

MEETING THE LORD IN THE AIR! PRE, MID, OR POST?

(An explanation of Revelation 11:12)

AT = Author's Translation from GNT [Greek New Testament]

Revelation 11:12 *“And they heard a great voice out of heaven saying to them, Come up here. And they went up into the heaven in the cloud. And their enemies saw them.”* (AT)

Explanation of verse 12

This is a very important event! Throughout the centuries of the Christian age, all the truly born-again believers were looking forward to this moment! This is the glorious moment when the Church meets the Lord in the air!

Where does the Bible speak about ‘meeting the Lord in the air’?

In 1Thessalonians 4:16,17, the apostle Paul wrote:

“¹⁶Because the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven with a command, with the voice of an archangel, and with God's trumpet. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who remain alive will be caught up at the same time together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” (AT)

How can human bodies meet the Lord in the air?

The human bodies of all those who believe in the True Jesus of the Bible **will be changed** by the Lord, so we can meet Him in the air. Let us read the words of the apostle Paul from 1 Corinthians 15:51-53:

“⁵¹Behold, I speak a mystery to you: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed. ⁵²In a moment, in a glance of an eye, at the last trumpet; for a trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

Please note

In verse 53 above, the words *“this corruptible”* and *“this mortal”* refer to the human body --- not to the human spirit nor to the human soul because these are not *“corruptible”* neither are they *“mortal”* (1 Kings 17:21,22; Revelation 6: 9; Acts 7:59).

Where does the Bible say that men are comprised of spirit and soul and body?

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, we read,

“And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Has this change of the body happened before?

Yes, it has! The moment the dead body of Jesus was raised, it was changed! This is the reason He could go to heaven with it (Acts 1:9-11)!

Had this change happened to others who had been raised from the dead before Him?

No! Eventually, the bodies of those who were raised from the dead before Him, like Lazarus (John 11:43), grew old and died again. Jesus is the very first Person whose body put on incorruption and immortality at the very moment He rose from the dead. The same thing will happen to the bodies of all those who have believed in Him **when He comes**. Let us read Paul's comments on this subject from 1 Corinthians 15:20-23:

"²⁰But now Christ has been raised from the dead; He became the firstfruit of those having fallen asleep. ²¹For since death is through man, also through a Man is a resurrection of the dead; ²²for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruit; afterward those of Christ at His coming."

From the above comments, and from his words in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, **we realize that the moment the "two witnesses" were raised from the dead and "went up into the heaven in the cloud", this specific moment, is the glorious moment the entire Church will meet the Lord in the air!** The Bible does not say anywhere that different members of the Church will meet the Lord in the air at different times! Neither does it say anywhere that other people who are not part of His Church will also go to heaven!

"But," one might say, "I don't understand! Before the two witnesses went up in the clouds, they first went through the 42 months of the great persecution which the "beast" launched against the saints. Didn't the rest of the Church meet the Lord in the air before the great tribulation began?"

Absolutely not! There is no scripture to support such a doctrine. As we read above, the apostle Paul made it clear that **the entire Church will be gathered to the Lord in the air, in the clouds, at the same time** (Greek text: 'αμα συν αυτοις')! And in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, he said that **our (complete) gathering** (Greek text: 'επισυναγωγή') **to the Lord** will not take place until **after** the man of sin is revealed whom the Lord **will destroy with the breath of His mouth as soon as He comes** (Greek text: 'τη επιφανεία της παρουσίας αδου' (verse 8; Revelation 19:20)!

The reason I used the word (**complete**) in the above paragraph, is the fact that here the apostle does not speak of a partial gathering, but about **the complete gathering to the Lord of the entire Church**.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:1, Paul wrote about, **"our gathering upon Him"**.

The word **"our"** refers to the dead saints who will be raised up from the dead and to the living saints who will be changed in order to meet, **all together and at the same time, in a glance of an eye**, the Lord in the air (1 Corinthians 15:51,52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17)!

The above solid truth must not be changed in any way. The word of God does not contradict itself. If our understanding on another subject demands a change on the above truth, we will do well to

re-examine that other subject. Therefore, the true Church of the last days will experience the persecution which the *“beast”* will launch against her!

To further support the truth that the resurrection, the change and gathering of the Church to Christ will **not** take place before the tribulation of the last days but **after**, let us examine carefully the words of the apostle Paul from 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4,8 (from the Greek text). There, Paul tells us that our gathering will take place on the day of **the** (second) **presence of the Lord**, which he calls *“the day of Christ”* (verse 2) and that the gathering is not the only event which will take place **as soon as the Lord appears**:

2 Thessalonians 2:1

Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας
 But we beg you, brothers, concerning the presence
 τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν
 of our Lord Jesus Christ and our
 ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ’ αὐτόν,
 gathering upon Him,

2 Thessalonians 2:2

εἰς τὸ μὴ ταχέως σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ νοῦς μήτε
 don’t be quickly shaken in your mind neither
 θροεῖσθαι, μήτε διὰ πνεύματος μήτε διὰ λόγου
 be frightened, not by (a) spirit nor by (a) word/doctrine
 μήτε δι’ ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι’ ἡμῶν,
 neither by (a) letter as if (it was written) by us,
 ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
 as if the day of Christ has come near.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

μὴ τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον· ὅτι
 do not (let) anyone deceive you by any means; because
 ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον
 (that day will not come) unless the apostasy comes first
 καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας,
 and the man of sin is revealed,
 ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας,
 the son of perdition,

2 Thessalonians 2:4

ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα
 the one who opposes and exalts himself above all

λεγόμενον Θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα,
that is called God or an object of worship,
ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς Θεὸν καθίσει,
so that he will sit himself in the temple of the God as God,
ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἐστὶ Θεός.
proving himself that he is God.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος, ὃν ὁ Κύριος
and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord
ἀναλώσει τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ
will consume with the breath of His mouth and
καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ·
will bring him to an end as soon as He appears;
(Blue color: Author's translation)

From the above verses, we see that **there are two things that will take place as soon as the Lord comes:**

- a) The complete gathering of the Church to Him in the clouds, and
- b) the annihilation of the man of lawlessness.

Therefore, those who make up the true Church of the last days will go through the great tribulation that the “*beast*” will launch against them.

Are there other scriptures to support the above conclusion?

Yes, there are! Let us examine the following points:

Point 1

In Revelation 7:9-16, we read about the “*great crowd*” which has become part of the Church “*out of every nation, even tribes and peoples and tongues*”. In verse 14, John was told that “**These are those coming out of the great tribulation**”, and verse 15 says that they are before the throne of God and they serve Him day and night **in His temple**.

Is it possible that they had entered God's heavenly temple before the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed?

The biblical answer to this question is “NO!” because, in Revelation 15:8, it says,

“... no one was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels should be completed.”

Therefore, we see that the Church was not able to enter the heavenly temple until “*the kingdoms of the world became our Lord's*” (Revelation 11:15)! This event will take place as soon as the Lord destroys the “*beast*” --- **not before** (Daniel 7:25-27). Thus, the Church will be here during the tribulation!

Point 2

In Revelation 19:1-9, we read:

“¹And after these things, I heard a great voice of a large multitude in Heaven, saying, Hallelujah! The salvation and the glory and the honor and the power of the Lord our God! ²For true and righteous are His judgments, because He judged the great harlot who defiled the earth with her fornication. And He avenged the blood of His slaves out of her hand. ³And a second time they said, Hallelujah! Also her smoke goes up to the ages of the ages. ⁴And the twenty four elders, and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God sitting on the throne, saying, Amen! Hallelujah! ⁵And a voice came out from the throne, saying, Praise our God, all His slaves, and the ones fearing Him, the small and the great. ⁶And I heard as a sound of a numerous crowd, and as a sound of many waters, and as a sound of strong thunders, saying, Hallelujah! Because the Lord God Almighty reigned. ⁷Let us rejoice and let us exult, and we will give glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb came, and His wife prepared herself. ⁸And it was given to her that she be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. ⁹And he says to me, Write: Blessed are the ones having been called to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb. And he says to me, These Words of God are true.”

From the above scriptures, we observe that the marriage of the Lamb and His Church, His bride, will take place **after** the destruction of the symbolic “*Babylon the great*” who sits on the “*beast*”. “*Babylon the great*” will be there during the tribulation of the last days and, in fact, **she will motivate the “beast” to persecute the truly born-again Christians** because Revelation 17:6 says,

“And I saw the woman being drunk from the blood of the saints, and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I marveled, seeing her, with a great marveling.”

How do we know that the marriage of the Lamb will take place as soon as the Lord comes? Marriage is a unity! When the Bridegroom comes to take the Bride, they enter “*the wedding feast*”. Let us read from Matthew 25:1-10:

“¹Then the kingdom of Heaven shall be compared to ten virgins who taking their lamps, went out to a meeting of the bridegroom. ²And five of them were wise, and five foolish. ³Those being foolish, taking their lamps, did not take oil with them. ⁴But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵But the bridegroom delaying, all nodded and slept. ⁶And at midnight, a cry occurred: Behold, the bridegroom comes! Go out to meet him. ⁷Then all those virgins were aroused and prepared their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. ⁹But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there not be enough for us and you. But rather, go to those who sell and buy for yourselves. ¹⁰But they going away to buy, the bridegroom came. And those ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut.”

Therefore, as the marriage of the Lamb will not take place until **after** “*Babylon the great*” is destroyed, and as “*Babylon the great*” will be there during the tribulation orchestrating the persecution against the saints, so will the Bride and the two witnesses who are part of her!

Point 3

In Revelation 20:4-6, we read:

“⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat on them. And judgment was given to them, and the souls of the ones having been beheaded because of the witness of Jesus, and because of the Word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast nor its image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one having part in the first resurrection. The second death has no authority over these, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years.”

In the above verses, we observe that **those who did not worship the “beast” and had not received its mark**, will:

- a) **Have part in the first resurrection!!** Those who have part in the first resurrection are the Church which will meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:23; Revelation 20:4-6)!
- b) **Reign with Christ a thousand years!!** The promise to rule as kings with Christ was given to the Church only (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; Matthew 19:28)!

Consequently, the above words of Revelation 20:4-6 prove the fact that the Church of the last days will face the *“beast”* with all its fury! And, Revelation 14:12 says *“Here is the patience of the saints”*.

Point 4

In Revelation 10:5-7, we read:

“⁵And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted his hand to Heaven, ⁶and swore by Him living to the ages of the ages, "who created the heaven" and the things in it, "and the earth" and the things in it, "and the sea and the things in it," that time shall no longer be; ⁷but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, whenever he is about to trumpet, was even ended the mystery of God, as He preached to His slaves, the prophets.”

From the above verses, we realize that when the seventh angel trumpets his trumpet, it will signify **the end of the mystery of God!** At that specific moment, the *“beast”* does not rule any longer because the kingdom of God will be here! This statement, is further supported by Revelation 11:15. There, it says,

“And the seventh angel trumpeted. And there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of the world became our Lord's, even of His Christ; and He shall reign to the ages of the ages.”

Therefore, all the events that took place, even the things concerning the “*beast*” and the “*two witnesses*”, took place during the trumpeting of the six trumpets! For this reason, I would like you to please consider the following reasoning carefully:

Those who preach that the resurrection of the dead saints and the change of the living saints will take place **before** the great tribulation of the last days, place the “*rapture*” in the days of the **sixth** trumpet which **is not the last of the trumpets!** However, the apostle Paul, whose writings are part of the written word of God, in 1 Corinthians 15:51,52 said,

“⁵¹Behold, I speak a mystery to you: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed. ⁵²In a moment, in a glance of an eye, at the last trumpet; for a trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.”

The “*last trumpet*” is the “*seventh*” (not the sixth) and it takes place when the “*beast*” is gone and “*The kingdoms of the world became our Lord's, even of His Christ*”!!!

For this reason, I encourage the Christian leaders who are advocates of the pre-tribulation “*rapture*” to become like the Bereans (Acts 17:11) and to re-examine this doctrine **before** they appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Why do so many Christians today believe that they will not go through the great tribulation of the last days?

Because the preparation for the great deception has already begun! Believing that they will be “*raptured*” before the coming of the “*beast*”, many will not recognize it when it appears, and they will join the prophesied “*apostasy*” or “*falling away*” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)! In fact, they will “*admire*” the “*beast*” when it comes into power (Revelation 17:8 --- from the Greek text)!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ take courage: Those who will “*admire*” the “*beast*” will be those “*whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world*” (Revelation 17:8). Rejoice my Brothers and Sisters in Christ because our names **are** written in the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3). “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, Rejoice!*” (Philippians 4:4).