

## RAPTURE

The Bible tells us that one day millions of people will suddenly disappear from the face of the Earth in less than a millisecond. This evacuation will remove God's people from the coming disastrous effect of the tribulation. There will be two stages for Jesus's 2nd Coming. First, He comes for His church before the Tribulation. Second, He will come back again after the 7-year Tribulation period to establish His Kingdom here on Earth and the Millennial reign. Matt. 24-25 give us many signs to the Jesus's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, no sign will be given for the rapture of His church. Nothing must happen for the rapture to occur. It could happen at any moment. We are only told to be ready. No one knows the day or the hour (1 Thess. 5:1-2).

Those Who refute the rapture believe that it is a recent doctrine first mentioned by Margaret McDonald and John Nelson Darby in 1830. However, the English noun/verb "*rapture*" comes from the Latin noun *raptura*/verb *rapio* that is used 14 times in the NT.

The basic idea of the word is "*to remove suddenly or snatch away*." It is used in the NT in reference to stealing/plundering (Matt. 11:12; 12:29; 13:19; John 10:12, 28, 29) and removing (John 6:15; Acts 8:39; 23:10; Jude 23). There is a third use, which focuses on being caught up to heaven. It is used of Paul's third heaven experience (2 Cor. 12:2, 4) and Christ's ascension to heaven.

1 Thess. 4:16–17 unquestionably refers to a rapture, *harpazo* is translated "caught up":

*"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** (Harpazo) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

Paul spells out the 7 stages of the chronological sequence of the Rapture:

1. *The Lord Himself will descend.*
2. *With a shout.* The Greek word used is that of a command by a military leader.
3. *With the voice of an archangel.* Angels are often used in God's work. In this scenario Michael the Archangel will be used.
4. *With the trumpet of God.* The sound of the trumpet was used to either summon people for battle, or worship. The trumpet sound triggers the rapture event.
5. *The dead in Christ shall rise first.* The words "in Christ" limits this rapture to believers. The O.T. saints' bodies will be resurrected at another time (Rev. 20). It gets a little confusing at this point. How do we reconcile this with passage like 2 Cor. 5:8, where it says: "*We are confident I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home (not the store At Home 😊) with the Lord.*" How do we reconcile Moses and Elijah being present at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:3)? The dead bodies are reunited with their spirits at the rapture.
6. *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (Harpazo) together with them in the clouds.* Every believer without exception will be removed from the Earth and will be united with Jesus in Heaven until the Lord comes back at the end of the Tribulation period (7 years), and we will return with Him

after the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7), another reason for pre-trib rapture because immediately afterwards is the Lord's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

*7. To meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Notice that this can't be the Lord's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming because Jesus's feet do not touch the ground. When Jesus comes for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming His feet will touch down on the Mount of Olives ( see Acts1:9-12), and it will split in two. (Zech. 14:4).

We will permanently remain with Him and return with Him to Heaven. As already promised in John 14:1-3, and will return with Him when He comes again to establish His millennial Kingdom after the 7 years of tribulation (see Rev. 19:14).

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 refers to the same eschatological event as 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17: *“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”*

So, it can be concluded from Scripture that the concept of the rapture did not originate in 1830.

The Church Is Not Mentioned in Revelation 4–18 as being on Earth. The common NT term for “church” (ekklesia) is used 19 times in Revelation 1–3, however, “church” is then used only once more in the twenty-two-chapter book, and that is at the very end (22:16) when John returns to addressing the first-century church. Nowhere during the period of Daniel's seventieth week is the term for “church” used for believers on earth (cf. Rev. 4–19).

Also, John shifts from detailed instructions for the church to complete silence about the church in the subsequent 13 chapters, (which is weird if, in fact, the church did continue into the tribulation). If the church will experience the tribulation of Daniel's seventieth week, then you would think that the most detailed study of tribulation events would include an account of the church's role—but it does not. Only the pre-trib timing of the rapture would account for the frequent mention of “church” in Revelation 1–3 and the total absence of the “church” on earth until Revelation 22:16.

In addition, nowhere in Scripture is it taught that the church and Israel would coexist together as God's instruments of redemption in Last Days. Today, the church God's human channel of redemption. Revelation shows us that the Jewish remnant, and not the church, will be God's human instrument during Daniel's seventieth week. The narrative abruptly shifts from the “church” in Revelation 2–3 to the 144,000 Jews from the twelve tribes in Revelation 4-19. Why? The Tribulation period focuses on the nation of Israel, not the church because a pretribulational rapture has removed the “church” from the earth prior to Daniel's seventieth week.

Also, nowhere in Scripture is the church warned about the coming tribulation. God's instructions to the church through the epistles contain a variety of warnings, but never do they warn believers to prepare for entering and enduring the tribulation of Daniel's seventieth week.

The Scripture warns about the coming error and false prophets (see Acts 20:29–30; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1–3; Jude 4). Scripture warns us against ungodly living (see Eph. 4:25–5:7; 1 Thess. 4:3–8; Heb. 12:1). Scripture even admonish believers to endure in the midst of present tribulation (see 1 Thess. 2:13–14; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Peter). However, there is absolute silence on preparing the church for any kind of tribulation like that found in Revelation 6–18.

It doesn't fit the pattern that the Scriptures would be silent about such a traumatic change for the church. If the pre-trib rapture were not true you would expect the Scripture to teach the reality of the church in the tribulation, the purpose of the church in the tribulation, and the conduct of the church in the tribulation. However, there is no teaching whatsoever. Only a pretribulational rapture satisfactorily explains this silence.

If you compare John 14:1–3, with 1 Thess 4:13–18, note the close parallels between the promises of John 14:1–3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. First, the promise of a presence with Christ: “. . . that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3) and “. . . thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17). Second, the promise of comfort: “Let not your heart be troubled . . .” (John 14:1) and “Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:18).

Also, if you compare what happens at the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50–58 with what happens in the final events of Christ's second coming in Matthew 24–25, at least **8 differences** are observable. These differences make it obvious that the rapture must occur at a time different from that of the final event of Christ's second coming.

1. At the rapture, Christ comes in the air and returns to heaven (1 4:17), but at the final event of the second coming, Christ comes to the earth to dwell and reign (Matt. 25:31–32).
2. At the rapture, Christ gathers His own (1 Thess. 4:16–17), but at the final event of the second coming, angels gather the elect (Matt. 24:31).
3. At the rapture, Christ comes to reward (1 Thess. 4:17), but at the final event of the second coming, Christ comes to judge (Matt. 25:31–46).
4. At the rapture, resurrection is prominent (1 Thess. 4:15–16), but at the final event of the second coming, resurrection is not mentioned.
5. At the rapture, believers depart the earth (1 Thess. 4:15–17), but at the final event of the second coming, unbelievers are taken away from the earth (Matt. 24:37–41).
6. At the rapture, unbelievers remain on earth, but at the final event of the second coming, believers remain on earth (M 25:34).
7. At the rapture, there is no mention of establishing Christ's Kingdom on earth, but at the final event of the second coming, Christ has come to set up His Kingdom on earth (Matt. 25:31, 34).
8. At the rapture, believers will receive glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:51–57), but at the final event of the second coming, no one will receive glorified bodies.

Additionally, several of Christ's parables in Matthew 13 confirm differences between the rapture and the final event of Christ's second coming. For example, in the parable of the wheat and tares, the tares

(unbelievers) are taken out from among the wheat (believers) at the second coming (Matt. 13:30, 40), but believers are removed from among unbelievers at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:15–17).

In the parable of the dragnet, the bad fish (unbelievers) are taken out from among the good fish (believers) at Christ's second coming (Matt. 13:48–50), but believers are removed from among unbelievers at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:15–17).

Finally, the rapture is not mentioned in either of the most detailed second coming texts—Matthew 24 and Revelation 19. This is to be expected in light of the observations above, because the pretribulational rapture will have occurred seven years earlier.

If your name is not written in the Book, when the Rapture occurs you will be left behind to experience hell on earth.