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My Journey Learning About Christ's Second Coming



By Steven J. Hogan

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When I became a Christian back in 1972, Christ's second coming was a hot subject, and on the hearts of many in the church. Hal Lindsey's popular book on Bible prophecy, *"The Late Great Planet Earth"*, was being read by many believers. Larry Norman, referring to the rapture of the church, was singing, *"I Wish We'd All Been Ready."* Since the Jewish people were back in their land, the thinking was that the rapture would take place very soon, sometime in the next 10 to 20 years. But we were mistaken.

Fast forward to 1993. At that time, someone gave me Marv Rosenthal's book, the *"Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church."* Reading it with great interest, I quickly realized that Marv's position on the timing of the rapture was different than what I had been taught. His arguments made

sense, and most importantly, were Biblical. My wife and I then attended two of his prophecy conferences, in 1994 and again in 1995. We were both very excited about learning as much as we could about end-times prophecy, and I remember going up to Marv and asking him lots of questions. Not long after that, I read *"The Sign,"* by Robert Van Kampen, another very instructive book on prophecy.

It was good to learn from others, but I knew I needed to go to God's word and get my own convictions. I can't tell you how motivated I was, and still am, to study Bible prophecy, and that's because God has put that desire in my heart. At first, I wanted to find out when, in general, the rapture was going to take place. Was it really at the beginning of Daniel's 70th week? Was it before the great tribulation, or after it? After many hours of poring over prophecy passages, I became convinced that Christians will go through great tribulation, then be raptured and rescued before God's wrath, the Day of the Lord. I concluded that the rapture of the church was a pre-wrath rapture.

My interest in Bible prophecy kept growing, and I continued to read and re-read, and study and re-study passages that spoke about Christ's return, examining them carefully to find out what God wanted me to learn about His Son's second coming. There was Daniel, Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4-5, 2 Thessalonians 1-2, and the book of Revelation. I talked to a few church friends about what I was learning, and then began to teach it. There was a lot of interest, many questions, and some opposition.

About ten years later, I began to see how Israel fit into the prophecy picture. In my experience, there had always been a focus on the future of the church, but not much was said about the future of the Jewish people. But God kept showing me all these Old Testament verses describing His purposes and plans for His chosen people. What I also discovered was that God's work with the Jewish people was in conjunction and coinciding with His work with the church. My heart was so excited, for God kept revealing to me more truth about His future

plans, resulting in a greater understanding of end-times prophecy.

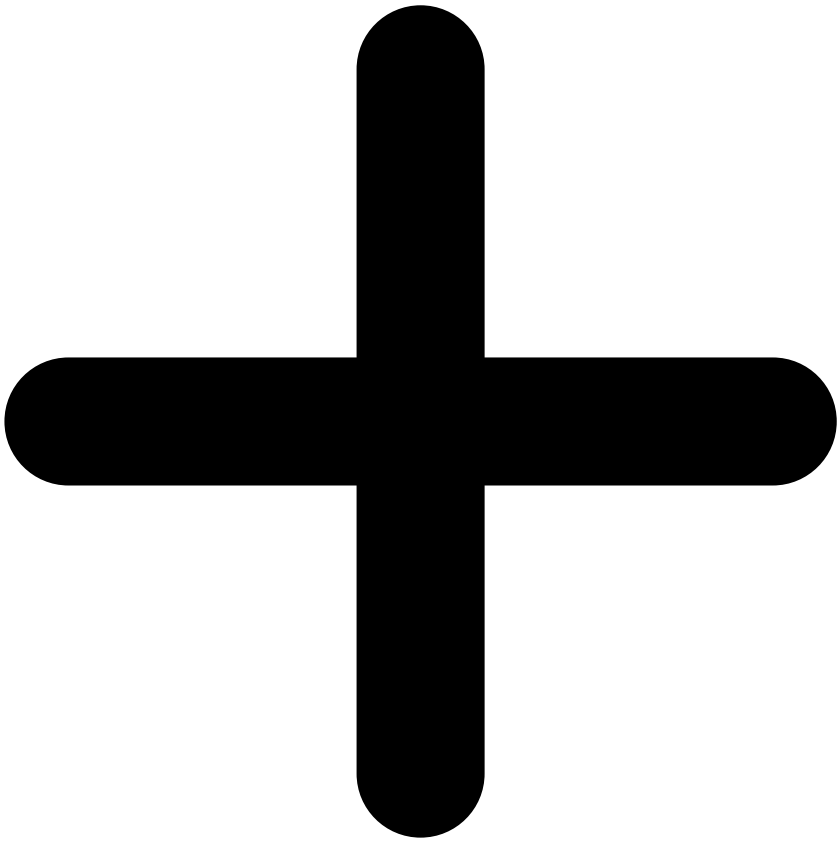
Then I started a monthly, Wednesday night Bible study on the end-times, Christ's second coming, and the future kingdom ages. Continually teaching about a Christian's future and hope has proven to be a tremendous blessing for me and my church. The preparation needed for these prophecy studies helped me to put all the pieces together, enabling me to see the big picture. First, there was the perfect age with Adam and Eve (Genesis 1-2). This was followed by the present evil age, starting with Adam's sin, continuing through God's work with Israel and the church, and ending with the rapture, the wrath of God, and the redemption of a Jewish remnant (Genesis 3 – Revelation 19). Then comes the millennial kingdom, a time when Jesus Christ, with believing Jews and Christians, will reign over the world for 1000 years (Revelation 20). At the end of that time, sin will be gone, death will be defeated, and Satan and all unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire. Finally, there will be the eternal kingdom, with the new heavens and new earth, and everything will be, absolutely and forever, perfect and glorious. Revelation 21-22

But what strikes me, what wakes me up at night, what really motivates me, is that this is our time to live. We are now living in the last years of this present evil age, and are so very close to the return of Christ and the rapture of the church. I can't tell you how excited I am to be alive, and to be able to live for God at this time in history! What a great honor, privilege and opportunity He has given each one of us!

For over 25 years, I've been pastoring a local church, first in Maryland and now in Florida. My primary purpose is to feed and care for the church, which I love to do. But since we live in the end-times, I also see it as my responsibility to prepare my church for the return of Christ, and to help them see the incredible hope we have from God. I want them, and you too (which is why I started this blog), to know Him, but to also know all about the future, to be excited about seeing Him, and to be telling others what will surely and soon take place, the coming of Jesus

Christ. My strong desire is that we all do business until He comes, be praying, *“Thy kingdom come,”* be preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and be looking for our Savior to return to earth and take us home to heaven. Luke 19:13; Matthew 6:9, 24:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

P.S. Another short history of my journey in learning about end-times Bible prophecy is at our About tab. I would also encourage you to check out Zion’s Hope’s website – there’s lots of excellent teaching and information found on that site.





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