

Mystery of Mysteries: What if Jesus Comes Tomorrow?

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The word “mystery” is a noun and means “something that is difficult or impossible to understand or explain”. In the New Testament it is something that man cannot find out on his own but God reveals. Our Sunday school text *The Book of Mysteries* by Jonathan Cahn deals with 365 mysteries of the Bible. Week after week our group would meet and say, “I never thought of it that way!” The author, a Messianic Jew, shows the miraculous way all things were planned out and foretold from the Old Testament to the New Testament. He often gives the meaning of the Hebrew words which show how our great God has had a plan from the beginning. How Christ’s birth, death, resurrection all happened where and how they were pre-ordained. This morning I would like for us to look at some of these mysteries leading up to and including the mystery of mysteries, the return of Christ.

The Hebrew word for bread is lechem and it is the word used in Jewish prayers to represent food and substance. Bread is important because it is the staff of life. The word for place or house is beit. Beit lechem is the house of bread. Do you recognize if we put the two words together? Bethlehem. So that is where we find the bread that we need the most to sustain us. We find Him there. We find God come down into our lives. So, more than anything else in this world, we need Him. And, in our Communion service, don’t we say, when we receive the bread, “This is His body broken for you.” Friends, He is the bread of life!

And, in the writings of the ancient rabbis it is recorded that in the days of the second Temple, the only place where one could shepherd a flock was in the wilderness. But there was one exception - the lambs that were specifically destined for the Temple sacrifices, the sacrificial lambs were kept in close proximity to the Holy City. This place was Bethlehem. That’s why Messiah was born in Bethlehem. And, the shepherds were the first to see Him. When lambs are born the shepherds attend to their birth. So the Lamb of God was born among the sacrificial lambs for the same reason to be sacrificed in Jerusalem. The mystery was there from the beginning, from His birth.

And how about the mystery of the two trees? The first tree was the one in the Garden of Eden where through the partaking of the fruit came sin and death or the fall of man. The cross, made from the wood of the tree, is the second tree. Through the first tree, sin begins. Through the second tree, sin ends. Through the first tree man fell. Through the second tree man rises. And as God planted the first tree in the center of the garden, so He has planted the second tree in the center of history, the center of this world, so that all can partake of it and find life, and life eternal.

You know, on Communion Sunday we proclaim the mystery of faith: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again! And the last part of our proclamation is the mystery of the Rapture. Therefore, if Jesus comes tomorrow - What then? Probably we don’t give that enough thought. The way I see it, it is the good news for Christians because the Church won’t have to go through the Tribulation described in Revelation chapters 6-18.

Just as, God created everything in a sequential, chronological order, so too will He carry out His future plans of eternity when we shall be with Him forever and ever. And to put it another way, the mystery of forever and ever is the mystery of the Rapture. So what does the Bible tell us about this great mystery of mysteries - the next great event to happen to the believing church?

Now the word “rapture” is not found in the English Bible, but neither is ‘trinity,’ ‘fall of man,’ ‘depravity’ etc. but the truth, the teaching, the doctrine is taught there.

So, where do we get the word “Rapture” from? When the New Testament was translated from Greek to Latin and then into English, when they came to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 to the word caught up together with them in the clouds, the Greek word for caught up is *harpazo*. And the Latin translation was *rapture*. So the English word *rapture* comes from these two words.

The Bible gives us examples of people who were actually raptured. Enoch in Genesis 5; Elijah in 2 Kings 2, Isaiah 6, Jesus, Acts 1:11 and Revelation 12, Paul in 2 Corinthians: 12, and the apostle John in Revelation 4. Isaiah, Paul, and John came back to the earth.

The Revelation tells us of many things that have to happen during the Tribulation before the second coming of Christ. Unlike the Revelation, the Rapture has no signs or time sequence. It could happen at any time - it is imminent. There are three main passages in the New Testament which are the bedrock for the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church.

The first is Jesus’s promise to take us to His Father’s house. In John 14, 1-6, Jesus said: “Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15: 51-52

“Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep. But we all shall be changed, 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 evidence in the Bible that the church will not go through the Tribulation as found in Revelation 3:10. “Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all of the world to try those that dwell upon the earth.”

Therefore, as Jesus was speaking to the church of Philadelphia, He was speaking to all of the churches throughout church history, including our time.

What if Jesus does come tomorrow? The good news for Christians is the Rapture!

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!