

ESCHATOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

PART 54

RAPTURE PASSAGES, PART 4

1 Corinthians 15:51-54

1 Corinthians 15:23–24 ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴then [εἶτα] comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

1 Corinthians 15:50–54 ⁵⁰Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in 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 will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

The first thing to note concerning the context of 1 Corinthians is that the Tribulation is not mentioned. This requires us to correlate this Scripture with other Scriptures concerning the Rapture, but that is normal procedure when studying the Bible. Scripture always harmonizes with Scripture.

There is a time sequence set in 1 Corinthians 15:23-24. Christ is the first fruits and then those who are His are resurrected at His Coming. There is an obvious interval between v. 23 and v. 24 although non-dispensational theologians refuse to recognize it. If there is no time gap there, then there is no Messianic Kingdom. Those who deny the Rapture make this about the Second Coming but the use of the word εἶτα means a point of time following another point without indicating any period of time, long or short. It simply refers to one thing following another. It is used to refer to one element following another with a pause between the two in 1 Timothy 2:13 (Adam was created first, then Eve) and 1 Timothy 3:10 (test the men first then let them serve as deacons). The end follows the Rapture with some time period in between.

Paul has been informing the Corinthians about the Resurrection and he then turns to the Rapture in v. 50. Adam received a human body that, after the Fall, was suitable only for habitation on a sinful planet earth and he was making it clear that kind of body must be changed into a body suitable for the family of God. This spiritual body, a body with a Holy Spirit perfected human spirit, will be a body perfect in form and function that is eternal. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God does not mean that the

resurrection body is non-corporeal, or that it has no continuity with the believer's natural, pre-resurrection body. Paul meant that mere mortals, with bodies designed only for the earthly realm and without the transformation of the resurrection, cannot inherit the imperishable kingdom. [Michael G. Vanlaningham, "1 Corinthians" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p. 1803]. The resurrected body of dead saints and the body raptured saints will get is the same type of body. Some theologians, including Vanlaningham, equate the Resurrection and the Rapture, but I differentiate between them. The Resurrection involves saints who have previously passed away and are then raised, and the Rapture involves those who are living and translated into their new bodies without experiencing death.

Paul references the fact the Rapture is a mystery, that is, it is truth that was unrevealed in the Old Testament but is now being revealed in the New Testament beginning with the Lord's promise in John 14:1-3. The dead in Christ rise first, then those living are changed. Both groups receive the same glorified, eternal body they will have for eternity. This Scripture pertains only to those who are in Christ; therefore, it cannot pertain to a general resurrection when everyone, believers and unbelievers, are raised together to face judgment.

At the end of the Messianic Kingdom, every enemy of God will be vanquished and death will be abolished and thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:14 ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

I want to examine the issue of the last trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:52) or the trumpet of God as Paul called it in 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

1 Corinthians 15:52 ⁵²in 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 will be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Non-dispensationalists believe this trumpet refers to the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15 and/or the trumpet of Matthew 24:31. The trumpet call of Revelation is the proclamation of judgment, specifically the final seven bowls of God's wrath and it does not represent the coming of the Lord, and the trumpet of the Olivet Discourse signals the gathering of believing Jews back into the land at the end of the Tribulation. Further, the book of Revelation was not written until decades after Paul ministered to the Corinthians and they would have had no idea what he was talking about if he was referring about the trumpets of Revelation and let's not forget, Paul wasn't the recipient of the book of

Revelation prophecy either—John was. Further, it is impossible for them to have known about the Gospel of Matthew and the Olivet Discourse at that time because it had yet to be written or was just recently written and not in widespread circulation yet. The Corinthians would not have known about Matthew's Gospel and Paul almost certainly didn't know about it either. The problem is found in the meaning of "last trumpet." Those who deny the Rapture claim it refers to the Second Coming, the general resurrection, judgment for all, and the beginning of eternity. This view, however, is incorrect.

Here is one example of this erroneous thinking I found in just a few minutes of searching the web: "THE LAST TRUMP: 'Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep (die), but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the LAST TRUMP, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.' 1 Cor. 15:51 Again we are dealing with the FIRST RESURRECTION, which we have already see [sic] will take place at the revelation of Jesus Christ after the tribulation. The point I want to make reiterates what we already know to be true. How many trumps are going to sound after the LAST one? Yet if this passage refers to a pre-tribulation rapture of the Church, then there would be yet another trumpet to sound seven years later. If this were the case how could it possibly be referred to as the LAST ONE? [<http://www.worldbibleinstitute.org/raptureframe.htm>. Accessed 26 April 2017 (Steve Highlander)]. There are other, viable alternatives in the way we understand the last trumpet.

We need to understand this issue because this is a powerful argument, an incorrect argument but a powerful one nonetheless, when it is made to people who simply read the word "last" and assign the meaning to it that would first come to mind for any English-speaking person. The thought that "last means last," that is, the final trumpet in history, as we usually understand the meaning of the word would be the meaning most people would assign to it, especially if they are not particularly schooled on the overall meaning of the Bible.

The issue isn't whether or not a trumpet will sound at the Second Coming when the Lord gathers Israel into the land as He predicted in the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:31) and as it was predicted by Old Testament prophets (Is. 27:13; Zech. 9:14). The issue is whether or not the trumpet of the Olivet Discourse is the same trumpet as the last trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15:52—and it is not the same one. The idea that this trumpet refers to the seventh trumpet of Revelation is simply absurd on its face given the context of the book.

Matthew 24:31 ³¹"And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Isaiah 27:13 ¹³It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

Zechariah 9:14 ¹⁴Then the LORD will appear over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning; And the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And will march in the storm winds of the south.

There are several explanations concerning the identity and meaning of the trumpet that are all reasonable and more or less support the premillennial Rapture understanding of this passage.

Showers had this to say about the "last trumpet." "It could be that when Paul referred to the last trump, he did not mean that it will be the absolutely final trumpet, after which there will be no more trumpets. In conjunction with this, Henry Alford warned the meaning of the word 'last' in the expression 'the last trump' should not be 'pressed too closely as if there were necessarily no trump after it.' Several uses of trumpets in the ancient world, together with the context of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:52, make possible other meanings of the expression 'the last trump.'" [Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord Come!* p. 261]. If this is correct, and it is, then it negates the argument that this trumpet is the last trumpet of any sort heard in history and it signals the Second Coming of the Lord and the initiation of the eternal state. There are other, biblical, explanations of the last trumpet.

Dr. Showers has a chapter in his book on this issue so these various definitions of the last trumpet are an abbreviated explanation of what may be found there. [Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord Come!* pp. 259-269]. The exception to this is the last interpretation which has been elaborated on by Dr. Fruchtenbaum.

The first and possibly the most natural explanation for this trumpet is the historical biblical use of a trumpet to sound when God called His people together for an assembly during which He was present in some way. This is the first use of a trumpet in the Bible and the Jews specifically relate the Feast of Trumpets to it. It occurred at Mt. Sinai during the Exodus and God was sounding this trumpet call.

Exodus 19:10, 19-20 ¹⁰The LORD also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments... ¹⁹When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. ²⁰The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

The Corinthians also would have been familiar with a Roman use of the trumpet in a similar way. They sounded a trumpet blast called the *classicum* which was a call to the citizens of the city to gather for an assembly where the Roman emperor was present. This became known as the Emperor's trumpet-call.

Another use of trumpets in that time was to terrify an enemy or to issue a warning of coming judgment. Jeremiah 4:19-21, 6:1; Ezekiel 33:3-6; and Amos 3:6 all involve the issue of warning of coming judgment. This aspect of warning the Jews of coming judgment is a key aspect of the fulfillment of this Feast.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is contrasting several things and he also lists three last things: the last enemy to be destroyed which is death, the last Adam, and the last trumpet. The first trumpet recorded in Scripture in Exodus was about the establishment of the Law which Paul called a ministry of death (2 Cor. 3:7-9). The contrast with that is the last trumpet in connection with the Resurrection, which I would call a ministry of life. This contrast is also made in Hebrews 12:18-24.

2 Corinthians 3:7-9 ⁷But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, ⁸how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? ⁹For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

Hebrews 12:18-24 ¹⁸For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, ¹⁹and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. ²⁰For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED." ²¹And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling." ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, ²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

Here is Shower's explanation: "Since the first trump of God called the people of Israel together to meet with God and be placed under the law, and since the law was the strength of death-causing sin and was a ministry of death, we can conclude that the purpose of the first trump of God was to call people together to God at Mount Sinai and thereby begin that ministry of death. By contrast, 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 indicate that the purpose of the last trump of God will be to call people together to Christ in the air and thereby begin incorruptible, immortal, bodily resurrection and change. Thus, it will call people together for the opposite purpose of that to which the first trump of God called people. It thereby will signal the beginning of the end for death, the last enemy of mankind to be destroyed or abolished, and will fulfill another use of the trumpet in ancient times—that of terrifying and enemy or issuing a warning of coming danger or judgment." [Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord Come!* p. 263].

This is a very plausible, and biblically sound explanation to explain the meaning of the last trumpet in connection with the Rapture. There's more to this interpretation and you can find it in Dr. Shower's book but this brief explanation will suffice for our purposes here.

Another meaning of "last trumpet" refers to a war trumpet. Before modern methods of communication were invented, trumpets played a large role in communicating orders on the battlefield and that was true for Greece and Rome as well. That is illustrated numerous times in the Bible. Trumpet, *σάλπιγξ*, refers to a trumpet or to the sound made by a trumpet. Trumpets could call men to battle, to attack, to pursue the enemy, to perform various maneuvers, to regather, to retreat, to reassemble or return to base at the end of a battle, and more. Paul used the metaphor of a trumpet used in battle in 1 Corinthians 14:8.

1 Corinthians 14:8⁸For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?

Because Paul used this metaphor here, some theologians assume he is referring to the last trump that signifies the end of a battle and calls the soldiers back to base or home which therefore is the meaning of the "last trumpet" in 1 Corinthians 15:52. Part of this thinking relies on the fact that the Bible frequently compares the Christian life with a spiritual battle. Once the last trumpet sounds, the battle is over for the Church. "[T]he connection between the trump of God and the last trumpet of battle is as follows: Just as the last trumpet of battle signaled the soldiers to end the battle and reassemble to return to camp or home, so the trump of God will signal the end of the church saints' warfare against Satan and his forces and their assembly with Christ in the air to go with Him to their heavenly home. The trump of God associated with the Rapture of the church will have the same kind of function or purpose as the last trumpet of battle in the ancient world. For this reason, Paul called it 'the last trump.'" [Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord Come!* p. 267].

This interpretation possibly has some merit, but one of the problems with it is the assumption that the trumpet is a metal instrument; it may be, it may not be. The Greek and Romans used metal trumpets. In the Old Testament, when we read the word "trumpet" in our English translations, it is often translating the Hebrew word, שׁוֹפָר [shofar], which refers to a horn used as what we would call a trumpet. Further, in the Septuagint, the Greeks used *σάλπιγξ*, at least some of the time, to translate שׁוֹפָר. The point is, the presupposition that Paul is referring to a metal trumpet as we know them as opposed to a שׁוֹפָר is suspect. Israel had and used metal trumpets, but it seems the shofar was used in the military and at the Feast of Trumpets, at least for the most part. The Hebrews seemed to use the metal trumpets only during the Exodus to summon the congregation and to set the camp up (Num. 10:2) and in the Temple (2 Kings 17:13, 11:14). When a metal trumpet was in view in the Old Testament, it was called תְּצַפֶּרֶה. Our study would be made easier if our English translations used "shofar" when the Hebrew word שׁוֹפָר is used, but the only translation I found that comes close is the HCSB which translates the word

“ram’s horn.” That makes it much easier to know the difference but they don’t consistently do it either.

There are only two incidents in the Old Testament where it is recorded that God blows a trumpet and that trumpet is a shofar. The first was in Exodus 19:18-20 and the last will be during the Second Coming recorded in Zechariah 9:14. It appears that the Lord will also be sounding the trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 which, of course, are our Rapture passages. Whether the trumpet of the Rapture is a shofar or a metal trumpet is unknown, but I suspect it will be a shofar.

The third proposed interpretation of the “last trumpet” involves the changing of the Roman guard. Roman guard posts began and ended with the sound of a trumpet. The claim is there is a first trumpet to start the watch and a last trumpet to end the watch. The problem I see with this interpretation is simply one of logic. The start of one man’s watch is the end of another man’s watch. How do you know whether or not the trumpet call is the first trumpet announcing the beginning of the watch or the last trumpet announcing the end of the watch? It seems unlikely they would use two different trumpets at the start of each watch to signal the end of one and the beginning of another. It is more likely they blew one trumpet to mark each shift change. Shower’s explanation of this interpretation is: “Just as there was a last trumpet to signal the end of a Roman guard’s watch, so the trump of God will signal the end of the church saints’ watch in the world. The trump of God associated with the Rapture of the church will have the same kind of function or purpose as the last trumpet of a Roman guard’s watch. For this reason, Paul called it ‘the last trump.’” [Renald Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord Come!* p. 267]. Shower’s explanation really doesn’t explain starting and ending trumpets which simply doesn’t make any sense.

For example, when I was a police officer the oncoming watch had a briefing after which they left the station to assume their beats. Once they started going out, the dispatcher radioed the watch that had been working to come into the station for debriefing and the oncoming watch assumed their beat. The point is, there was only one call needed to signify the end of one watch and the beginning of the next. Two calls would have been redundant.

This interpretation seems to be a rather desperate search for an interpretation that has no exegetical or even logical substance to it. I wouldn’t give any credence to this one.

The final interpretation, and the one I prefer but with caution, relates the last trumpet to the Jewish Feast of Trumpets. Before I explain that, I want to explain the prophetic and typological significance of all seven Feasts. The Feasts obviously belong to Israel but they have prophetic significance for everyone. We know the first four Jewish Feasts, the Spring Feasts, were all fulfilled with Christ and/or the church while still retaining significance for Israel. Passover was fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Unleavened Bread was fulfilled in the burial of the Savior. First Fruits was fulfilled in the

Resurrection of the Lord. Pentecost was fulfilled in the establishment of the church. The interval between the Spring Feasts and the Fall Feasts seems to represent the building of the church and also represents the discipline of Israel outlined in Deuteronomy 28. What follows the Diaspora? Restoration as promised in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 which is represented by the three Fall Feasts. Dispensationalists are consistent in understanding the last two Fall Feasts being fulfilled in Christ. The Day of Atonement is widely thought to refer to the Second Coming and the Feast of Tabernacles refers to Christ ruling in the Kingdom, God with us, so to speak. This obviously involves both Israel and the Church. Where does that leave the Feast of Trumpets? It would be inconsistent to understand the Spring Feasts to be perfectly fulfilled in Christ and the church and not to expect the Fall Feasts to be perfectly fulfilled as prophetic and typological pictures of Christ, the restoration of Israel, and the Messianic Kingdom. If the first four feasts were fulfilled at the First Advent of Christ, it seems more than reasonable to believe the last three feasts will be fulfilled at His Second Coming. Every dispensationalist generally agrees with this assessment, but the Feast of Trumpets seems to be the only Feast that the fulfillment of which is in question.

To understand how the Rapture might be fulfilled in the Feast of Trumpets, we need to understand the nature and purpose of that Feast and how it has evolved over the centuries with Judaism.

Fruchtenbaum presents the reasonable presumption that the Corinthians would have known what the last trumpet meant. He suggests the presence of the definite article in connection with "the last trumpet," τῆ ἑσξάτῃ σάλπιγγι, could only have suggested to them the last trumpet of the Feast of Trumpets. That may or may not be correct depending upon how much contact the Gentile Corinthians interacted with the Jewish believers and their Jewish customs. There is no denying, however, a trumpet blast called the last trumpet played a prominent role in the Feast of Trumpets. "*The last trump* refers to the Feast of Trumpets and the Jewish practice of blowing trumpets at this feast each year. During the ceremony there are a series of short trumpet sounds concluding with one long trumpet blast which is called the *tekiah gedolah*, the great trumpet blast. This is what Paul means by *the last trump*. As such, it says nothing concerning the timing of the Rapture; only that the Rapture, whenever it comes, will fulfill the Feast of Trumpets." [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, p. 147].

What does the Feast of Trumpets signify? The following information was generally collected from Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, "Rosh Hashanah—The Feast of Trumpets" in *The Feasts of the Lord: God's Prophetic Calendar from Calvary to the Kingdom*, pp. 103-116.

The Feast of Trumpets is followed by a ten-day period, called the Days of Awe, leading up to the Day of Atonement. This period of time is considered to be a time of divine judgment during which God will decide whether a person will live or die in the year to come. God reviews the books of judgment on this day and delivers His final judgment on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). The ten days represent the last chance to

repent before God's final judgment is rendered. This doctrine is loosely based on Ps. 69:28 and Ex. 32:32-33 both of which refer having names blotted out from the book of the living.

Psalm 69:28 ²⁸May they be blotted out of the book of life And may they not be recorded with the righteous.

Exodus 32:32–33 ³²“But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!” ³³The LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

During this ten-day period, gut wrenching, heartfelt prayers of repentance are offered to God. Repentance is a dominant thought in the minds of the Jewish people at this time. During this period, the shofar is blown every morning during the morning prayer service. “It serves as a call to repentance and a solemn reminder that the most awesome holy days on the Jewish calendar are approaching” [p. 110]. The Jews believe that Satan appears before God to accuse Israel when God opens the books of judgment. They believe the trumpet blasts will confuse him so they blow the shofar 100 times each day of services during this time. This is done according to a prescribed number of blasts of specific blasts—one long blast, three short blasts, nine staccato blasts, and one final sustained blast—in a cycle. The final one is the last trumpet. The worship service recognizes God's kingship, God's remembrance of the Abrahamic Covenant, the blast of the shofar on Mount Sinai, and God's rescue and recovery of Israel at the end (Zech. 9:14). On the second day of the Feast, in recognition of its connection to the shofar, they always read Genesis 22 when God provided the substitutionary ram in place of Isaac.

The Feast of Trumpets is the only Feast that occurs on the dark of the moon, that is, at a new moon. All the other Feasts take place when the moon is in a brighter phase. Israel's prophets associated darkness with the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:14-16; Joel 2:31). “The day is coming in which the Lord will switch off the natural lights of heaven. He will then pour out His wrath with relentless fury upon this wicked world as the Messiah returns to set up His kingdom. It will be Israel's darkest day, her ‘Days of Awe,’ as God's wrath prepares her for repentance, even her national Day of Atonement.” [pp. 113-114].

It is also interesting to note the Jews believe the Resurrection will take place on the Feast of Trumpets.

A ninth century rabbi in Babylon codified ten reasons for the blowing of the shofar at the Feast of Trumpets. [Mitch Glazer and Zhava Glazer, *The Fall Feasts of Israel*, pp. 47-48].

1. Trumpets are sounded at a coronation and God is hailed as King on this day.
2. The shofar heralds the beginning of a penitential season (from Rosh Hashanah to the Day of Atonement).

3. The Torah was given on Sinai accompanied by blasts of the shofar.
4. The prophets compare their message to the sound of the shofar.
5. The conquering armies that destroyed the Temple sounded trumpet blasts.
6. The ram was substituted for Isaac.
7. The prophets asks: "If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people tremble?" (Amos 3:6).
8. The prophet Zephaniah speaks of the great "day of the Lord" (Judgment Day) as a "day of trumpet and battle cry" (Zephaniah 1:14, 16).
9. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the great shofar which will herald the messianic age (Isaiah 27:13).
10. The shofar will be sounded at the resurrection.

The link between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of the Lord is unmistakable. The one thing that will happen prior to the Day of the Lord is the Rapture of the Church which is followed by that Day. We noted last week that Paul presented this order in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11. After the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. The shofar is also thought by the Jews to herald the messianic age which will follow the Rapture and the Day of the Lord. The Resurrection is thought by the Jews to occur on the Feast of Trumpets and we know the Resurrection of the Church saints happens at the Rapture. If the Rapture happens on the Feast of Trumpets, the Jews will be sent a signal that the Day of the Lord will follow. The penitential season the Rabbi mentioned is the Day of the Lord which is designed to bring Israel to a place of repentance and restoration. The Rapture will be a warning to them. Many Jews, of course, know nothing of the Rapture and don't care, but many of them do know and just don't believe it. When it happens, they will realize what is about to come upon them. This is all true whether the Rapture happens on the Feast of Trumpets or not; it will still be a sign to the Jews that judgment is to follow.

I believe it is possible the Feast of Trumpets will be fulfilled by the Rapture just as all the other Feasts are fulfilled in Christ and/or the Church which are the anti-types of the types the Feasts represent. What day, month, or year that will occur, no one knows—but I won't be surprised if it is on that very Feast day. It doesn't have to be, but the Rapture at least fulfills it. But if it doesn't happen on that day, the Rapture seems to be the warning that characterizes the various facets of the Feast of Trumpets and what follows.

This theory is not without its critics and they make a very good argument against it. Dr. Ice adamantly claims this view amounts to date setting and a violation of literal hermeneutics. I would urge you to read the piece he wrote on this issue. It may be found at pre-trib.org, click on the "articles" tab, the a author's of the article are in alphabetical order, find Ice's articles (which are alphabetized by article title), and find "Why Date Setting the Rapture is Wrong."

He believes times and seasons, chronology, and signs are all relate to God's earthly people Israel. I think that is true. The Church depends on revelation for its information. If the Feast of Trumpets is fulfilled by the Rapture, wouldn't that be an incredible sign to Israel that the Day of the Lord is about to come upon them? This also reminds us of the question asked a few weeks ago whether or not the people of the world will hear the

shout and the trumpet of God at the Rapture. Will that shofar be audible to the Jewish people at the Rapture? If it is, and at this point we simply do not know, that would be an incredible sign to the Jews.

Without getting too deeply into Dr. Ice's argument, I do disagree with some of it. He claims all seven feasts are fulfilled in and with Israel, but this seems to put any prophetic or typological understanding of the Feasts into a straitjacket that eliminates the future meaning. Yet, he also admits they have typological significance which presumably is for Christ and the church, but he doesn't say what that significance is. If Pentecost, for example, wasn't fulfilled in the creation of the Church as the anti-type, then what does it signify in terms of a type? Types always have anti-types or they cannot be considered types in the first place. Pentecost was the feast of the harvest. What better picture is there of the Church than a harvest? He also claims the Feast of Trumpets will be fulfilled at the Second Coming and he uses Matthew 24:31 as his proof. However, if the prophetic order of the Fall Feasts is as I maintain it is, then the Feast of Trumpets comes first, followed by the Day of the Lord, and then the Day of Atonement relates to the Second Coming and Matthew 24:31. The Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement do not both refer to the Second Coming which is what Dr. Ice seems to be suggesting. I completely disagree with him on that point as well. I maintain the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets does relate to Israel in that it will serve as a warning for what is about to befall them and even Ice agrees with that understanding. He wrote, "Thus, the Feast of Trumpets predicted God's alerting of the nation for the impending event which would bring about repentance." [<http://www.pretrib.org/data/pdf/Ice-WhyDate-SettingtheRa.pdf>, accessed 26 April 2017]. That is exactly the point I'm trying to make and that is what the Rapture may well do. It will be a major sign to Israel that the upcoming days of awe as they have understood them for centuries will this time be the Day of the Lord that will bring about national repentance and the coming of Messiah.

One other caveat to all this is the Jewish rituals and theology surrounding the Feast of Trumpets are mostly additions to its meanings that have developed over the centuries of Rabbinic Judaism. In other words, they are not necessarily entirely the result of the original biblical command to hold this Feast, however, they do have a biblical basis for much of their doctrine and their insights, deliberate or not, conform to the prophetic scenario as we understand it. I'm personally convinced that the Jewish rabbis do stumble onto a lot of truth even though they are persistent unbelievers. They just don't understand the real meaning of a lot of the doctrine they hold and I'm convinced much of what they do in relation to the Feast of Trumpets falls into this category.

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