June 1,2022

Blessing to all and make the Grace of God be upon you and your family. As I was looking through my library for June BSL topic, it occurred to me this letter was going to be the 27th BSL written. I hope my Lord gives me time to do 27 more. I enjoy doing these letters because it’s a bible study all to myself and I get to share it with you and on this topic, I included personal words about myself. For this month BSL will be**"Events prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ”**. There is a lot of bible scripture on this topic and I tried to keep it as condensed as possible. Each event could be a letter all by itself.

And to you fathers out there, "Happy Father Day”. . .

So, let’s get started.

Your Brother in Christ, Tony Gonzalez

**1 Peter 3:15**

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense** to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

**Events prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

In His first coming, Jesus was the suffering Servant. In His second coming, Jesus will be the conquering King. In His first coming, Jesus arrived in the humblest of circumstances. In His second coming, Jesus will arrive with the armies of heaven at His side. With that said, let’s don’t get confuse of what scripture says of events that will happen prior to His return. I for one in my early years as a ‘born again believer” did not know the event differences of Jesus and what bible called His Second Coming. I thought it was all one in the same, that is “Armageddon”.

At this time, I would like to say something about the night I got saved which leads up to this letter. I felt like God spoke to me, not verbally but in my mind and whatever reason I didn’t think about it till the next day. I remember the words He said “read my word”. I didn’t understand the meaning right away but the more I thought about it, God reveal to me where to find the answers that were on my mind for years. Being brought up in the Catholic church, I was never encouraged by the church to read the bible. To be honest, I never gave it a thought the bible was God’s word. Was I the only one thinking this way, I don’t think so. There might be someone out there right now who never gave it a thought as I did. To this day, I believe God has given me the task of spreading His word as He told His disciples to do the same.

**Rapture of the His Church**

After reading many prophecy scriptures, bible studies, reading various books, I realized there were two separate events prior to His second coming to bring in the millennium. Let’s break it down and discuss each one individually. For this writing, I will be using the Pre-Tribulation view which says the Rapture will come prior to the Tribulation.

Let’s talk about the word “rapture”. If you try to find the word “rapture” in scripture, you will not find it. So, where we do find this event of Jesus appearance? **1 Thessalonians 4:14-18**

* **14** For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.
* **15** For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.
* **16**  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.
* **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Note, Jesus will ***descend*** from heaven . . . will be ***caught up . . .*** ***in the clouds*** ***to meet the Lord in the air***. It does not say He will set foot on earth but ***descend***from heaven*,* will be ***caught up*** (harpazo / rapture). This is where the word rapture is taken from in the Latin Vulgate bible which appears in the English Bible as “caught up”. The word in the Greek translation is “harpazo”. Then it states ***in the clouds*** ***to meet the Lord in the air***. We are to meet the Lord in the air not on the ground. This event is only an appearance of Jesus ***in the clouds*** and not His Second coming that will come later. Also, this event will not be seen by the world, for it will be unknown to the world of unbelievers at the time of its happening.

**Israel Invasion**

 The next event is a time of war, not Armageddon but war against Israel. Here we are talking about the invasion of Israel. This event it is said takes place *after* the Rapture and *before* the Tribulation yet some scholars say it takes place during the Tribulation and others say after the Tribulation. At this time, I cannot cover all three views in full detail but will tell you what scripture says about the war and God responses.

Scripture gives us information about the invasion of Israel in the book of **Ezekiel 38** and **39**. A short summary on these two chapters is as follows. In **Ezekiel** **38:2,5 & 6**, Our Lord tells Ezekiel where exactly these people are coming from: Gog (a title of a person) and Magog (former Soviet Republics) **Ezekiel 38:2.** Persia (Iran), Cush (Sudan), Put (Libya) **Ezekiel 38:5**, Gomer-Beth-Togarmah (Turkey) **Ezekiel 38:6**. The invaders are Muslim nations led by Rosh (Russia), and in **Ezekiel 38:15** the Lord tells us the direction the invasion will be coming from - *“You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army”.*

 So, now we know who and where the invasion is coming from and would like to point out that at this time Israel is all alone to do battle with the invasion forces. Let’s see what God does to these invaders. In **Ezekiel 38:18** says *“But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger”*. Israel does not need any nations to help her with God on their side. **Ezekiel 38:19-22 *- 19*** *For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, on that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.* ***20*** *The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground.* ***21*** *I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother.* ***22*** *With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur.*

**Ezekiel 39** continues to describe His wrath and the aftermath of the invading forces. Too much to describe on this letter. I say again, this is an event of war and God interfering on behalf of Israel and not to be confuse with the Second Coming of Christ.

 To do a quick review of what you just read, the Rapture has happened, Gog and Magod invades Israel and now Armageddon that leads to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

**Armageddon**

Between the defeat of Gog and Magod and “Armageddon” scripture does not tell us the time between the two. It could be days, weeks or months, no one knows the time or the hour, but we do know it is coming and why. The word Armageddon literally means “Mount of Megiddo” and it truly exist today about 60 miles north of Jerusalem. You may be shocked, if you don’t already know, that Armageddon is mentioned only one time by name in the bible.

**Revelation 16:16** -*“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”* Why are we having another battle one might ask? The War of Armageddon is, first of all, a great rebellion against God –

**Revelation 13:4** – *And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”*

This battle will consist of nations of the world lead by the antichrist/satan and the goal of the coalition will be once and for all to destroy the Jewish people and Jerusalem. The bible gives us so much information in regards to this battle. Here are but a few:

**Revelation 16:14 -** *For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.*

**Revelation 16:16 -** *And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.*

**Zechariah 14:2 -** *For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*

**Joel 3:2 -**  *I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land,*

 Base on the scripture above, we see the words “*to assemble”, “they assembled”, “will gather”* indicates *Armageddon* is just a staging area for the battle to take place in Jerusalem.

Needless to say, this battle of Jerusalem is the prelude to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. At this time, Jesus will confront the antichrist and his forces and slay them with the sword of his mouth that describes as instant defeat.

**Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

**Revelation 19:11-16** describe Jesus coming down from heaven *- “to strike down the nations*”

***11*** *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.* ***12*** *His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.* ***13*** *He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.* ***14*** *And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.* ***15*** *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.* ***16*** *On his robe and on his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords*.

**Habakkuk 3:13** from the Old Testament describes it this way: *You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck***.**

**Zechariah 14:4 -** tells us: *On that day, his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.* The whole world will see Him.

**Zechariah 12:10 *-*** *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.*

**Revelation 1:7 -** *Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*

**Titus 2:13** called this appearance *“waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”*.

The bible gives us more reference to His Second Coming and I hope I encourage you to study the events leading to His return. What follows after His Second Coming is the “Millennium” followed by the “New Heaven and a New Earth” which you should already have these BSL’s.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:5-6