

## What Saith the Scripture?

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# How to Be Ready for the Rapture

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It is the height of conceit that we would ever think that we will make ourself ready to be raptured home to Heaven by the simple force of our will. "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). If we have learned anything about the LORD Jesus Christ, we have learned that "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). In other words, we must be trusting in His merit and *not* any so-called worthiness of our own for Salvation, Sanctification, and Eternity. "3 For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for Righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the Reward not reckoned of Grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that Justifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness" (Romans 4:3-5). In sum, our confidence and sufficiency is not in ourselves, but in God. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2Corinthians 3:5).

Having clearly established that we must presently be living "by the Faith of the Son of God, Who loved [us], and gave Himself for [us]" (Galatians 2:20), we can address how to be ready for the Rapture. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 24:44). However, in our attempt to properly emphasize the "Grace of God that bringeth Salvation" (Titus 2:11), we have a tendency to discount those Scriptures that make us responsible for our own readiness to meet the LORD Jesus Christ, when He returns for us in the Rapture. "Even so Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). It would be a grave mistake to assume that any action that we have taken in the past, will be sufficient *by itself* to ensure our readiness to be raptured. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, **that ye may be accounted worthy to escape** all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). Rather than relying upon any metaphysical formula from men promising that God will grant us the indulgence of our sins that we are committing or will commit-- and, still rapture us home to Heaven-- we ought rather to faithfully declare our absolute necessity of a continuing and practical holiness. "Follow Peace with all men, and Holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14).

What must we do to be ready for the Rapture? Our readiness to be raptured is summed up in the declaration, ***Trust Jesus for all things pertaining to life and to godliness.*** "According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of Him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue" (2Peter 1:3). Even those Professed Christians who have not yet been taught or understood that there is any such thing as a Rapture-- who do not realize that "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air" (1Thessalonians 4:17)-- will nonetheless be raptured, if they are at that time trusting Jesus for all things pertaining to life and godliness. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you

unawares" (Luke 21:34). If we needed a lengthy checklist to be assembled by theological divines to determine our readiness, then we will never have enough time to properly determine our condition before the LORD Jesus returns "in the twinkling of an eye" (1Corinthians 15:52). Only an active Faith in the LORD Jesus Christ *for everything* will find us ready to be raptured. "Have Faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

In practice, we can encourage our Faith-- and, thereby our readiness-- with the following suggestions.

- *First*, aim at walking after Christ Jesus perfectly. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). If we do not aim at walking perfectly after the LORD Jesus, then it is assured that we will miss the mark of the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). We must adopt the same standard by which God measures us-- nothing less than perfection of heart intent. "Be ye therefore Perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect" (Matthew 5:48). No doubt, in the flesh, we would feel much more comfortable tolerating and excusing our failures as unavoidable and defensible; but, in our heart, we would still understand the justice of our LORD's expectation of "perfecting Holiness in the fear of God" (2Corinthians 7:1). And, when we actually "do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1John 3:22), we should have the presence of mind to lay the credit at the feet of the LORD Jesus, who was at work in us "to will and to do of His Good Pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).
- *Second*, walk with the Holy Spirit as your Guide. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). If we would walk only as fast as we could prayerfully advance, we may not achieve much of what the world thinks we should accomplish in matters of employment, material possessions, esteem, or enjoyment, but we will be able to have the fellowship and guidance of the Spirit of Christ. "Teach me to do Thy Will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is Good; lead me into the Land of Uprightness" (Psalm 143:10). As Christians, we must remember that the greatest gift that God has given to us is His Son, who in turn has given us the gift of "Eternal Life" (Romans 6:23) and the "Gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Though the manifestations of the Spirit of Christ vary from individual to individual, *the main reason for the Spirit's ministry to us is to secure from us a heart of perpetual, loving obedience of the Almighty's commandments*, i.e., "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27).
- *Third*, confess your sins to the LORD as soon and as often as it is necessary to keep a "conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). God's faithfulness is demonstrated every time our backslidden actions have been forgiven, i.e., "If we confess our sins, He is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9). But, that is not to say that we should ever presume to commit sin *with* the confidence that we will be forgiven, for that would be treating God as if He had granted us the indulgence to sin. "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2). It is quite the contrary with God. He does not hold out any certainty of forgiveness for us, when we "sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth" (Hebrews 10:26). Instead, with Him "there remaineth no more Sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of

Judgment and Fiery Indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (10:27). Only when we have again thrown ourself at His Mercy could we possibly even hope to have the Spirit's Testimony that our backslidness has been forgiven. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in Mercy" (Micah 7:18).

- *Fourth*, commune with the LORD through the Word and prayer, as oft as you can. "7 Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? 8 If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold, Thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:7-10). Our ability to think God's Thoughts after Him is directly related to our pursuit of His Living Word. "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). We must sense our need of living "by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4)-- as Jesus did. "Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy Name, O LORD God of Hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16). Also, it should rejoice our heart that the Father invites us to continually pray to Him. "Pray without ceasing" (1Thessalonians 5:17). Attempt to pray about everything, for He is actually listening. "6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). "Rejoice evermore" (1Thessalonians 5:16) in His Goodness towards you and thank Him. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (5:18). Worship Him. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in Truth" (John 4:24). And especially, petition Him for deliverance from temptation, for we will only find success in overcoming sin, when we receive His Divine Assistance. "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil" (Luke 11:4).
- *Finally*, patiently occupy for the LORD Jesus Christ until He soon returns for us. "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13), for He said, "Behold, I come quickly" (Revelation 22:7). Gainful employment is our necessity i.e., "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19); but, however our God meets our physical needs-- He will-- and, we must cooperatively exert whatever is the necessary labour. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Use the Promises of God to keep your actions directed in the way that will magnify God and sanctify you. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4).

Whatever action you may undertake to fortify the Saints, restore the Backslidden, and win the Lost, is your opportunity to multiply the talents Christ has given you, for He has warned how He will reward or punish us according to our labour. "14 For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other

two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the Earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the Earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:14-30).

Maranatha!

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