a horn will blow and a voice of the archangel will cry out and all who are part of the authentic Church, the Bride of Christ will hear it, will then be "caught up" (*rapturo*) in the clouds to be with our Lord, our God, our Savior and our Bridegroom forever and ever we will follow Him *back* to heaven, and we will see for the first time the place Jesus has prepared for us *there*.

It is for these reasons that I do not believe the PostTrib Rapture view has any merit whatsoever. I'm *not* trying to offend anyone who might hold to that view. I'm simply drawing evidence from the Bible itself and presenting it.

There is a huge Jewish wedding ceremony motif in Scripture with respect to the Church (the Bride of Christ), and our Bridegroom, Jesus. It is implied, reflected and taught in numerous passages of Scripture and parables.

In an upcoming article, I will talk about the timing of the Rapture. I also promise to get back to my series on *Daniel 7 and Revelation 13*. Join me then!