

# HOW DO WE PRAY IN AGREEMENT WITH VARYING END-TIMES INTERPRETATIONS?

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In recent months, there has been growing speculation about signs and symbols in the heavens and escalating world events predicting a soon-coming Rapture and Great Tribulation. At the same time, there is also a growing segment of the Church that isn't looking for a Rapture, but a great spiritual Revival with the best days of the Church still ahead.

There are well-known and respected leaders on both sides of the issue. Best-selling authors and several key evangelical leaders have been prominent proponents of the Rapture interpretations. The *Left Behind* series (books and films) has had a huge impact on the Church. Yet, John Wesley, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, and many of the early Church Fathers and historians including Josephus, believed the tribulation that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:21 already happened within the first century church.

These differences of biblical interpretation have been around for centuries and they will probably continue in the days to come. The challenge we face as intercessors is finding that place of agreement where we can be *"...like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind"* (Phil 2:2). **If we are not standing in faith for our future, we may nullify our own intercession in the present.**

Perhaps the best approach is to look at those things that we CAN agree on and purpose to make those our goal in intercession. Given the increased turmoil in the world amid political and social unrest, let's use the Word of God as an anchor for unified prayer. Here are some suggestions:

## **WE STAND TOGETHER IN FAITH AND NOT FEAR**

*"...if indeed you continue in the faith, firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard"* (Col 1:23).

We have a spiritual adversary that will never relent. The spirit of fear is rampant around the world and we must keep our hearts and minds fixed on God's goodness and His triumphant love. We must continually magnify Him and not the apparent darkness. Faith is what pleases God (Heb 11:6). Let us give more time and attention to what God is doing rather than on what the enemy is doing.

## **JESUS IS RETURNING FOR A RADIANT BRIDE**

*"Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless"* (Eph 5:25-27).

It is to the Father's glory that the Bride of Christ is ready for the return of the Bridegroom. He is looking for a Bride that is held in honor (*radiant*), free of moral faults (*without stain*), not old and tired (*without wrinkle*), blameless (*holy*), and free of any blemish (*without moral blame or rebuke*). UNTIL we demonstrate this reality, we have work to do. Let us pray that we would become a Bride that is fitting for the King.

### **THE LOST NEED TO BE SAVED**

*“Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ He said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news’ ” (Mark 1:14-15)!*

We must never forget what we were commissioned to do — preach the gospel of the kingdom of God so that the lost will be saved and empowered for eternity. Every day until Jesus returns provides another opportunity for those in darkness to see the light. Let us use this time wisely as good stewards of this good news.

### **WE ARE TO OCCUPY UNTIL HE RETURNS**

*“The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:20).*

*“And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, ‘Occupy till I come’” (Luke 19:13 KJV).*

Scripture is clear that no one knows when Jesus is returning (Matt 24:36). What we do know is that we are here as ambassadors of another kingdom – His kingdom. It has always been God’s intention for His sons and daughters to represent Him here and demonstrate the power of that kingdom (Rom 8:19). Until He returns, let’s embrace our call and determine to be *“...like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind” (Phil 2:20).*