BE ALERT: THE STAGES OF THE RAPTURE ARE UNFOLDING

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us continue to reflect on the words of eternal life.

Are you aware that the process of preparing those who will be raptured has already begun? The question is: which stage are you in?

Scripture reveals that the Lord’s return to take His bride will not be an isolated, sudden event for everyone. There are distinct stages, and only those who are already walking in them will be ready when the final trumpet sounds. This is not meant to take the prepared by surprise.

Let us carefully examine what Scripture says:

> *1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 (NKJV):*

> *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”*

Notice that this passage outlines three key phases in the descent of the Lord:

1. A shout,

2. The voice of an archangel,

3. The trumpet of God.

Often, believers focus only on the final trumpet, assuming that is when the rapture will take place. But the Word clearly shows that

two significant steps precede it: the shout and the voice of the archangel. You cannot hear the trumpet of God if you have not responded to the earlier calls.

Let’s break down each stage to better understand what they mean for us today:

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1. THE SHOUT – THE INVITATION

The purpose of the rapture is for the church to be taken to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, a heavenly celebration prepared by Christ for His bride (Revelation 19:9; John 14:1–3).

Just as no one attends a wedding without being invited, so too must we receive and respond to a divine invitation to be part of that great event. Jesus illustrated this in a parable:

> *Matthew 22:2–3, 8–10 (NKJV):*
> “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come... Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready,

> but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out...and the wedding hall was filled with guests."

The first invitees in the parable represent Israel, who largely rejected Christ. As a result, the invitation was extended to the Gentiles—those of us who were once far from God (see Matthew 23:37–39; Acts 13:46).

But accepting the invitation alone is not enough. In the parable, a guest is later found without proper wedding garments and is cast out (Matthew 22:11–13). This symbolizes those who claim salvation but have not been transformed by it.

Revelation gives us clarity:

> *Revelation 19:7–8 (NKJV):*
> "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts

> of the saints.”

The fine linen—the wedding garment—is holiness, a life marked by repentance, righteousness, and obedience. It is not enough to say you’re a believer; you must live as one.

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2. THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL – THE FINAL CALL TO PURITY

The second stage in 1 Thessalonians 4 is the voice of the archangel. This represents a final warning and call to readiness for the bride of Christ.

In the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1–13), the cry at midnight, *“Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!”*, is that voice of warning. Five virgins were wise and had oil (symbolizing the Holy Spirit and a sanctified life); the other five were foolish and unprepared.

This stage calls for spiritual sobriety. The voice of the archangel echoes the messages to the churches in Revelation, especially the final one:

> *Revelation 3:15–18 (NKJV):*
> "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot...because you are lukewarm...I will vomit you out of My mouth...buy from Me gold refined in the fire...and white garments, that you may be clothed."

This is not the time for complacency. The church of Laodicea, representing the final era of the church before Christ's return, is rebuked for being lukewarm. We must respond to this voice by pursuing holiness and casting off compromise.

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3. THE TRUMPET OF GOD – THE MOMENT OF RAPTURE

Only after the shout and the voice comes the trumpet. This is the final call, the moment of catching away—the rapture.

> *1 Corinthians 15:51–52 (NKJV):*
> "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall

> be changed."

Those who have responded to the Lord's call, kept their garments pure, and walked in holiness will be raptured. Those who have died in Christ will be resurrected first. But those who live in compromise—even if they attend church—will be left behind.

Do not be deceived. The rapture will not be for every churchgoer or every person who once made a confession. Jesus warned:

> *Matthew 24:40–41 (NKJV):*
> "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."

Don't be left behind.

Today, many live double lives—worshiping God on Sunday and

indulging in worldly pleasures the rest of the week. This is the lukewarmness Christ warned about. The Rapture is imminent. All the signs Jesus mentioned (in Matthew 24, Luke 21, 2 Timothy 3) are being fulfilled in our generation.

If you have not yet given your life to Jesus, or you've been living lukewarm, now is the time to repent and follow Him with all your heart.

There is still time to respond to the shout. There is still time to listen to the voice of the archangel. But when the trumpet sounds—it will be too late to prepare.

Have you responded to the call? Have you put on the garment of righteousness? Are you walking in holiness?

Shalom.

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