

Rapture of the Church

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From Charles Carter

Meaning of Rapture

- **What is the Rapture?**
- A term often applied to the ‘catching up’ in the clouds of the saints, including both those raised from among the dead, and those who will be alive on the earth at the time, to meet the Lord in the air at His coming according to 1 Thess. 4:16-17. This preliminary detail in the coming of the Lord is of great interest to the church, which is set to wait for him. (Concise Bible Dictionary)
- **Is the word ‘Rapture’ found in the Bible?**
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says, “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.” In this verse, the Greek word, “harpazo” is translated into two English words: “caught up”. In the latter part of the 4th century, there was a Latin translation of the Bible produced that is called the Latin Vulgate. In this translation, the two words, “caught up” are translated “rapio” from which we get the word “rapture.” So, while the word rapture is not found in our English translation, it was in the Latin translation of the Bible.

A Mystery Revealed

- **The Lord promised to return for us.**
- John 14:2-3, “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”
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- **The Church**
- Foretold in Matthew 16:18
- Began in Acts 2:1-4
- Continued to grow in Acts 2:47
- It will continue on until the Lord returns for His church

The Church was a mystery revealed through the Apostle Paul – Eph. 3:1-7
The Rapture of the Church was also a mystery revealed through the Apostle Paul - 1 Cor. 15:51-52

The Lord's Return

- **The truth and details of the Rapture of the Church are not found in the OT, or in the Gospels.**
 - Contrast Matt. 24:40-41 (Read Matt. 24:3-21).
- **The Day of the Lord describes the Lord's return to the earth after the Tribulation Period and after the Millenium. It is not the Rapture.**
 - 1 Thess. 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10
 - Read Zech. 14:4 with Acts 1:9-12

Paul lived in anticipation of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:15), but also realized the Lord's return might not happen in his lifetime (2 Cor. 4:14)

Every chapter in 1 and 2 Thess. mentions the Lord's return as the Rapture or the Day of the Lord.!

Waiting for Christ's Return

Could the Rapture occur today? Is the Lord's return imminent?

- 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to **wait for his Son from heaven**, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."
- There are no signs to watch for to indicate the Rapture of the Church.
 - Contrast Luke 21:20-28 which speaks of the Lord return to the earth.
- Revelation 3:10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (trial, tribulation), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."
- Rev. 4:1-2
 - In Revelation, chapters 1-3, the word 'church or churches' is used 19 times.
 - It is not mentioned again until Rev. 22:16, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

The Trumpet Call

What and when is the 'last trumpet'?

- 1 Corinthians 15:52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
 - 1 Thess. 4:16, Rev. 4:1
 - Other trumpets: Matt. 24:31, Rev. 8:1-6, Rev. 10:7

The trumpet was used to summon an assembly. Ex. 20:18, Ps. 81:3, Isa. 18:3, etc. The last trumpet is the one which concludes a series which have already been sounding at intervals. Isa. 27:3, Ps. 47:5, Num. 10:1-9.

What will happen to those who are not taken in the Rapture?

- 2 Thess. 2:1-12
 - Who are those left behind? (Verse 10)
 - How can God send a 'strong delusion'?
 - Can God tell a lie? (Titus 1:2)
 - Is there another chance for salvation for those left behind at the Rapture?

The Lord's Coming

Do these verses speak of the Rapture or the Lord's return to the earth?

- Revelation 1:7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."
- 1 John 2:28, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."
- Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Revelation 22:20-21, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."