

RAPTURE

Is the concept of the Rapture scriptural?

There is a great controversy over the validity of using the word **RAPTURE** since the word is not found in the Bible.

Some say it is not a biblical concept, others identify it as part of the second coming of Christ at the Battle of Armageddon.

When the word "**Rapture**" is used as relating to a specific Bible occurrence, it simply refers to **the catching away of the saints**.

According to my dictionary, the word Rapture actually means: **A state of being transported; Ecstatic joy; ecstasy. The act of transferring a person from one place to another. A snatching away, Transport with ecstasy.**

The definition of the word explains why Christians use it in the context of **the catching away of the saints** mentioned in Scripture.

In this study, we will be identifying the Rapture, as that period of time described by Paul, where he says:

- ✠ For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall always be with the Lord.** *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*

TIMING OF THE RAPTURE

After the revelation of the Antichrist as the savior of peace when He confirms the peace agreement for seven years the Rapture will occur after the Wrath of God is introduced by the sixth Seal. [[Revelation 6:12-17](#)]

The true Saints will be raptured that they may escape all the plagues of Wrath. [[Luke 21:36](#)]
At the same time the 144,000 Israelis receive the Mark of God granting them immunity to protect them from the plagues of the Great Tribulation. [[Revelation 7:1-8](#)]

We will consider all scriptures that speak about the same time and occurrence, to see if there is a pattern that presents itself to explain the concept and setting for us. First we will look for the **purpose of the catching away of the Saints**.

There are Four Apparent PURPOSES for the RAPTURE

1. TO RESCUE MAN FROM THE WRATH COMING ON THE EARTH

When we think of the Wrath of God, we often think only of the Lake of Fire and final judgment; or even destruction by other countries as the God's Wrath revealed in punishment against the sinful nation.

In Revelation, we find the Wrath of God and of Christ is expressed in the plagues of the Great Tribulation:

Wrath begins

- ‡ When He opened the sixth seal, I watched and saw. There was a great earthquake, the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the moon became like blood, and the stars of heaven fell to the earth like a fig tree that drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" *Revelation 6:12-17*

Here we see that **the day of the Wrath of the Lamb begins with the first of the Great Tribulation plagues. The end of the Wrath of God** is identified as the **final plagues of the Great Tribulation:**

Wrath ends

- ‡ Then I saw another great and marvelous sign in Heaven: Seven angels having **the seven last plagues, for in them the Wrath of God is fulfilled.** *Revelation 15:1*

These scriptures clearly indicate that **the Wrath of God is applicable to the plagues of the Great Tribulation. It is the PLAGUES OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION that we might be able to ESCAPE, by the grace of God.**

The following scriptures indicate that it is possible to escape the Wrath of God

- ☆ Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, who have performed His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. **It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.** [[Zephaniah 2:3](#)]
- ☆ They that feared the Lord spoke often to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them. So **a Book of Remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the Lord and who meditated on His Name. "They shall be mine," says the Lord of Hosts. In that day when I make up My jewels I WILL SPARE THEM as a man spares his own son who serves him.** Then you shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. [[Malachi 3:16-18](#)]

- ‡ But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "O generation of vipers! **Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**" [Matthew. 3:7]
(see also Luke 3:7)

John the Baptist recognized the `chance to escape the coming wrath' when he spoke of `fleeing the wrath to come.'

Jesus mentioned it also:

- ‡ **Therefore, always watch and always pray that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass,** and to stand before the Son of Man. [Luke 21:36]

Then Paul and the writers of the Epistles wrote:

- ‡ Much more then, **since we have now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath** through Him. [Romans 5:9]
- ‡ They themselves declare the manner of reception you gave us. They report how you 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 who delivers us from the wrath to come.**
[1 Thessalonians 1:9-10]
- ‡ **But you, brethren, are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief.** You are all the children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunken at night. But let us who are of the day be sober putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation for a helmet. **For God has not appointed us to wrath,** but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [1 Thessalonians 5:4-9]
- ‡ See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For **if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,** [Hebrews 12:25]

✠ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you who will covertly bring in abominable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and will bring on themselves swift destruction. Many will follow their deadly ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed (evil spoken of). In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words; their condemnation from of old is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep.

God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment. **He did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness (one of eight people)** when He brought the flood on the world of the ungodly. **In turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, He condemned them to destruction, making them examples to those who later on would live ungodly. The Lord rescued righteous Lot, who was troubled by the filthy behavior of the wicked. For that righteous man, dwelling among them, was grieved in his righteous soul from day to day in seeing and hearing their lawless deeds. If God did these things in the past, then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust until the day of judgment to be punished.** [2 Peter 2:1-9]

Then again in Revelation, Jesus said:

✠ Because you have kept My command to endure patiently, **I also will keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.** [Revelation 3:10]

✠ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. [Revelation 12:5]

Speaking to the Churches, Jesus said:

✠ But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'-- as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. [Revelation 2:25-28]

➤ *Zephaniah 2:3, Malachi 3:16-18, Matthew. 3:7, Luke 3:7, Luke 21:36, Romans 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-9, Hebrews 12:25, 2 Peter 2:1-9, Revelation 3:10, Revelation 12:5*

Concerning *Revelation 12:1-6*

- ✠ I view the **Woman** as the Nation of Israel from which the Church was born. **The Man Child** is the Church, the Body of Christ, who is caught up to heaven in the rapture. **The `remnant of her seed'** depict the Tribulation Saints who are left behind to make up the Elect, and the ones Martyred for the Word of God and for their testimony of Jesus.

These Martyred are the ones who take part in the "First Resurrection." **The Elect** are the ones who survive the Great Tribulation to enter as mortals into the Kingdom age.

Following the time of the Great Tribulation there are only two resurrections: The first resurrection (mentioned above), and the **second and last resurrection**, which is the resurrection of the damned who stand before God at the Great White Throne to be sentenced to the eternal Lake of Fire.

[The explanation of this concept is expressed fully in the sections on "The Great Tribulation", The First Resurrection", and "The Great White Throne Judgment"]

There is a contrast between those who will escape and those who will not escape. The fact that there are some who will not escape is verified by the statement "**And they shall not escape.**" [1 *Thessalonians 5:3*]

2. TO GATHER THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

It is sufficient, at this point, to indicate that since the marriage supper of the Lamb takes place in Heaven, it is necessary to take those who will share in the supper from earth to Heaven. The catching up of the Saints is the most reasonable method of that gathering. These people are special to God:

- ✠ Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" [Revelation 19:9]

3. TO TAKE THE RESTRAINER OUT OF THE WAY SO EVIL CAN COME TO IT'S FULLNESS

- ✠ When the influence of the Church is taken out of the way, the bent of mankind toward evil will be released to come to it's full expression. It will be in this time period that the Antichrist will be revealed and will show himself for what he is. **The catching up of the Saints is God's method of accomplishing the removal of this restraint.** [see 2 *Thessalonians 2:5-10*]

4. TO GATHER THE SAINTS WHO WILL MAKE UP PART OF THE ARMIES OF HEAVEN WHO COME BACK WITH THE LORD TO THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Those who make up the Armies of Heaven will include those caught up in the `catching up of the saints' called the Rapture.

Scriptures that deal with the Saints coming back with the Lord are: *Isaiah 13:1-6, Zechariah 14:1-7, Jude 1:14-15, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, Revelation 17:12-14, and Revelation 19:11-16*

FACTS ABOUT THE RAPTURE

- ✠ ANGELS ARE INVOLVED IN THE GATHERING OF THE ELECT -
- ✠ THE GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET WILL ACCOMPANY THE GATHERING -
- ✠ ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH WILL MOURN -
- ✠ THE ELECT ARE GATHERED FROM THE FOUR WINDS - (FROM THE EARTH)
- ✠ THE ELECT ARE GATHERED FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER -
- ✠ ACTIVITIES OF EARTH WILL BE NORMAL LIVING EVERYTHING AS USUAL -
- ✠ DURING THE LIFE TIME OF THE GENERATION THAT SEES THE SIGNS -
- ✠ THE CATCHING AWAY WILL BE SELECTIVE INCLUDING ONLY THE ELECT -
- ✠ (ONE TAKEN - THE OTHER LEFT)
- ✠ HIS GLORY WILL BE REVEALED -
- ✠ TIME OF THE RAPTURE UNKNOWN -
- ✠ RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD IS INVOLVED -
- ✠ THE LORD WILL COME IN A VISIBLE BODY TO MEET THE SAINTS IN THE AIR -
- ✠ GLORIFIED BODIES OF THE SAINTS -
- ✠ SALVATION AND JOY WILL BE FULLY REALIZED -
- ✠ THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN AS THE EARNEST GUARANTEE -

It is interesting to note that a **Trumpet** call has been used throughout the Bible as means for God to call His own, to gather them together for war or travel. The Trumpet, used in the gathering of Israel in the past, was a portrayal of the Trumpet call that will gather the Saints to Jesus in the air at the time of the Rapture.

Only the Father knows when the time arrives, for He alone tells His Son (the Bridegroom) when He should go for His awaiting Bride. This is interestingly similar to Hebrew customs of old.

- ✠ Then two men will be in the field, **one will be taken and the other left**. Two women will be grinding at the mill, **one will be taken and the other left**. **Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming**. *Matthew 24:30-42*
- ✠ I tell you, in that night two people shall be in one bed, **one shall be taken and the other shall be left**. Two women shall be grinding together, **one shall be taken and the other shall be left**. Two men shall be in the field, **one shall be taken and the other left**. *Luke 17:34-36*
- ✠ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And **then He will send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven**. *Mark 13:26-27*

The last sign of the Endtime sequence in the Matthew and Mark texts, Jesus concludes with the description of the great signs in the heavens when the powers of the heavens are shaken. **The next statement is taking the entire period of Endtime events as a general time frame when He says, "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in Heaven."**

The description of the catching away of the Saints brackets the lesson of the Fig Tree in which He says, "**When you see all these things, you will know that He is near, at the very door.** Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."

Signs that speak of the time being near should logically occur before the event they forecast not after it is over. The Rapture is intended to provide a means for the Saints to escape the plagues of the time of Great Tribulation. Those who hold to the concept that the catching away of the saints occurs after the Great Tribulation is over and at the time of the Battle of Armageddon, loose sight of the fact that **the Rapture is one of the signs that indicate the time of the Great Tribulation is near.**

Jesus described the **normality of life**, and the **surprising sudden catching away of the Saints**. One will be taken and the other left, at the coming of the Son of Man. He then concludes with examples of those found watching and those not, and of their rewards or punishment.

The signs are to be recognized, by the wise, before it happens. This seems to demonstrate that it is probable for the Rapture to happen before the plagues begin, allowing the Saints to escape the things that are coming on the earth according to the scriptures.

RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD IS INVOLVED

A PARTIAL RAPTURE OR RESURRECTION HAS ALREADY OCCURRED

Notice the partial rapture at the time of Jesus' resurrection:

- ✠ And the graves were opened; and **many bodies of the saints who had died were raised.** **COMING OUT OF THE GRAVES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.** *Matthew 27:52-53*

The Saints that were raised at the time of the resurrection of Jesus, fulfilled the prophecy in the Psalm where David said:

- ✠ You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive, and You have received gifts for men, yes also for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. *Psalm 68:18*

The term, "You received gifts for men, yes for the rebellious also" is explained in the text where Paul shows that the gifts are for sinners who would later accept Christ:

- ✠ But grace was given to every one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: **When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.** *Ephesians 4:7-8*

Scriptures clarify the concept about the timing, the gifts and the ascended position:

- ✠ Therefore, **being exalted to the right hand of God,** and having received, from the Father, **the promised Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.** *Acts 2:3*

(Peter is referring to the gifts for men which were poured out on the day of Pentecost as Christ poured out of the Holy Spirit on the assembled Saints.) The phrase "**You led captivity captive**" is an indication that

the saints that were raised after the resurrection of Jesus were led to paradise with Jesus when He ascended to the right hand of God.

The application of the resurrection at the time of the rapture and at the first resurrection are expressed thus:

- ✠ Indeed I say to you, **the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.**

For as the Father has life in Himself, He has also given the Son power to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man.

Do not marvel at this for **the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation (judgment and condemnation.)** *John 5:25-29*

- ✠ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that I should not loose any of the ones that He has given Me, but that **I should raise them up at the last day.**

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes on Him, may have everlasting life. And **I will raise him up at the last day.** *John 6:39-40*

- ✠ No man can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and **I will raise him up on the last day.** *John 6:44*
- ✠ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and **I will raise him up at the last day.** *John 6:54*
- ✠ Martha said to Jesus, **I know that he (Lazarus) shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. **He that believes in Me, shall live, even though he dies.**" *John 11:24-25*

- ✠ We know that He who raised up the Lord Jesus shall also raise us up, by Jesus, and will present us with you. *2 Corinthians 4:14*
- ✠ Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. *2 Corinthians 5:1-10*

There is a time and an order for every event in God's revealed plan. **This applies to every phase of resurrection and accounts for the accuracy of all scriptures concerning it, Those raised after the resurrection of Jesus, Those absent from the body & present with the Lord, Those of the "First Resurrection" at the end of the Great Tribulation, and those raised at the Great White Throne Judgment**

CONCERNING THE TIME AND ORDER

- ✠ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have died. Since death came by man, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die,

even so in Christ all shall be made alive. **But every one in his own order: Christ the first fruits then afterward, they that are Christ's at His coming.** *1 Corinthians 15:20-23*

Those Saints who died before Christ's time were raised after the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus Himself being the first fruits from the dead.

Throughout the church age, the saints who die go immediately to the presence of the Lord.

Those who die at the time of the rapture rise first and are caught up to meet the Lord in the air ahead of the living saints.

Those who die in the Great Tribulation will be raised in the First Resurrection. The First Resurrection is for the Tribulation Saints; the last resurrection is for the unsaved, each in his own order.

THE LORD WILL COME IN A VISIBLE BODY TO RECEIVE HIS SAINTS IN THE AIR

- ✠ I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. *John 14:1-3*
- ✠ This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come again in the same manner as you have seen Him go into heaven." *Acts 1:9-11*
- ✠ For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an 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 together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall always be with the Lord.** *1 Thessalonians 4:13-17*

The coming of the Lord for His Saints will not be as an invisible spirit to dwell in His spiritual church, but it will be in a visible body to receive His saints to Himself. It will be in this visible body that He will reign on earth 1,000 years.

THE GLORIFIED BODIES OF THE RAPTURED SAINTS

- ✠ Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **Who will change our wretched mortal body that it may be fashioned to conform to His glorious body according to the working by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself.** *Philippians 3:20-21*
- ✠ It is sown a natural body, **it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 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 shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then the scripture shall be fulfilled that says, "**Death is swallowed up in victory.**" *1 Corinthians 15:35-58*

Paul tells the Romans that **the 'New Bodies' represent part of the precious hope of the Saints, which completes the evidence of being adopted as sons of God:**

- ✠ Not only all creation, but also we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit, yes **we ourselves groan within ourselves eagerly waiting for the adoption, which is the redemption of our body. For this is the hope in which we were saved.** Hope that is seen or received is not hope at all, for who would hope for what he already sees or holds? But if we hope for what we do not see or hold, then we wait for it with patience. *Romans 8:23-25*

So **the confident expectation of a glorified body is one of the concepts that strengthen the believer to patiently endure the problems of this world including sickness and physical disabilities.** We know that the end reward will make all our trials worth the wait. Truly it will be worth it all, when we see Jesus! Paul called it the "**REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.**"

THE EARNEST (GUARANTEE) OF THE PROMISE

- ✠ He predestined us to be adopted as His own children through Jesus Christ according to His own good pleasure and will. **Having believed in Him, you were also sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the earnest (guarantee) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession,** to the praise of His glory. *Ephesians 1:3-14*
- ✠ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, **by whom you are sealed for the purpose of the day of redemption.** *Ephesians 4:30*

HIS APPEARANCE WILL BE SALVATION AND JOY

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, 1 Peter 4:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:8-10, Hebrews 9:28

IT WILL HAPPEN IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIME

- ✠ In the dispensation of the fullness of times, He will gather all things together in one in Christ; both the things which are in heaven and which are on earth, united in Him. *Ephesians 1:10*

There is a time, a specific appointed time, when all will be brought together in Christ; just as there is a time for all things, and an order of events, that all God has revealed will come to pass in it's own order and at it's own time. It is important that we be found watching and ready in obedience when He comes for us, so we will be acceptable to Him. His rewards are with Him and He will reward everyone according to their individual works and obedience at the time of His coming.

Are you ready if He comes today? Will He say "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord", or "depart from Me you accursed into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"?

Are you eagerly watching for His coming? Do you know and obey His commandments? Your eternal soul is at stake!

It is not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to **repentance** and live eternally with Him in glory.

If you do not have confidence of your relationship with God, and confidence that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, then turn to God with all your heart, decide right now, seek to know God through His Word. He is revealed in the Bible. Pray, ask for forgiveness, accept Him into your heart. Then find a fellowship of believers to associate with that will help to strengthen and encourage you.

Many influences in the world around you will try to distract and discourage you to test the strength of your commitment. Decide now to overcome all the distractions and to stand firm with God to the end. Your knowledge and understanding of God and His plan for your life will increase as you seek Him. As your confidence in your relationship with Him grows, your faith will also grow and you will find you have entered the abundant life He has promised to all who believe and follow Him.

May God bless you as you continue to seek understanding and knowledge of the mind and heart of God and Christ, which will grow in you to become pure wisdom. By washing yourself in the Word of God on a regular basis, you will become part of the "Church" that God sees as being without spot, or wrinkle, or any other blemish, one that is holy and blameless; the "church" for which Christ died. This is the "church" that is victorious over the enemies of God. These are the ones who hold the word of God with a clear conscience, and maintain their testimony of Jesus.

This is the "church" for which Jesus is coming in the Rapture. I am praying that all who read this book will be among those who will be found worthy to escape all the things that are coming on the world to test those who dwell on the earth, and worthy to stand before Jesus "the Son of Man." My desire is for you to be among that number.

Because the **purpose of the rapture** is to take us out of the way of the Wrath to come, and the **purpose of the seal of the 144000** of Revelation 7 & 14 protects them from the plagues of the Wrath of the Great tribulation, I expect the timing to be the same. The rapture and the sealing both occur before the Wrath begins.