

# The Rapture of the Church

Looking for that blessed hope



**1 Corinthians 15:51-53** *"Behold, I shew 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 trump: 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."*



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# Introduction

In the last days there will be a great departure from the truth where many people will abandon God's ways. At this time, Jesus will return to gather His Church and we are told to watch and be ready. The dead in Christ will be raised, and believers who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air and forever be with the Lord.

## The Rapture of the Church

In the last days there will be "scoffers" and a great departure from the truth where many people will abandon God's ways. And because they do not like to retain God in their knowledge, He hands them over to a reprobate mind.

*2 Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

*Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

See also [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#)

It will be as in the days of Noah and the days of Lot..

*Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 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, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

See also [Luke 17:26-30](#); [Romans 1:21-27](#).

**Maranatha** {"our Lord cometh"}

*Matthew 24:29 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: 30 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.*

Now, before this second advent takes place, the Bible mentions something quite mysterious and amazing - it mentions a rapture event, specifically for the church!

*The word 'Rapture' {Latin} means to be "caught up". In Hebrew the word is "naphal", and in Greek the word "harpazo" is used which is to seize, catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force). **There are many Rapture events in the Bible** and here are the common references of those "caught up"..*

- <sup>1</sup>. Enoch {a type and shadow of the church} lived a total of 365 years, then God took him away. [Genesis 5:21-24](#)
- <sup>2</sup>. Elijah went up into heaven in a whirlwind. [2 Kings 2:11](#)
- <sup>3</sup>. Jesus was taken up into heaven (the ascension). [Acts 1:6-11](#)
- <sup>4</sup>. Philip was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord. [Acts 8:38-40](#)
- <sup>5</sup>. Paul was caught up to Paradise (the third heaven). [2 Corinthians 12:2-4](#)
- <sup>6</sup>. John was caught up to heaven. [Revelation 4:1-2](#)
- <sup>7</sup>. Jesus returns to gather His Church {the Rapture}. [1 Corinthians 15:51-53](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#)
- <sup>8</sup>. The two witnesses ascend up to heaven in a cloud. [Revelation 11:3-12](#)
- <sup>9</sup>. Angels gather the elect. [Ezekiel 34:13](#), [37:21-23](#); [Matthew 24:30-31](#)

Jesus will return to gather His church ("the body of Christ") which is His bride..

*John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 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. 3 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.*

*Revelation 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

See also [Acts 1:9-11](#); [1 Corinthians 12:27](#)

The Lord will come "as a thief in the night" and we are told to watch and be ready..

*Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

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

See also [Hebrews 9:28](#); [1 Peter 4:7](#); [2 Peter 3:10](#); [Revelation 16:15](#)

Those who watch and are eager for the Lord's appearing will receive a "crown of righteousness" as reward:

*2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

*Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 **Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ..***

*Revelation 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

### **The Rapture event:**

*1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 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. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 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. 16 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: 17 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. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

*Isaiah 26:19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. 20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. 21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

Believers and those who have died in Christ receive glorified bodies. They become immortal and incorruptible.

*Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

*1 Corinthians 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption..*

*Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

*1 John 3:2 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.*

See also [1 Corinthians 15:50-54](#); [Colossians 3:4](#)

Believers are rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ {bema judgment}.

*1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

*2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Raptured believers will return with the Lord Jesus to earth at the end of the 7-year tribulation ([Zechariah 14:4-5](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:13](#); [Revelation 1:7, 19:11-16](#)), after which the Marriage supper of the Lamb takes place. [Matthew 25:1-13](#); [Revelation 19:6-10](#)

## The Rapture is Pre-Tribulation

The 24 elders mentioned in [Revelation 4:4-5:10](#) are the redeemed saints and they are already in Heaven BEFORE the seal judgments begin. This number most likely represents the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament and the twelve Apostle heads in the New Testament.

The Rapture has to take place BEFORE the tribulation begins. Placing the rapture at the end of the tribulation causes many doctrinal issues and complications. Here are a few..

*1. If believers are raptured at the second advent {..receiving glorified bodies} and the wicked are destroyed, who will populate the millennial kingdom? At the end of the thousand years Satan is released to deceive the {mortal} nations once more. See [Zechariah 14:1-21](#); [Revelation 20:7-8](#)*

*2. Jesus establishes His millennial kingdom on earth. If the rapture takes place at the second advent then how can believers be with Jesus in Heaven where He is preparing a place for us? We're told that Jesus will come back for His church and they will return with Him to where He is right now. See [John 14:1-3](#)*

*3. The tribulation will be a time of martyrdom and great distress. If we as believers have to go through the tribulation, how can we "comfort one another with these words"? See [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#)*

*4. If believers are saved by Grace through Faith alone (and not of works), then why does getting the mark of the beast become a salvation issue {which is based on works}? The Bible makes it crystal clear that those who receive this mark will be cast into the lake of fire. So in order to remain saved, believers MUST refuse this mark and be martyred for*

*their faith. The reason for this, is because the age of Grace ends at the rapture!*  
See [Revelation 13:15-18](#), [14:9-11](#)

### **Daniel's 70th Week is for Israel, not the Church..**

*Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people {Israel} and upon thy holy city {Jerusalem}, to finish the transgression {the single act of rejecting their Messiah}, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

*The church age has always been a prophetic parenthesis hidden from the old testament prophets: **Israel reaches the end of its 69th week of Daniel's prophecy..** {The mystery of the church age begins at Pentecost and ends at the rapture} **..and so Israel continues with its final 70th week.***

**Note:** The final 70th week is known as "the time of Jacob's trouble". In [Genesis 32:28](#), Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Therefore the 7-year tribulation is also understood to be "the time of Israel's trouble".

See also [Jeremiah 30:1-24](#); [Daniel 9:24-27](#), [12:1-13](#); [Matthew 24:20-21](#); [Luke 21:24](#); [Revelation 6:1-19:21](#)

**The Tribulation is a time of wrath.** John never links the Church with the tribulation - Out of the four Gospels, the tribulation is NEVER mentioned by John who specifically addresses the church. John then excludes any mention of the church in [Revelation chapters 6-19](#) when speaking of the tribulation. This is because God's judgment upon the world is to destroy the wicked.

*Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.*

See also [Isaiah 26:20-21](#); [Ezekiel 7:1-27](#); [Matthew 24:15-21](#); [Luke 21:23](#); [Revelation 6:17](#))

**Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come..** The Church is not appointed unto wrath because it's sins are forgiven..

*1 Thessalonians 1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ..*

*Revelation 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

*Luke 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

See also [2 Peter 2:9](#)



# The Rapture -versus- the Second Advent

The rapture is distinct from the second advent. It is an event where believers will be caught up in the air to meet Jesus in the clouds and return with Him to Heaven (only His own will see Him). Chaos will ensue on earth in the form of a 7-year tribulation, then at the second advent, Jesus returns to earth with His saints and Holy angels. His feet touch down on the mount of Olives and every eye shall see Him.

So to summarize this plainly: The rapture is a private event that deals specifically with believers only *{the saved meet their Saviour}*, whereas the second coming is a public event that deals with judgment upon an unbelieving world *{the wicked will meet their end, and the faithful remnant enter into the promised land}*.

## The Rapture

- <sup>1.</sup> A "blessed hope" that is eagerly anticipated. [Titus 2:13](#)
- <sup>2.</sup> The Lord comes to personally gather His Saints {Peacefully}. [Acts 1:11](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:1](#)
- <sup>3.</sup> Believers are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and return with Him to Heaven. [John 14:1-3](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#); [Acts 1:11](#)
- <sup>4.</sup> Only His own will see Him. [Acts 1:9-11](#)
- <sup>5.</sup> The wicked remain on earth, whereas all believers are "caught up". [1 Corinthians 15:50-54](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)
- <sup>6.</sup> Jesus comes with His reward. [2 Timothy 4:8](#); [1 Corinthians 3:10-15](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)
- <sup>7.</sup> Earth is not judged, and iniquity abounds.
- <sup>8.</sup> Believers are instantly transformed and receive glorified bodies. [1 Corinthians 15:51-53](#); [Colossians 3:4](#); [Philippians 3:20-21](#); [1 John 3:2](#)
- <sup>9.</sup> Not mentioned openly, or plainly in the Old Testament, however there are parallels with "types and shadows" of the event

## The Second Advent

- An earthly despair that is feared and dreaded. [Isaiah 13:9](#); [Ezekiel 30:3](#); [Amos 5:18](#)
- The Lord comes with His Saints {Not peacefully}. [1 Thessalonians 3:13](#); [Revelation 19:11-15](#).
- Holy Angels gather the tribulation elect and bring them to the mountains of Israel. [Ezekiel 34:13](#), [37:21-23](#); [Matthew 24:30-31](#)
- Jesus returns to earth and His feet physically touch the mount of Olives. [Zechariah 14:4](#)
- Every eye shall see Him. [Revelation 1:7](#)
- Tribulation survivors remain on earth. Holy Angels take the wicked and cast them into the furnace of fire. [Matthew 13:36-50](#); [24:37-51](#); [Revelation 14:9-10](#)
- Jesus comes with judgment and wrath. [Obadiah 1:15](#); [Zephaniah 1:14-15](#); [Isaiah 13:6-13](#); [Ezekiel 30:3](#)
- The Earth is judged and righteousness is established.
- Tribulation survivors are not transformed. They are still mortal and will repopulate the earth in the millennial Kingdom.
- Mentioned many times in the Old Testament.

("Enoch being taken" is an illustrative example).

<sup>10</sup>. No Kingdom on earth.

The Kingdom is established. There is peace and righteousness for 1,000 years. [Zechariah 14:16](#); [Revelation 20:4-6](#)

<sup>11</sup>. No reference to Satan.

Satan is bound for 1,000 years. [Revelation 20:2](#)

<sup>12</sup>. The rapture is immediately before the 7-year tribulation. [Luke 21:28](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:10](#), [5:9](#); [Revelation 3:10](#)

The second advent is immediately after the 7-year tribulation and there will be many great signs and wonders. [Joel 2:28-32](#); [Matthew 24:29-30](#); [Acts 2:16-21](#); [2 Peter 3:10-12](#)