



Let's start with a prayer.

You are probably all familiar with movie sequels. Hollywood makes a movie that is so successful that they are encouraged to make a follow-on movie. The follow-on movie may give more information about the characters in the original movie, it may portray new adventures, and it may introduce new characters.

Sometimes the sequel is also a hit, such as ***Toy Story 2***, and sometimes it is much worse than the original, such as ***Speed 2***. In some cases a whole host of sequels and spin-offs is born, such as ***Star Wars***.

Today, I want to talk to you about Jesus – the Sequel, which is guaranteed to be the biggest hit ever! In fact, there are really two sequels, but the first is like taking a movie straight to video.

The original story is the greatest selling book of all time, the Bible. And the sequels are also told in the original, but we haven't seen them released yet.

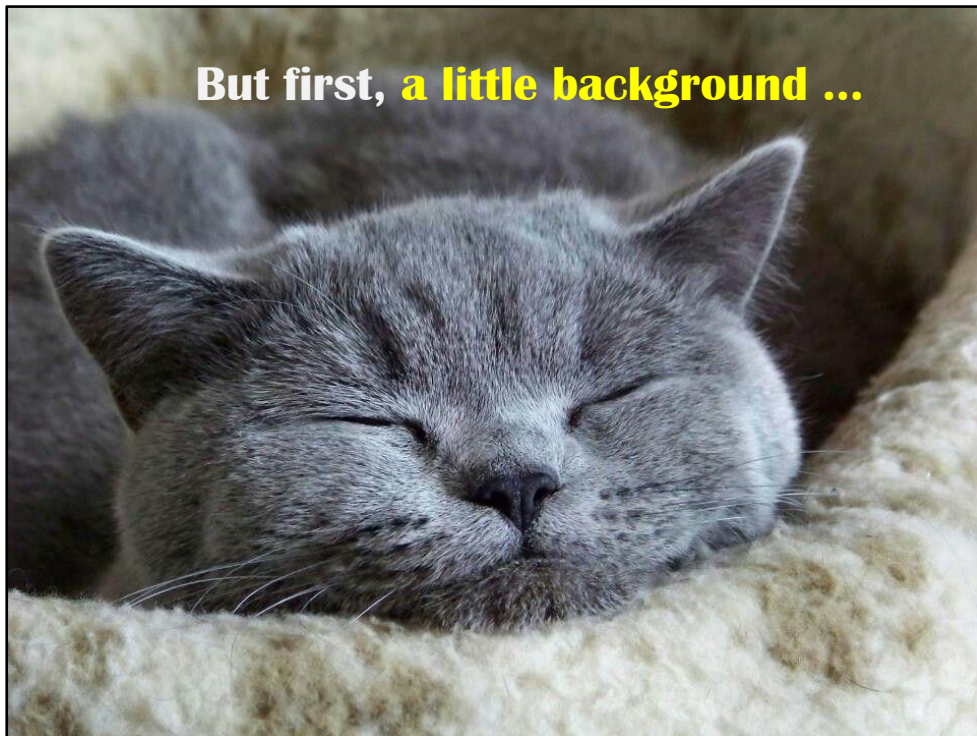
We live in very trying times! People are frightened to go out in public. The economy is struggling, and there are riots in several cities.

But we are not without hope! We have the Word of God to guide and sustain us. And that Word tells us to look up for our redemption draws nigh! Jesus – the Sequel is a message of hope.

Jesus in John 14:3 said, *"If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also."*

So, let's look at two upcoming events that are portrayed in the Bible that should give us all a reason to hope: the Rapture and the Second Coming.

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But first, let's go over a little background.

Okay, so why the cat? I like cats. And doesn't this make you feel better already?

In the interest of time, I won't be able to give all of the competing views of the Rapture and the Second Coming.

Jesus taught that a seven-year period of awful events would occur prior to His return. The first 3 ½ years of this period is known as the Tribulation, and the second 3 ½ years is known as the Great Tribulation. I am not going to be giving detail on this period, but please be aware that there are differing views on this. To find out more, read the Book of Revelation. The LORD blesses all who read and hear that book. Jesus said to "pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

In general, I will present a pre-tribulation view. This view holds that the Rapture will occur prior to the start of the seven-year Tribulation and that the Second Coming will occur at the end of the seven-year period.

In Matthew 24, after Jesus predicts the fall of the Temple, He and his disciples are sitting on the Mount of Olives. The disciples asked Jesus, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what is the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus' answer is known as the Olivet Discourse. Unpacking all that Jesus says would take multiple studies.

However, part of the discourse relates to our topic when Jesus refers to the Rapture by saying:

³⁷ *As the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be.*

³⁹ *They didn't know until the flood came and swept them all away. So this is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be:*

⁴⁴ *This is why you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

And Jesus refers to the Second Coming by saying:

²⁹ *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days: The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the celestial powers will be shaken.*

³⁰ *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

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Our first sequel is the Rapture. This is the sequel that I said was like a movie that is released straight to video.

What is the Rapture? It is a one-time future event where Believers who are alive on the Earth will be caught up into Heaven by Jesus. It is also the time when those who have already died in Christ, along with those who are caught up, will receive their resurrected bodies. This occurs in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

The rapture is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Here are verses 15 to 18:

¹⁵ *For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep.*

¹⁶ *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

¹⁷ *Then we who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so we will always be with the Lord.*

¹⁸ *Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

The Rapture is also described in 1 Corinthians 15:50-54. Here are verses 51 and 52:

⁵¹ *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

⁵² *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

There is plenty of controversy about the Rapture.

Some people point out the word "rapture" is not in the Bible. That is really not significant, because we use various words to describe biblical principles. As Greg Laurie points out, the word "trinity" is not in the Bible, and the word "Bible" is not in the Bible. The Greek word used for "caught up" in 1Thess 4:17 is the word "harpazo". The Latin translation of "harpazo" is "rapturos" from which we get the English word "rapture".

Some teach that the rapture was not taught until the 1800's. But we just read Paul's comments which were written around 51 and 55 AD respectively.

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The Rapture - continued

- **No signs precede**
- **Imminent**
- **No soul sleep**
- **No purgatory**

There are no special signs that precede the Rapture. Even though we know the signs of the times, we don't have a particular sign that tells us when Jesus will call us home. We also don't know the day or the hour when the Rapture will occur.

Why doesn't the Bible tell us this important information? That is because the LORD wants us to always be looking for His return. This is the doctrine of Imminency. We are to live as though Jesus may return for us at any moment. It could happen before I finish this message! The Apostle John said in 1John 3:2-3:

²Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is.

³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

So, believing that Jesus could return for us at any moment encourages us to lead more godly lives, it presses us to tell others the good news, and it keeps us focused on the LORD.

When Paul says in 1 Cor 15:51 that we shall not all sleep, he is not referring to "soul sleep". The term sleep that Paul uses means to die. He is really saying we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed. Then, in 2Cor 5:6-8 Paul says:

⁶So, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

⁷For we walk by faith, not by sight,

⁸and we are confident and satisfied to be out of the body and at home with the Lord.

So, when we are absent from our bodies, we will not sleep, we will be present with the LORD.

There is also no Biblical support for the idea of Purgatory. Instead, the writer of the Book of Hebrews says in Heb 9:27:

²⁷And just as it is appointed for people to die once — and after this, judgment —

So, if you are in Christ, then when you die you will go to be with the LORD. If you are not in Christ, then You will be eternally separated from the LORD: first in Hell, and lastly in the Lake of Fire.

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Now let's move on to sequel number 2, the Second Coming of Christ.

You should all be familiar with the first coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus left Heaven and became a man to die for our sins and open the way for our salvation.

The Jewish scholars of old believed that there were two Messiahs. This was because there are very different scriptures that describe the coming Messiah. One Messiah appears to be a suffering servant, such as we find in Is 53, and one Messiah appears to be a conquering king, such as we find in Is 9:6-7.

There was Mashiach ben Yoseph, the Messiah the son of Joseph, the suffering servant.

There was also Mashiach ben David, the Messiah the son of David, the conquering king.

So, how does this relate to the Second Coming?

The "second coming" is the term used to refer to the future event when Jesus will return to Earth, conquer His enemies, and reign as King of the world. He will return as Mashiach ben David and much more.

The book of Revelation describes the second coming of Jesus in chapter 19 verses 11 – 16.

¹¹*Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness.*

¹²*His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on His head. He had a name written that no one knows except Himself.*

¹³*He wore a robe stained with blood, and His name is the Word of God.*

¹⁴*The armies that were in heaven followed Him on white horses, wearing pure white linen.*

¹⁵*A sharp sword came from His mouth, so that He might strike the nations with it. He will shepherd them with an iron scepter. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty.*

¹⁶*And He has a name written on His robe and on His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

Unlike His first coming, being born in obscurity in a stable, Jesus' second coming will be a majestic and awesome event that nobody will miss! Rev 1:7 says, "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, including those who pierced Him. And all the families of the earth will mourn over Him. This is certain. Amen."

And who are the armies of Heaven following Jesus? It is none other than His bride, the Church!
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The Second Coming - continued

I read Heb 9:27 before, when I discussed the Rapture. However, verse 27 is only the first part of a clear description of the Second Coming. Here are verses 9:27 – 28:

*²⁷And just as it is appointed for people to die once — and after this, judgment —
²⁸so also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.*

The second coming is so significant in scripture that there are eight times more references to the Jesus' second coming than His first. In fact, as David Jeremiah states, "1 out of every 30 verses in the New Testament teaches us that Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth."

So, when Jesus returns where will He return? The answer is found in Zechariah. Zech 14:4 says:

"On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge valley, so that half the mountain will move to the north and half to the south."

Jesus defeats His enemies, and the Antichrist and the False Prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire.

Then, as we learn in Daniel 12:11-12, Jesus will be busy for 75 days after his return, setting up His government, and judging the nations, and more.

Then satan will be bound, and Jesus will begin to reign for 1,000 years.

Oh, there is so much more to tell about the Tribulation, the Marriage of the Lamb, and what follows the Second Coming, but that will have to wait for another message.

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The Rapture vs The 2 nd Coming	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Occurs <u>before</u> the tribulation Luke 21:36 2. Christ comes <u>for</u> His saints 1 Thess 4:13-17 3. Christ takes saints to <u>Heaven</u> John 14:3 4. Christ does <u>not</u> come to Earth 1 Thess 4:17 5. Christ is <u>not</u> seen 1 Cor 15:52 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Occurs <u>after</u> the tribulation Matt 24:29-30 2. Christ comes <u>with</u> His saints Rev 19:11-21 3. Christ brings saints to <u>Earth</u> Zech 14:4-5 4. Christ <u>does</u> come to Earth Zech 14:4-5 5. Every eye <u>shall</u> see Him Rev 1:7

Many people get confused between the Rapture and the Second Coming. They mix up the verses and think there are contradictions.

We have seen that these are two separate and distinct events. This chart should help you keep the events straight. In reality, there are several more comparisons that we could make, but I think these five comparisons are sufficient:

1. The Rapture occurs before the seven-year Tribulation, while the 2nd Coming occurs after the seven-year Tribulation.
2. In the Rapture, Jesus comes for His saints. In the 2nd Coming Jesus comes with His saints.
3. Jesus takes His saints to Heaven in the Rapture. Jesus brings His saints back to the Earth with Him in the 2nd Coming.
4. In the Rapture, Jesus meets us in the air, and He does not come down to the Earth. In the 2nd Coming, Jesus does come down to the Earth, and He will stand on the Mount of Olives as we read.
5. Lastly, in the Rapture, the people of the Earth do not see Jesus. In the 2nd Coming every eye shall see Jesus return.

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So, where are we now?

In Luke 21:8-11, Jesus gave us a hint:

⁸Then He said, "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Don't follow them.

⁹When you hear of wars and rebellions, don't be alarmed. Indeed, these things must take place first, but the end won't come right away."

¹⁰Then He told them: "Nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

¹¹There will be violent earthquakes, and famines and plagues in various places, and there will be terrifying sights and great signs from heaven.

Many believers think that we are in the end-times. I am not a prophet, but I have never seen so many prophecies being fulfilled and so many warnings from the Word showing up on the news each day.

So as the Bible says in Rom 13:11-12:

¹¹Besides this, knowing the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

¹²The night is nearly over, and the daylight is near, so let us discard the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

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The news seems very grim today. What can we do? Where do we turn in trying times?

Here's the good news! You are invited to be the friend of the true and living God!

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life

You are a whoever! You can know today on the authority of God Almighty that you are saved.

How? Well, if you are here or listening in, and you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then here is what to do.

The Bible says that you must turn from your sins. Then it says "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." You need to trust in Jesus as you would a parachute if you had to jump from an airplane.

That is all there is to it.

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