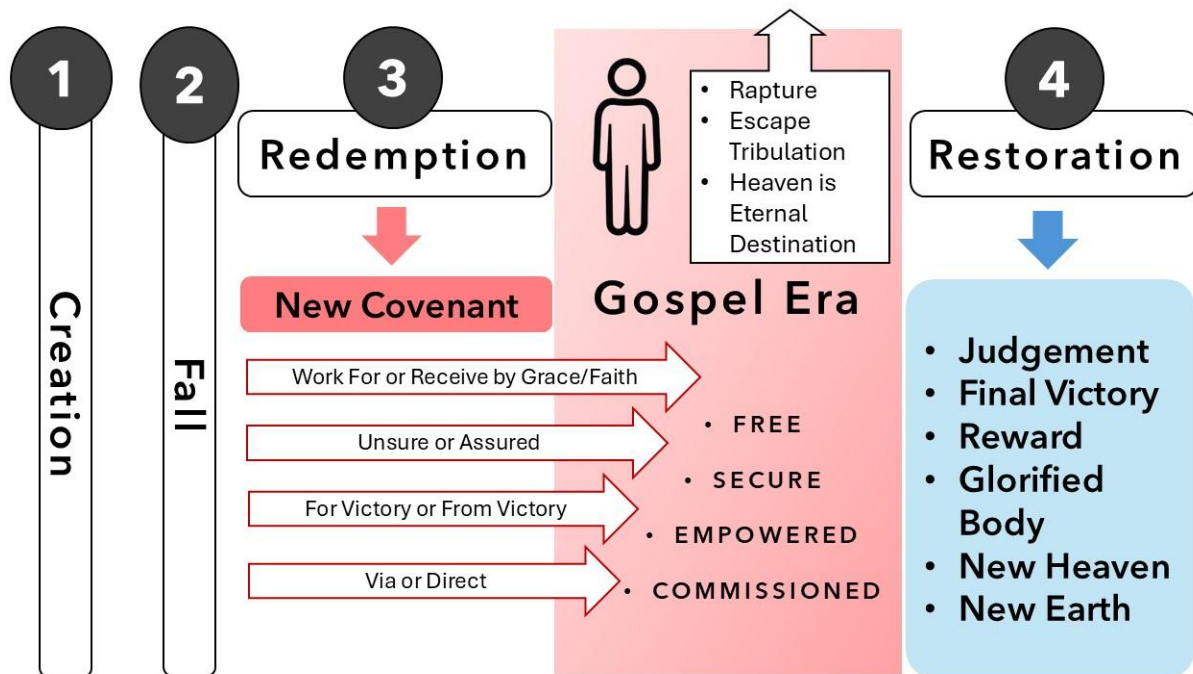


THE BIBLE STORYLINE and your part in it... (Part 3)

By Marius Gradwell
Christian Centre Abbotsford

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IS JESUS COMING BACK ONCE OR TWICE?

The Question of Christ's Return

- Will Christ return once or twice in the future?
- Two views:
 - Some believe in a "Rapture" (Takes the church out before tribulation) followed by a second coming for final judgment.
 - Others believe Christ will return once for judgment (punishment of unbelievers and rewards for believers – not judged for sin, but give an account of what they have done with salvation) and to establish His kingdom. A New Heaven and A New Earth. Uniting Heaven and Earth.

Scriptural Basis for One or Two Returns

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 ESV *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive, who are left, 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.*
 - Rapture teaching never includes the dead being raised.

- What happens when we *meet* the Lord in the air? We usher the King back into the city as the glorious victor over the enemies of Satan, sin and death. Imagery of ancient Roman practice.
 - “Caught up in the clouds ‘to meet’ the Lord in the air”
 - Used two other times in the New Testament.
 - Matthew 25:6 ESV *But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’*
 - Acts 28:15 ESV *And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.*
 - In both places, a group of people goes out to meet someone and accompany them back to where they just went from.
- Scripture promises protection during trials and tribulation and grace to endure trials; it is not consistent with Scripture to suggest that we escape tribulation.
 - 1 Peter 4:12 ESV *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*
 - Revelation 3:10 NLT *“Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world.*
- Matthew 24:40-41 ESV *Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. (41) Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.*
- Matthew 24:36-39 ESV *“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. (37) For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (38) For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, (39) and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*
- Luke 17:34-37 ESV *I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. (35) There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left.” (37) And they said to him, “Where, Lord?” He said to them, “Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”*
 - The wicked were taken away, and the righteous remained. This refers to unbelievers being taken in judgment, not believers being raptured.

Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Doctrine

- For 1800 years of Church history, Christians had no concept of the pre-tribulation rapture.
- **1830s:** John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren popularised the idea of a pre-tribulation rapture.

- Many believed he piggybacked off the comments made by a young girl named Margaret MacDonald who had a vision in 1830 of the end times and the Church being raptured from the earth.
- Popularised by C.I. Scofield's Reference Bible. (England and America)
- Scofield helped found Dallas Theological Seminary.
- D.L. Moody popularised and spread it further. Many of the Plymouth Brethren taught at his Bible Schools.
- Further spread through media, books, and movies (e.g., *Left Behind* series – sold 80 million copies).

The Concept of Resurrection and Heaven

- Resurrection affirms the rejoining of body and spirit, contrary to a disembodied existence.
- Heaven is viewed as temporary, with a new heaven and earth to come.
- **Revelation 21:** Describes God's eternal dwelling with humanity on a renewed earth.
- **Misconception:** Belief that heaven is an eternal disembodied existence.
- **Biblical Teaching:**
 - Resurrection involves a physical body; after death, believers await new bodies in the new heaven and earth (Revelation 21-22).
 - Eternal life will be lived in a **redeemed creation**, not a purely spiritual realm.

Conclusion

- Christ's return: a single, glorious event where He will **judge evil, redeem believers, and establish His eternal kingdom on a new earth.**
- This understanding emphasises **active faith and discipleship**, not escape, aligning with the Biblical mission to live out faith amid trials.