

RAPTURE: APPEARING OR DISAPPEARING?

I Thes. 4:14-17

I Cor. 15:51-52

I. WHAT ABOUT THE RAPTURE?

A. *What happens when Jesus returns to earth?*

1. (1 Th 4:14 KJV) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (1 Th 4:15 KJV) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (1 Th 4:16 KJV) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (1 Th 4:17 KJV) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
2. (1 Cor 15:51 KJV) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (1 Cor 15:52 KJV) 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.

B. *How soon is it going to happen?*

C. *Who will be in it?*

D. *"Rapture" and "resurrection" one and the same. I prefer "resurrection."*

II. TRADITIONAL TEACHING OF RAPTURE

A. *Two phases of the coming of the Lord.*

1. Coming for His saints.
2. Coming with His saints.

B. *Word "rapture" not found in Bible.*

1. Term denoting catching away; removal from earth.
2. Actual definition.
 - a. To seize violently.
 - b. From Latin word "rapio" meaning to rape.

C. *Traditional visions.*

1. Soaring through air.
2. At any moment.
3. Anti-christ will appear; great tribulation begins.

D. *Implications of the rapture.*

1. To be with Jesus.
2. Escape world--this world is not my home.
3. Escape tribulation.
 - a. God is far too good to let his people go through tribulation.
 - b. Too weak to survive such demonic attack.

E. *Two questions relating to "rapture."* Nature of rapture vs. timing of rapture.

1. Nature of the rapture. What the rapture really is.

2. Timing of the rapture. When is the rapture?
 - a. Pre-trib--born out of fear and selfishness.
 - b. Mid-trib--no distinction between tribulation and the wrath of God.
 - c. Post-trib.

III. HISTORY OF PRE-TRIB RAPTURE

A. *Early church did not teach it.*

B. *Based on vision in 1830.*

1. Margaret McDonald's trance and vision.
2. Saw a two-phase coming of the Lord.

C. *The spreading of the teaching.*

1. Mrs. J. B. Cardale echoed "revelation" in home prayer meeting.
2. Readily received by Edward Irving.
 - a. Accepted and taught at prophetic meetings at Powerscourt House in Ireland.
 - b. Attended by Plymouth Brethren organizer John Darby.
 - c. Irving's views influenced John Darby and C. I. Scofield.
3. Clarence Larkin and his charts began to teach new theory.
4. Carried over into Pentecostal movement.

IV. PARABLE OF WHEAT AND TARES - MAT. 13. (Mat 13:24 KJV) Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: (Mat 13:25 KJV) But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. (Mat 13:26 KJV) But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. (Mat 13:27 KJV) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? (Mat 13:28 KJV) He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? (Mat 13:29 KJV) But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. (Mat 13:30 KJV) 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, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. (Mat 13:36 KJV) Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. (Mat 13:37 KJV) He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; (Mat 13:38 KJV) The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; (Mat 13:39 KJV) The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. (Mat 13:40 KJV) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (Mat 13:41 KJV) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; (Mat 13:42 KJV) And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Mat 13:43 KJV) Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

A. *Tares gathered first.*

- B. ***Righteous shine in the kingdom.*** Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.
- V. AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH. (Mat 24:37 KJV) But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- A. ***Partying and reveling.*** (Mat 24:38 KJV) For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,
- B. ***Knew not until flood came and too them all away.*** (Mat 24:39 KJV) And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- C. ***Who is taken?***
1. (Mat 24:40 KJV) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
 2. (Mat 24:41 KJV) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
- D. ***Be ready and watch.***
1. (Mat 24:42 KJV) Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
 2. (Mat 24:43 KJV) But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.
 3. (Mat 24:44 KJV) Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.
 4. (Mat 24:45 KJV) Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?
(Mat 24:46 KJV) Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (Mat 24:47 KJV) Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. (Mat 24:48 KJV) But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; (Mat 24:49 KJV) And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; (Mat 24:50 KJV) The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, (Mat 24:51 KJV) And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- I. **THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL NEVER BE REMOVED.**
- A. Ps. 37:9 - *"For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."*
 - B. Ps. 37:11 - *"The meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."*
 - C. Prov. 10:30 - *"The righteous shall NEVER BE REMOVED; but the wicked shall NOT INHERIT THE EARTH (emphasis mine)."*
 - D. Ps. 32:29 - *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever."*

- E. Prov. 2:21-22 - *"For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it."*

II. WHAT IS TRUE "RAPTURE"?

- A. ***Resurrection of sainted dead*** - I Thes. 4:13-17. (1 Th 4:14 KJV) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (1 Th 4:15 KJV) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (1 Th 4:16 KJV) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
- B. ***Translation of living saints*** - I Cor. 15:51-52. (1 Cor 15:51 KJV) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (1 Cor 15:52 KJV) 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.
- C. ***Gathering to the Lord.***
1. I Thes. 4:17. (1 Th 4:17 KJV) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
 2. II Thes. 2:1. (2 Th 2:1 KJV) Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,
 3. Mat. 24:31. (Mat 24:31 KJV) 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.

III. WHEN IS "RAPTURE"? BETTER QUESTION: WHEN IS THE RESURRECTION?

- A. ***Pretrib position.*** If favor pretrib, must stand in constant readiness for event.
- B. ***Posttrib position.*** If posttrib, readiness includes mental and moral preparation for prior experience of tribulation.
- C. ***A look at Mat. 24:29-31*** (Mat 24:29 KJV) 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: (Mat 24:30 KJV) 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. (Mat 24:31 KJV) 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.
1. Immediately after the tribulation of those days...shall appear sign of Son of man in Heaven...
 2. See son of Man coming in clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
 3. Shall send forth angels with sound of trumpet.
 4. Gather his elect.

IV. THE TRUMPETS.

- A. **...with the trump of God.** (1 Thes. 4:16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:
- B. **...sound of trumpet** (Mat 24:31 KJV) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet,
- C. **...at the LAST TRUMP** (1 Cor 15:52 KJV) 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.
- D. **Timing of trump.** Since there is a trumpet sound at the coming of the Lord after tribulation in Matthew 24, this has to occur on or before I Corinthians 15:52, since that is the Last Trump.
- E. **Announcing the Kingdom of God.** (Rev 11:15 KJV) 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.
- F. **It appears that the last trumpet signals:**
 - 1. The resurrection of the dead.
 - 2. The translation of the living saints.
 - 3. Our gathering to the Lord.
 - 4. The announcement of the Kingdom of God on this earth.

V. THE FIRST RESURRECTION OCCURS AFTER TRIBULATION.

- A. **First resurrection (which is the rapture) occurs after tribulation (those beheaded in tribulation are in the first resurrection).** (Rev 20:4 KJV) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev 20:5 KJV) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (Rev 20:6 KJV) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.
- B. **Man of sin revealed before coming of Lord (He destroys him with the brightness of His coming)** - II Thes. 2:1-8. (2 Th 2:1 KJV) Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, (2 Th 2:2 KJV) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (2 Th 2:3 KJV) 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; (2 Th 2:4 KJV) 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, showing himself that he is God. (2 Th 2:5 KJV) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? (2 Th 2:6 KJV) And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. (2 Th 2:7 KJV) For the mystery of iniquity doth

already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. (2 Th 2:8 KJV) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

VI. THE ESSENCE OF I THESSALONIANS 4.

- A. *Comfort to living concerning sainted dead.*
- B. *Shall not precede the dead, but will be joined together with them.*
- C. *To meet the Lord in the air.*
- D. *So shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Go ye out to meet Him - 10 virgins.

OT examples of greeting traveler by running out to meet--then proceeding back into the house together.

I. OF TIMES AND SEASONS. (1 Th 5:1 KJV) But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. (1 Th 5:2 KJV) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (1 Th 5:3 KJV) 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. (1 Th 5:4 KJV) But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. (1 Th 5:5 KJV) Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (1 Th 5:6 KJV) Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. (1 Th 5:7 KJV) For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. (1 Th 5:8 KJV) But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. (1 Th 5:9 KJV) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Th 5:10 KJV) Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. (1 Th 5:11 KJV) Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

II. SCRIPTURES RELATING TO "FLYING AWAY."

- A. (Job 20:8 KJV) He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.
- B. (Psa 55:6 KJV) And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.
- C. (Psa 90:10 KJV) The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
- D. (Prov 23:5 KJV) Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.
- E. (Hosea 9:11 KJV) As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.

BLESSED HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and

our Saviour Jesus Christ."

I John 3:3 -(1 John 3:2 KJV) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:3 KJV) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Looking for coming of Christ, not going of the church.

Looking for appearing of Christ, not disappearing of the saints.