

The Rapture

The word *rapture* is not directly mentioned in the Bible. The term is taken from Latin and simply means “a carrying off” or a “snatching away.” This concept, however, is clearly taught in Scripture as an event primarily described in 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. According to these passages, all Believers will experience a bodily transformation at the return of Jesus. This bodily transformation will also involve a supernatural resurrection for many. Believers who have died in the past will resurrect first before receiving glorified bodies. Together we will meet Jesus in the air as He returns with the forces of heaven to subdue the world and relinquish authority from Satan:

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Cor. 15:52).

For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever (1 Thes. 4:16–17).

So when exactly will this important event occur? According to most Bible scholars, the rapture of the Church hinges on the timing of the tribulation period. Christians believe the rapture must happen either before (pre-tribulation), during (mid-tribulation), or after (post-tribulation) the Great Tribulation. In this article, I will proceed to show clear evidence for the post-tribulation rapture.

The New Testament mentions the tribulation period approximately four times (Mat 24:21; 29; Mark 13:24; Rev 7:14). It is alluded to, however, in other places also. The tribulation is simply a time of global crisis like none other in human history (Mat 24:21). It will consist of horrific judgments and a massive decline in humanity's population due to God's wrath.

In the following scripture passages we will discover clear evidence for the rapture occurring “immediately after the tribulation” or post-tribulation. As you will see, the Bible places this event at the “last day” of human history or the “last trumpet”. Notice these verses:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Mat. 24:29-31).

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven (Mark 13:24-27).

*And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, **but should raise it up again at the last day**. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and **I will raise him up at the last day**. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and **I will raise him up at the last day**. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and **I will raise him up at the last day**. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day (Jn. 6:39; 40; 44; 54; 11:24).*

*For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that **He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth**: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25-26).*

*And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before the great and terrible day of the Lord come**. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call (Joel 2:30-32).*

So based on the evidence in the above verses, we can be certain that the rapture occurs immediately after the tribulation, not before or after it. It is also significant that 1 Corinthians 15:52 tells us that the rapture will be signaled by the blast of the “last trumpet”. This clue is important because it helps us connect the timing of the rapture to the end of human history, or immediately after the conclusion of the Great Tribulation. We can be certain of this simply because the last trumpet is mentioned directly in Revelation 11 where it is used to herald the end of all things and the return of Christ: *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*** (Rev. 11:15).

But many might be surprised to learn of a different kind of “rapture”. And unlike the one Christians anticipate with great hope, this one will involve the unbelievers only:

*Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, **Gather ye together first the tares [unbelievers], and bind them in bundles to burn them:** but gather the wheat [Believers] into my barn (Mat. 13:30).*

*Then shall two be in the field; **the one shall be taken**, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; **the one shall be taken**, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; **the one shall be taken**, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, **Where, Lord?** And he said unto them, **Wheresoever the body [or carcass] is, thither will the eagles [or vultures] be gathered together.... For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles [or vultures] be gathered together.** (Luke 17:34-37; Matthew 24:28).*

Notice that in Matthew 13:30 **the wicked are slain and removed from the earth prior to the rapture of the righteous**. Similarly, the passages in Luke 17 and Matthew 24 describe the same judgment. What we discover is the systematic elimination of up to half of mankind. One in every two individuals (50% of humanity) will perish and turn into food for the vultures/eagles during the tribulation period. So contrary to the popular view, these passages do not describe the blessed rapture. Those who are said to be taken, “the one shall be taken”, are taken to their death.

The “Thief in the Night” Scenario

Most Christians are undoubtedly familiar with the teaching of a secret rapture. The

“thief in the night” scenario in which the Church disappears as if stolen away by a thief is a very popular notion. However, it is largely flawed and unscriptural. Here are some verses to consider:

*But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. **For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.** For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief** (1 Thes. 5:1-4).*

***Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (2 Thes 2:3-4).*

In the above passages, Apostle Paul is advising the Church not to remain ignorant regarding the timing or season of Christ’s return. Christians are not to be left in the dark in respect to this important event, “**ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief**”. So Paul is kind enough to advise us concerning the events that must preclude Christ's Coming so that we know exactly what to look out for. As a result, we are told that the rapture cannot occur until two important events transpire: 1) the “falling away” (or apostasy of Believers), and 2) the “man of sin” (antichrist) appears and sets himself up in the temple of God as if He were God. These two events must occur prior to the return of Christ.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I hope this teaching presented compelling evidence for a post-tribulation rapture. Clearly, from what we have read so far, this important event will not happen suddenly and without warning as many teachers claim. Rather, we are to anticipate the coming of Christ at the last day of human history and only after the last trumpet has sounded. We also realize that we must vigilantly watch for the two precluding events leading up to the rapture, namely the “falling away” (in mass) of Believers and the incarnation of satan in the form of the antichrist. Doing so will help us better prepare for the future ahead.

In Christ,

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