

Bible Prophecy

The Rapture

What is the Rapture?

- “The title ‘rapture’ comes from the Latin word used in I Thessalonians 4:17 which is translated in English ‘caught up.’ The rapture of the church is the catching up or translation of the church.” Charles Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*
- I Thessalonians 4:13-18 gives us these five elements of the Rapture:
 - The Lord Himself descending from Heaven, heralded by shout and trumpet.
 - The dead in Christ rise first.
 - The alive in Christ are “caught up” into the clouds.
 - These meet the Lord in the air.
 - These will always be with their Lord.
- I Corinthians 15:51-57 gives us three more elements (quoting Ryrie again):
 - The rapture will include not only the bodily resurrection of those believers who have died, but also the changing of the bodies of those who are alive at the time it happens.
 - It will be instantaneous.
 - It will include all believers, not simply some of them.
- The Rapture is part of the “mystery” of the Church Age and is not found in the Old Testament. However, we perhaps see something similar in the translations of Enoch (Genesis 11:5) and Elijah (II Kings 2:11).
- Other passages that allude to the Rapture include John 14:3 and Titus 2:13

When will the Rapture Occur?

- The timing (or belief in) the Rapture and the Millennial Kingdom are the two defining elements of End Times systems of interpretation.
- The prevailing views – Pre-Tribulation (me), Mid-Tribulation, or Post-Tribulation.
- God will keep/protect the saved from the Tribulation - I Thessalonians 5:9, Revelation 3:10
- The Holy Spirit’s restraining influence (of which the church is an instrument) is also removed before the Tribulation begins – II Thessalonians 2:7-8
- There are no preceding events to the Rapture. It is presented as an imminent event – Revelation 22:20

Where is the Rapture in the Book of Revelation?

- Critics of the Rapture love to point out that it is not present in the Book of Revelation. I disagree.
- I think there are two ways to find the Rapture in Revelation:
 - First, in Revelation 4:1. Before we begin to see the End Times events unfold, we open with a voice, shout, and call to “come up”. I think this is the Rapture.
 - Second, in the mentions of churches. We see churches in Revelation 2 and 3 but they are not mentioned again until 22:16. The absence of the church during the Tribulation can be easily explained to be a result of the Rapture.

What is the Purpose of the Rapture?

- For Christ to receive His own, whether alive or dead – I Thessalonians 4:13-18
- To judge and reward their works – I Corinthians 3:11-15
- To remove the Hinderer – II Thessalonians 2:7-8
- In our hearts today:
 - It is a comforting hope – John 14:1-3
 - It is a purifying hope – I John 3:1-3
 - It is a joyous hope – Titus 2:13