

The Rapture and the Return of Christ

Two Future Events. Different Purposes.

The Rapture



- Christ comes for His Church
- Believers meet the Lord in the air
- A source of comfort and hope
- Happens before the Tribulation

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3



The Return of Christ



- Christ comes with His saints
- He returns visibly to the earth
- Brings judgment and defeats evil
- Follows the Tribulation

Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11-16; Zechariah 14:4

KEY DIFFERENCE

Rapture: Christ comes for believers

Return: Christ comes with believers



TWO FUTURE JUDGMENTS

Different People. Different Purposes. Perfect Justice.

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST



FOR BELIEVERS ONLY

- Concerns rewards, not condemnation
- Works evaluated
- Salvation secure in Christ
- Motivates faithfulness
- Linked with heavenly reward

2 CORINTHIANS 5:10
ROMANS 14:10-12
1 CORINTHIANS 3:12-15



GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

FOR THE UNSAVED DEAD

- Final judgment before God
- Books are opened
- People judged according to their deeds
- Anyone not in the Book of Life is condemned
- Ends in the lake of fire

REVELATION 20:11-15



GOD IS JUST. GOD IS GOOD. GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES.



**CLAYTON
COMMUNITY
CHURCH**

SUNDAY BULLETIN

August 30, 2026

GET CONNECTED

CONTACT US

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OUR LOCATION

2501 Rockford Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63144

ONLINE

ClaytonCommunityChurch.com
FB: ClaytonCommunityChurch

From Before Time to Beyond Time

The Story of God and His Kingdom

ORDER OF SERVICE

- Call to Worship – Pastor Paul
- Open the Eyes of My Heart & Hear My Cry
- Corporate Confession - Pastor Matthew
- Let Us Adore / Sing Halleluja
- Scripture Readings Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b; Matthew 16:21-28 - Nathan
- Lamb of God
- Message - Pastor Matthew
- He Shall Reign Over All The Earth
- Closing Prayer & Benediction - Pastor Ed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Check our website for calendar of events, weekly bulletin, Zoom connection, and information to get “plugged in” to one of our ministries: claytoncommunitychurch.com.

WAYS TO GIVE

Online

claytoncommunitychurch.com/give

In Person

Cash or check via giving envelopes. The Giving Box is to the right of the worship center as you exit.

Mail

Mail checks to:
Clayton Community Church
2501 Rockford Ave, St. Louis, MO 63144



UPCOMING EVENTS

Every Tuesday 6 pm: Prayer meeting via Zoom

Every Tuesday 7 pm: Bible Study via Zoom

September 4 6:30 pm: Small Group Bible Study – Selay's

September 10 6:30 pm: Small Group Bible Study – Nagles'

September 11 Lord's Supper & Ladies' Luncheon

September 19 8am-12pm Church Work Day

September 20 Pizza/Salad, Help the church improve guests 1st impressions video training and discussion

CLAYTON KIDS CHURCH

Nursery and Kids Church is available babies to 10 years old. Kids are dismissed right before the sermon.

SERMON NOTES

See Handout

The Kingdom: Already / Not Yet

Jesus has won the victory, but the final completion is still coming.



ALREADY



The King has come



Christ has died and risen



Satan's defeat is certain



The Spirit has been poured out



The Church is sent into the world



NOT YET



Enemies still resist



Suffering still remains



Death still occurs



Creation still groans



Spiritual battle continues



Christ will return



CROSS & RESURRECTION



THE CHURCH AGE
We live between



CHRIST RETURNS
Final completion



The victory is won. The full completion is coming!

From Before Time to Beyond Time Part 2

The Story of God and His Kingdom | Foundation Text: Galatians 4:4–5

BIG IDEA: From eternity past to eternity future, God is carrying out one sovereign purpose: to bring all things under the reign of Jesus Christ, defeat every enemy, redeem a people for Himself, and restore creation so that God may be all in all.

INTRODUCTION — EVERY SHADOW POINTS TO CHRIST

- The Old Testament leaves us searching for Someone: a new Adam, a true Ark, the Seed of Abraham, the Lamb of God, a greater Moses, the true Bread, the true Temple, the great High Priest, and the Son of David.
- Every shadow is pointing forward. Every promise is waiting for fulfillment. Every unanswered question is preparing us for Jesus.

Scripture: Malachi 4:5–6

IV. FULLNESS OF TIME — THE INCARNATION OF THE MESSIAH

- When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son. Everything before this point was moving here; everything after it flows from here.

Scripture: Galatians 4:4–5

THE KING COMES TO HIS KINGDOM

- The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The promised King arrived: the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the Servant of Isaiah, the Son of Man.
- Jesus proclaimed: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.”

Scripture: John 1:14; Mark 1:14–15

THE PRESENT REALITY OF HIS REIGN

- The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil.
- Jesus heals, forgives, casts out demons, and raises the dead. These are signs that God's Kingdom has invaded enemy territory.

Scripture: Matthew 12:28; 1 John 3:8; John 10:10

THE SECRET OF THE KINGDOM — ALREADY AND NOT YET

- Already — the King has come, the decisive battle has been won, and the future Kingdom has broken into the present.
- Not Yet — the final consummation awaits Christ's return, when every enemy will be fully removed.
- We fight from victory, not for victory. Jesus must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:9–10; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Ephesians 6:10–20

THE CRUCIFIED KING AND RISEN LORD

- At the cross Jesus bears our sin, takes our condemnation, reconciles us to God, breaks Satan's accusation, and defeats the powers.
- The King wins by dying.
- Christ has been raised from the dead. His resurrection is the beginning of new creation.

Scripture: Colossians 2:14–15; Isaiah 53:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20

V. THE LAST TIMES — THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- This is where we are in the Story: Christ has come, died, risen, and ascended; the Spirit has been poured out; the Church waits for the return of the King.

Scripture: Acts 2:16–18

THE CHURCH BETWEEN THE TIMES

- Believers have tasted the powers of the age to come. The Church is meant to give the world a foretaste of God's coming Kingdom.
- The King has all authority; therefore the Church goes — preaching the Gospel, making disciples, serving, loving, reconciling, and bearing witness among the nations.

Scripture: Hebrews 6:5; Matthew 28:18–20; Colossians 1:13

VI. THE FULFILLMENT OF TIME — THE SECOND COMING

- History has a destination. The King is coming again.

Scripture: Matthew 13:39–43

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

- The dead in Christ will rise, living believers will be caught up with them, and meet the Lord.
- The Rapture is a source of hope, not fear. Death is not final; believers will be reunited in Christ.
- It should produce readiness and expectancy. We should live ready to meet Christ.
- At Clayton, we understand the Rapture as occurring before a seven-year Tribulation, followed later by Christ's visible return.

Scripture: Revelation 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

THE RETURN, JUDGMENT, AND FINAL FULFILLMENT

- The same Jesus will return personally, bodily, visibly, and gloriously.
- God has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness. Every wrong will be addressed and every enemy confronted.
- The Kingdom inaugurated at Christ's first coming will be consummated at His second.

Scripture: Acts 1:11; Acts 17:31; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 11:15

VII. BEYOND TIME — ETERNITY FUTURE

- Every rival kingdom will fall, every rebellious power will be defeated, and the last enemy — death — will be destroyed.
- God will dwell with His people. Every tear will be wiped away. Death, mourning, pain, and the curse will be no more.
- The Bible begins with creation and ends with new creation. The Story comes full circle.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; Revelation 21:3–5; Revelation 22

WHERE ARE WE IN THE STORY?

- I. Before Time — God Purposed
- II. Beginning of Time — God Created; Humanity Rebelled
- III. Unfolding of Time — God Promised and Prepared
- IV. Fullness of Time — The King Came and Conquered
- V. Last Times — The Spirit Came and the Church Was Sent ← WE ARE HERE
- VI. Fulfillment of Time — The King Will Return
- VII. Beyond Time — God Will Be All in All

CONCLUSION — LEARN, LOVE, AND LIVE THE STORY

- Learn the Story — Know more than isolated Bible stories; know the Story those stories belong to.
- Love the Story — Let God's purposes become larger than your own. You are not the hero, Jesus is.
- Live the Story — Proclaim, Serve, Love, Make Disciples and Wait faithfully for the King.

**The victory has been won. The final fulfillment is still coming.
Through Jesus Christ, God has invited us to find our place in His Story.**