

## Abraham's Petition and the End Times

We can learn a lot about the end times from the story of Abraham. He traveled and wandered through different lands and places toward what God had promised to him. It was a tough road sometimes, but he obeyed and listened to God's voice. He departed from his homeland, Haran, with his nephew Lot. After a while, they decided to part from each other as the land wasn't large enough for the livestock of both groups, and there was strife between their herdsman.

Abraham let Lot decide where he would head, and he chose the best-looking land without knowing that it was the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose people were exceedingly wicked and immoral (Genesis 13:5-13).

It happened that after a time, the Lord decided to destroy that land because the outcry against it and its sin was great, and He saw their wickedness. He appeared to Abraham and said to him: "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done

altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know” (Genesis 18:20-21).

This is the part of the story that has to do with the end times. Why? Because God is always the same. He doesn't change. If He couldn't bear certain things at that time and if His patience could run out at a certain point, the same could happen now. As 2 Peter 3:8-9 tells us, “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

When the people of this world mock and ask why His coming is delayed, we must tell them that it is because of His longsuffering and patience. This means He is patient now, but His patience will eventually run out. In the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, sin was common in their lands. It was their lifestyle, and it was considered as something completely common and normal. The time will come and in part has already started when what was considered as something wrong by society is suddenly something normal and a matter of choice to do or not.

Today, you don't have to hide anymore to do certain things that before were considered taboo. They were not only considered taboo by society but were also wrong in front of God. With time, what was

considered evil has been deemed good and accepted even by the law itself, and what was good is slowly becoming taboo, uncommon, and pointed out as something wrong (Isaiah 5:20).

This is a danger. We see this drastic change in our society today. I will not list all the wrongs and the sins committed today, but you know well that your parents or grandparents didn't even imagine all the things we as a society today accept, things that in their day were rarely even seen or heard of. Topics like divorce, immorality, relationships in disorder, drug abuse, and same-sex marriage – are openly discussed and promoted in today's society and even in schools.

Returning to our story about Abraham and Lot, we can see that the condition in which God found Sodom and Gomorrah was similar to our condition now. Some would ask, "Yes, but why is He not coming yet? We keep doing all these things, and no punishment or even a sign of His disapproval can be seen."

I would not agree with this because I think He is showing His disapproval, but not in the way we expect Him to. We all expect to see Him coming now in the clouds and showing all His majesty. This will eventually happen, but it will be at the very end, and then it might be too late for any other action or choice we need to make. He is showing His disapproval now in different ways, even through nature. He is just not showing all of His discontent toward sin at present because He still wants to give us an opportunity.

The other reason I can point out to those asking why He is not showing up and coming now is that it hasn't actually been a long time since we have lived in such an extreme and immoral way. Immorality and wickedness have always been there in the world, but the Lord will come when this immorality becomes unsupportable. The trend toward ungodliness, even at extreme levels, has been around for fifty or sixty years. I am speaking about fifty or sixty years because this is the time in which many taboos have fallen, even on a global level, and have become a promoted fashion in our culture, and many people follow that. Things that can make the Lord furious and He cannot stand have been accepted as something normal. Nevertheless, He still has patience, and because of His love, He still waits for people to repent. This is the reason why He doesn't show His wrath now. If we had lived a longer time in the immoral way we live today, then yes, we could probably consider the fact that He is delaying, but even this is relative, as only He knows the purpose and the exact time established for Him to come. But it is not only a question of how long we've lived this way, but how low society's moral values are getting. As said earlier, there has always been immorality in the world, but when it is generally accepted by society and considered the ordinary way of life on a global level, it is something different.

The story of Noah and the flood has similarities with what we can expect at the end times. There, as well, the sin was so much that God

wasn't able to bear it anymore. "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (Genesis 6:5-6).

My thought on this passage is that as people before the flood lived longer, they developed sin more in their lives. My opinion on why they lived for so long is first because the Lord had decided so, and second because of the natural and atmospheric conditions in which they lived, as the Bible says that there wasn't any rain before the flood. People used to live up to 700-800 years, and in this way, as we already said, they advanced into sin. This is what provoked the Lord to bring the end through water (flood) and probably to decide to shorten the longevity of their life to how we know it today.

"And the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years'" (Genesis 6:3).

He said this just before the flood. We can see He also did that for good because He knew that if the man continued to live longer, he would develop sin more and, in this way, would be harder to reach salvation and be saved. What is most important is salvation and eternal life.

Today, we often see that the older someone is, the more he has advanced into sin and the harder his heart is toward God.

Imagine how it was when people lived for over 700 years, as the Bible says. What we nevertheless see today is that even though man doesn't live as long, he is still advancing toward sin because of the knowledge he has and the overwhelming information he is surrounded with and can access effortlessly. The information we have today can be used for good but also wrong, as it is generally done. Everything today is moving in a faster way.

From these events, we see that there is a limit to God's patience. We can say that when nothing else can be done, when there is no possibility for the gospel and God to break through with His light, then the end will probably come. Obviously, God can do anything anywhere, and His light can penetrate the deepest darkness, but He has also established things to be done in a certain way. We see an example in Genesis 18:22-33 where Abraham conversed with the Lord after He had told him that the end of Sodom and Gomorrah was coming.

Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. And Abraham came near and said, "*Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous*

should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who *am but* dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for *lack of five*?"

So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*."

And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* for the sake of forty."

Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* if I find thirty there."

And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of twenty."

Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

And He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten."

So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

We see here that Abraham started conversing with the Lord to see if He was still going to destroy the city if righteous men were found in it.

“And Abraham came near and said, ‘*Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*’” (Genesis 18:23, emphasis added).

After that, he started to make a kind of petition and ask Him what He would do if there were fifty righteous persons, and the Lord told him that He wouldn’t destroy the place because of these men. Abraham kept on asking, and from fifty, he asked what would happen if there were forty, and then he kept on asking Him until he arrived at the number ten (Genesis 18:32).

For a long time, when I read this story, I thought that when they talked, they arrived at the number of one righteous man only, or they meant that without mentioning it. Then I noticed that they had stopped at the number **ten**, meaning that if there were at least ten righteous persons, God wouldn’t destroy the city. I also wondered why God brought the end when there was at least one righteous man, Lot, but he was indeed the only one, and the last number they had stopped at while conversing was ten.

There was only one righteous man and not ten. The one righteous man was Lot. This is the reason why the end came upon that place. Because there weren’t enough righteous people. This means that if there are righteous men in a certain place, God won’t bring the end there. When I talk about righteous persons, I don’t talk about people who are righteous by themselves but people who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. That is what makes them righteous. Obviously, after

being redeemed, they also change their ways and seek to walk in righteousness. The righteous men, the Christians, preserve the earth. They are like the salt of the earth, and what the salt does is preserve. This is one of the qualities for which it is used.

As it happened in the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, so it will happen in these times. Until there are no righteous men on the earth, even a few, God will not bring the end. Now, we need to see what *few* means. If ten were enough in a place like a city such as Sodom, and that was the last number through which the judgment could've been avoided, we need to see what that will mean for the whole earth. What would be the number?

All of this means that as long as there is hope and potential for the gospel to be shared so that more people can be saved, the end won't come. People today don't know what they are doing when inventing new laws and obstacles hindering the gospel's proclamation. All of this is just causing the end to come sooner. The purpose of God is to reign on this earth so that the gospel can be proclaimed. And in which way can it be done if not through the Christians, as this is the way it needs to be done?

While there are believers here, He can still reign on the earth, and His kingdom can be seen through those who believe. Once this becomes impossible, and the iniquity gets to an even higher level, He will have to finish everything and create a new earth on which His ultimate kingdom and justice will reign. But until then, He wants to save as many persons

as He can, and that's why He is withholding His ultimate kingdom and justice now for the love of those who need to be saved. There will eventually come a time in which the gospel is not available. It will be hard to be preached and shared.

The greatest iniquity is not just expressed in certain crimes or immorality but mainly in taking God completely out of the picture and replacing good with evil, or better said, calling what is evil good, and in this way, people would not be able to see and acknowledge their own iniquity.

It is good that the laws of God are still used in our moral code, but when they are removed and replaced with the world's way of defining justice, it will be a problem. We can look at the people in past generations, for example. Speaking in general, their morals were better than today's people's. There was still evil and immorality, but the people had to hide from doing certain things and were also ashamed of them if they did them, while today, the same things are done openly without any shame or regret. They are just considered by those doing them and by many others as something normal.

I am not saying that the people from the past were saints. They were also sinners who needed to repent, but their view on immorality was different. Doing many of the things that people are trying to say are acceptable today was still considered wrong. They knew when they were doing something wrong. That's the difference. When you do something

wrong, you know that you have to repent, but when the wrong you are doing is considered completely normal for you, and there is no law or something to tell you it is wrong, that's a problem. This is the attitude that God doesn't accept. When people don't feel ashamed of their condition.

“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore, they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish them, they shall be cast down,” says the LORD” (Jeremiah 6:15).

The downfall of today's society will be when the knowledge of evil and good is completely distorted. It is already going in that direction, but there will be a time when it will reach its peak. “Where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy *is* he who keeps the law” (Proverbs 29:18).

Here, we can see how a nation without a vision and guidance from God perishes. We see how our society these days is slowly removing and changing the original laws and principles we had, which were based on the laws of God. The role of the law is not to change anyone because it can't, but at least it can show people they are wrong, which can bring them to the realization of their condition and repentance. But how will they realize it if they grow up and live in a society that doesn't teach them what is right and wrong, good or evil, and has something else for

laws and principles rather than what God states? How will they know if what is wrong is considered good and vice versa?

Returning to Abraham's story and the questions he asked the Lord concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, we see that they stopped at the number ten. We can compare this situation to the end times, which are about to come, as God is always the same, and He will deal with situations similarly as He doesn't change throughout time.

There are some points of view here that slightly differ from each other because we also don't know the exact way things will turn at the end times. It is not something simple we can discuss and take positions on; as Jesus Himself told us, there are things that we won't be able to know. He told us to be watchful and ready, which was His main message, and He said to us that we wouldn't know the exact hour He would come.

Many people have different points of view concerning the end times, and they stick firmly to them. I personally don't have strong and firm convictions on all the points. I am sure and firm on what He told us about His return and that we need to be watchful and ready, which is the most important. At the same time, I don't know the exact way or time that will happen, as some things are not meant for us to know because the Bible states so and also because the most important is to be ready for it. We can know, though, if He is close as He gave us a comparison in Matthew 24:32-35 in which He says that the signs of His coming are as

the leaves of a fig tree and the summer's approaching. Just as the summer approaches when we see leaves appearing on the fig tree, so His coming is close when we see the signs.

One thing that probably doesn't directly have to do with the events of the end times but is important in our Christian life and how we can stay watchful is the way a believer needs to live. We can see that Lot was the only believer there, and if there were at least ten, God wouldn't have destroyed the place.

I think Lot's duty was to spread and share with others what he knew about the Lord. We can think that he probably did it and nobody listened to him, but we can also think that he was probably a believer who didn't spend much of his time trying to do that in his everyday life. Why? Because the moment he tried to warn his sons-in-law about the coming end, they thought he was joking (Genesis 19:14). They were probably not used to him talking on that topic, or perhaps his life did not represent the image of what he was warning them about at that moment.

The other thing was that his wife looked like she was so attached to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. We know it because she looked back at the end and, in this way, turned into a statue of salt. The point here is not that she looked back but that she desired what was left behind. Okay, I also know that many believers have family members who don't share their faith, and this is something that happens. These people are still faithful to God and do everything possible for the gospel.

Lot's situation looked quite different. There was also the fact that he chose to live in places such as Sodom and Gomorrah. Yes, if someone stays in ungodly and dangerous places with the purpose of bringing a light there, that is fine and is actually what we are called to. To be a light. Still, Lot and his household's main reason was another, such as the land which they chose looked fruitful and well-watered (Genesis 13:10-11). That prevailed over God's purposes.

To all these factors, we can add the behavior of his daughters after they escaped with him (Genesis 19:30-33). It is clear they weren't used to living the right way, probably because they didn't hear much about it and were not raised that way. Even if they did hear it, it probably wasn't emphasized to them as something of prime importance. We can also say that they may have heard the message presented to them in a proper way, but rebelled and didn't accept it. Based on the circumstances, however, I am keen to think they didn't hear much about it.

By all of this, we can see plenty of indicators that Lot was probably not performing his duties as a believer in the best way. Yes, he was a righteous man, but he probably kept this righteousness more to himself. Nevertheless, we are called to share it with others. The Bible speaks about people who build on the right foundation but use materials that perish easily, such as wood, hay, and straw.

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the

Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

It looks like there are some people who build with materials that endure fire and others who build with materials that do not.

They will be saved, but as through fire, the same as Lot was. In Lot's case, he was indeed saved through fire as the city where he lived burned, but I am speaking figuratively about the fire in our case. Fire represents a form of a trial. The way someone builds brings obviously consequences. I know that today, there are imperfections in my life, but I would like to trust in God for that. The greatest imperfection in Lot was perhaps not in his life but in the fact that he probably didn't share what he knew about the Lord with others.

Going back to the topic of the end times, we can see that when there were not enough righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah, its end came. We can compare it with the present situation. There are still righteous men on the earth, but one day, when they are no more, the end will come. It will happen when there is no more possibility for sharing the gospel. If we look at the future situation, there might be *two ways* in which there will be no more righteous persons on the earth one day.

When I speak about righteous persons, I obviously speak about people who have been saved by the Lord.



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### ***Post-tribulation rapture***

The first case we will look at, and the way this can happen, is that the laws and the way of life will be changed drastically, and the godliness and the positive Christian influence will decrease significantly. The righteous persons will become fewer. It would happen as in the days of Lot. As he was the only one, in the same way in that time, those who are righteous because they are saved, and Christ's righteousness has

been applied to them, will be very few, and the Lord will take them (rapture them), and the end will come.

We see today how the regulations prohibiting Christians from sharing the gospel with others are increasing. With the new age cultural movement and in education, Christianity and God are not welcome. This idea supports the theory of a post-tribulation rapture, meaning that the Christians will go through the great tribulation, and after that, when immorality and lawlessness are at their peak, they will be taken. Their number will decrease because of the growing opposition toward the gospel. The number of true Christians will decrease because of the opposition, the difficulty of sharing the gospel, and the increasing immorality in society. Their numbers will probably decrease because there won't any longer be so many new converts to Christianity. I mean that the people from the new coming generation will come harder to the faith. One of the reasons will be that the gospel will be no longer available as before. It won't be preached freely as before and might be prohibited. We already see that it has been taken out of some of the schools. The moral values, in general, will be changed, the same as in the times of Sodom and Gomorrah.

We hope, though, that these times will not come quickly, and we can still have the opportunity to proclaim the good news. It needs to be done in any circumstance, though. However, there will be times when the opposition toward the gospel will grow so much that God will not be

able to bear it anymore. He will take the believers, meaning that the rapture will occur, and the end will come immediately after that, same as in the case of Lot. He was taken out of Sodom and Gomorrah, and their end came right after that. As we said before, this is the case of post-tribulation rapture, when the Christians go through the great tribulation and are taken after that. Whether there is a pre-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture, the end will come because there will no longer be believers and salt on the earth. In the case of the pre-tribulation rapture, it is because the believers are taken, and after that, the immorality and the extreme difficulty will come, so much that God will not bear it. In the post-tribulation, their number will decrease because of the difficulty and the opposition itself, and after that, the few left will be taken (raptured). In both cases, we see that the reason for which God's patience will finish will be because the iniquity will take total control, and Satan will try to establish his kingdom fully here on earth.

There is a doctrine sustained by some believers, saying that there will be a great revival taking place at the end times. To me, this idea fits more with the pre-tribulation rapture, but I cannot say if it will exactly happen in that way. We don't know if there will be one great revival or various revivals happening at a specific time around the world. People believing that, take as a reference the prophecy found in Joel 2:28-32, saying that God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. This part of the scripture is also cited in the book of Acts chapter 2 when the Holy Spirit

was first given to the believers. Therefore, we don't know how exactly it will happen, but as believers, we need to always hope for a revival. One thing is sure. This is that with the growing materialism and moving away from God's principles, we can see that people are getting more depleted, empty, and depressed. We think we advance and progress but see more desperation each time. This is because we are not meant to live in such a way. This factor could push people to seek God's help and to repent. It won't be anymore because it is part of their culture but because they will see their need. Their condition will make them do it. Still, how would they know what to do if they never heard of it (Romans 10:14)? That's why our duty today and in the future, more than ever, is to proclaim the gospel. People's condition nowadays, which is the result of today's lifestyle, is the one that might indicate that some people will turn to God in the last days, and there might be some revival. Their need and desperation, despite the variety of solutions and comfort the world offers, will make them do that.

### ***Pre-tribulation rapture***

I support the idea of the rapture as this is biblical, and I think it will happen, but I just cannot say which one it will be—pre- or post-tribulation. I don't know because God is the one who will decide when it will happen, and some things are hidden from us.

As we said already, the other way in which could happen is that the Christians will be raptured first, and the great tribulation will start then. This is the pre-tribulation rapture. So, the decrease of the righteous people on the earth will happen because God will take them away. This is because He won't let them go through the exceedingly bad trials that will take place on the earth.

In both cases, the end will come when there are no longer righteous people on earth. Surely, God wants to preserve His people from the judgment. The question is whether they will be preserved from the great tribulation, or they will go through that and then be raptured after it. This is a mystery for us. What we need to do is be ready and watchful and share the good news with others.

Although the discussion we made before about the way Lot lived and what he was supposed to do seems to be somewhat off the topic of the end times and the signs of them, it is actually close to the matter. What we are supposed to do in these perilous times is to share the gospel as much as we can, as the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

Again, we don't know if the rapture will happen before the great tribulation, in the midst of it, or after it. Midtribulationists believe that rapture occurs in the midst of the tribulation or, better said, in the midst of the Antichrist's manifestation. He will appear, and according to them as it is written in the book of Daniel 7:25, he will have authority over the

saints for three and a half years, after which the saints will be raptured. Around that time, the Antichrist will be ultimately revealed when “the abomination that causes desolation” occurs (Matthew 24:15, Daniel 11:31, 12:11). After this, the other half of the tribulation will start. This is the “great tribulation”, of which is written in Revelation 7:14. This is how midtribulationists think the end times will unfold. They also believe, like the pretribulationists that the church will be spared from the wrath of God, which, according to them, is manifested at the time of the great tribulation—the last three and a half years before Christ’s second coming when His kingdom will be established on earth. Those three and a half years are thought to have to do with the seven bows’ judgment written in the book of Revelation 16. The difference between midtribulationists and pretribulationists is that they believe believers will go through part of the tribulation, which will occur in the last days. Still, it won’t be the worst part of it. With this, I am just stating what this doctrine believes and not confirming that it will happen exactly this way. This is about future prophecies, and we need to consider almost all points of view and extract the essential teaching that could help us be ready for those days.

We also don’t know if when the Bible in the book of Revelation speaks about the wrath of God (Revelation 11:18), it refers to an end that will occur in a moment or the great tribulation. There are verses pointing out that the wrath of God will be poured on the earth, and it will happen

over a period of time and will not just come in a moment. “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete” (Revelation 15:1).

In this verse, we see that with the seven angels having the seven last plagues, the wrath of God is complete. This means that God's wrath had already started before the seven angels' event, leading us to think that this wrath doesn't represent just a single moment. If it says that with these seven angels having the seven last plagues, the wrath of God is complete, it means that it started already before that. By this, we can assume that it will not happen in a way that everything will be fine, and then all of a sudden, the end will come. It could happen gradually.

To me, the tribulation and the fact that God will not just end everything in a moment means that He will do it with a purpose so that people can reflect on their condition and repent. This is what trials are for; those we are going through now and those that will come to the whole world—to draw people to Himself and to repentance. Otherwise, He would end everything in a moment without any warning. But He is a God of compassion, and He warns us about danger, about things that could happen because He doesn't want us to perish. Unfortunately, as the Bible says, there will be people who won't pay attention to these warnings.

Maybe we are not meant to know all things, but something will happen. When a few Christians are left, and they cannot do much more for the kingdom because of the great opposition, they will be taken. We are starting to see this opposition now. We didn't expect it in the times we are living in now with all of the freedom of speech and rights everyone has. It seems that Christians don't have these rights because they are shut down and oppressed while the rest of the people are free to express themselves.

So, we don't know how much more time there will be until the total opposition to Christianity takes place, but in recent years, we can see things moving in that direction.

One of the things that somehow makes me think that there will be a rapture is the growing opposition toward it. We see the enemy's attacks on the idea of rapture. We see media; we see certain secular movies that distort its concept, the way, and the purpose with which it will happen. Haven't you thought, why in so many science fiction movies, there have been represented alien abductions and people mysteriously disappearing all of a sudden? All of this has been shown obviously in a negative way. This is already an enemy's deceit, prepared perhaps for what is about to come. When the rapture happens one day, and the people start wondering what just happened, there will be already an answer that will state probably aliens had abducted people or that something else mysterious happened. All of this will be with the purpose of distracting

people from the idea that God is involved in all this. Revelation 16:13-16 states that there will be a battle in the last days. That battle will be at a place called Armageddon, and people will probably be fighting without knowing who they are fighting against because of the deception they will fall for.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.” (Revelation 16:13-16)

They will not know they are fighting against God. They will be blinded, follow the demons’ deceit, as it is said in Revelation 16:14, and probably fight the battle thinking that they are fighting against someone else. This is the enemy’s purpose – to distract people’s minds from God. He doesn’t want them to get involved with Him.

As we said, we don’t know the exact way the rapture will happen. We’ve seen movies about it and heard stories and opinions, but the question is not how exactly, but the purpose with which it will happen. For us, there is nothing else left but to listen to the Bible exhorting us to

be always ready. “Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming*” (Matthew 24:40-42, emphasis added.)

Notice that these verses speak about persons who will be taken and others who will be left behind. These passages are placed right before the exhortation to be watchful because we don't know the exact hour at which He is coming. We don't know when exactly the second coming of Jesus will happen and in which way. It is wrong to say and define with precision the time and the way in which it will happen. When I talk about the second coming of Christ, I also refer to the rapture. I am taking as a reference Matthew 24:30-31, which says that after He appears in heaven, and all the tribes see Him, He will send His angels, and they will gather together His elect.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29-32).

This passage makes us keener to think that Christians will be taken after the tribulation,, as verse 29 speaks about a tribulation that will take place. After that, in verse 30, it mentions His coming, but I'll leave everyone to decide for himself. What is certain, and we know for sure, is that we need to be ready.

Many people made mistakes when predicting the date throughout history. God doesn't want us to know all the things at once, and we are not meant to know some things because they are meant to be taken by faith and because faith is needed for salvation. We might imagine how His coming could happen, but it might not occur that way.

For example, movies about rapture give us an idea of what could happen and warn us to be ready, but this is just how the movie makers imagine it could happen.

The issue is that people want the rapture to happen tomorrow, and when they don't see it happening, they start to question the Word of God. But Peter said it well in 2 Peter 3:1-4: "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: *that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things*

*continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:1-4, emphasis added).*

We read in 2 Peter 3:8-9, “But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

We see here the main purpose of God “delaying” His promise of coming back and redeeming His elect. It is because He still wants people to know Him and be saved. He looks differently at time from the way we do, and His eyes see much further than what we can see or imagine. He sees the complete picture of our redemption. What an amazing God we have! The best thing we can do is to trust Him!

