

## The Rapture of the Church

Prior to the Tribulation Period in which God pours out His wrath on an unbelieving world, the believing Church will be raptured to Heaven so as not to endure the wrath of God.

### **Christians are not destined for the wrath of God:**

*For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.*  
1 Thes 5:9-10

*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.* Rom 5:9

*Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.* Rev 3:10

### **Jesus raptures His Church prior to the Tribulation:**

*Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.* 1 Cor 15:50-53

*For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.* 1 Thes 4:14-19

### **Summary**

At the Rapture we see Jesus coming from Heaven to collect His saints; those who believe in Him. His coming will be so fast if you blink your eyes you may not see it. First the bodies of the dead in Christ will come out their graves and resting places; their bodies will ascend from the earth and their spirits will descend from Heaven. Then those who are alive and believe in Him will also meet Him in the air to be with the Lord forever. We will also be with all of our deceased loved ones forever.

The first sound of the Rapture is the shout of Christ and is a call for believers to rise from the grave. The voice of the archangel, perhaps Michael, is a sound of protection and safe passage. The blast of the trumpet is a call announcing the believers' reception into heaven.

The last trumpet or trumpet of God is explained by Dr. John F. Walvoord using an analogy from the discipline of the ancient Roman army:

The Rapture trumpet will call all Christians to rise from the earth to meet the Lord in the air and from there they will go to Heaven, as Christ promised in John 14:3. The last trumpet for the church may be analogous to the last trumpet used in the Roman army. Soldiers were awakened by a first trumpet blast early in the morning, which served as their alarm clock. A second trumpet assembled them for instructions for the day. At the third and last trumpet they marched off to their assignments.

Similarly, receiving salvation is like hearing a trumpet call. Then God's call to service is like hearing a second trumpet. And at the third or last trumpet believers will go to heaven.

Christ will honor us with the diplomatic protocol of antiquity. The city magistrate would welcome a visiting guest outside the wall of the city, walk in through the city gates and then continue the formalities. Christ will come out of Heaven to greet us before taking us with Him into Heaven. At that moment, our reunion will be complete with Christ, there will be no subsequent parting and we will spend eternity in uninterrupted union and communion with our Lord.

During the Rapture the Lord does not return to earth so this is not to be confused with His second coming as described in Revelation. The Rapture ends the Church Age and believers will receive imperishable bodies in preparation to spend eternity with the Lord in Heaven forever.

### **Removal of the Restrainer**

At the time of the Rapture the Restrainer or Holy Spirit (believers and presence of God through the Holy Spirit) is taken out of the earth. Lawlessness is already at work and when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the earth, Satan and his evil activity will prevail on earth which is described in the book of Revelation as the Tribulation Period. The apostasy will come first and then the anti-Christ (lawless one) is revealed. Those who do not receive Christ as Lord and Savior will believe what is false and will be judged because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness. In the end justice will prevail as Christ returns to earth and simply opens His mouth and slays the lawless one.

### **When does the Rapture Occur**

There is no sign or event that must take place before the Rapture. Some day, some hour, some minute, God will say to His Son, Jesus Christ, "Son go get your bride." In the twinkling of eye, no sign, no warning, the Archangel will shout, the trumpet of God will resound and the Lord will descend to collect His believers. This will usher in the Tribulation Period, which the dead in

Christ and believers alive at the time of Christ's coming will not be a part of. We are promised that we will not incur the wrath of God.

### **Beginning of All Things**

At the Rapture we will be with the Lord forever and *the beginning of all things* will begin. First we will receive our rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ and then we will be the guests of honor at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We will return with Christ at the end of the Tribulation Period as He conquers Satan and the evil world to usher in the Millennial Kingdom. After the final rebellion on earth and judgment of the nonbelievers we will enter the Eternal State and abide with God and Christ in the new Heavens and new Earth forever.

Paul understood the implications of this sign-less event. It means that we must be ready for the Lord's return at any time and at all times. Thus, he urged his protege Titus to be always "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

## **The Rapture & Jewish Weddings**

Jesus relied on the ancient Jewish wedding pattern for many of His teachings including the parables in the Gospels and the Last Supper. We also find that the Rapture has many common factors with the Jewish wedding.

### **Jewish Wedding**

#### **1. Establish a Marriage Covenant**

- Usually the bridegroom or a male representative of the groom's father made the arrangements which included the bridegroom paying a purchase price for the bride. In Genesis 24, Abraham sent his servant Eliezer, to find a bride for Isaac and Rebeah agreed to marry Isaac before meeting him.
- The bride would agree to the arrangement.
- The marriage ceremony would take place in the future but was now a legal and binding marriage.
- The groom would go back to his father's house and prepare a place for them to live whether it was in his father's house or a separate house.
- The bride underwent a ritual cleansing bath to demonstrate her purity and began to gather her trousseau and prepare for married life.
- In some cases where the groom & bride were located in close proximity they would share a cup of wine to celebrate their betrothal.

#### **2. The Wedding Ceremony**

- The father of the groom would determine when his son would gather his bride for their wedding ceremony. The son did not know when this would occur until his father told him.
- At that moment the son would get his male escorts and proceed with a torchlight procession to the home of the bride. The groom's arrival would be announced with a shout.
- The bride did not know ahead of time when the groom and his party were coming.
- The groom would take his wife and her female attendants to the groom's father's house where the wedding guests had assembled.
- The groom and bride would then be escorted to the bridal chamber that the groom had prepared. The bride's face would remain veiled until after the consummation of the marriage.
- For 7 days they would remain in the bridal chamber, consummating their marriage. Then they would appear with the bride's face unveiled.

#### **3. The Marriage Supper**

- Once the marriage had been consummated by the bride and groom, the wedding guests would feast and make merry for seven days.

## Comparison of Jewish Wedding & the Rapture of the Church

Jewish Wedding	Rapture of the Church
<b>1. Establish a Marriage Covenant</b>	<b>Our Salvation</b>
Groom's father made the arrangements	Holy Spirit calls us.  <i>"You did not choose me but I chose you."</i> John 15:16
Groom pays a purchase price.	Jesus paid the price for our salvation.  <i>"If we confess our sins, He is faithful &amp; righteous to forgive us our sins &amp; to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9"</i>
Bride agrees to the arrangement	Individual must choose to accept Jesus as their Lord & Savior  <i>"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16"</i>
Is now a legal & binding contract	Our salvation is secure.  <i>These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:13"</i>
Groom returns to his father's house to prepare a place for his bride	Jesus returned to Heaven to prepare a place for us.  <i>"In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go &amp; prepare a place for you, I will come again &amp; receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."</i> John 14:2-3
Bride prepares herself for married life.	The Church will prepare herself for her groom Jesus Christ.  <i>Let us rejoice &amp; be glad &amp; give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come &amp; His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright &amp; clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.</i> Rev 19:1-8

Share a cup of wine	<p>Jesus said He would not drink wine again until the great feast that will begin His Father's kingdom on earth.</p> <p><i>" . . . For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes". Luke 22:17</i></p>
<b>2. The Wedding Ceremony</b>	<b>Rapture of the Church</b>
Father of the groom tells his son to gather his bride. Father does not tell the son when this will be ahead of time.	<p>Even Jesus does not know when He is coming to get His bride.</p> <p><i>But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heave, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Matt 24:36 &amp; Mark 13:32</i></p>
Groom gathers his male escorts, proceeds with a torchlight procession, & announces his arrival with a shout at the bride's house.	<p>Jesus will be accompanied by an angelic escort, preceded by a shout when He returns for His Church.</p> <p><i>"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel &amp; with the trumpet of God, &amp; the dead in Christ will rise first." 1 Thes 4:16</i></p>
Groom take his bride to his father's house.	<p>Jesus takes us to Heaven to be with Him forever.</p> <p><i>"Then we who are alive &amp; remain will 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 Thes 4:17</i></p>
Groom & Bride enter marriage chamber for 7 days & bride's face remains veiled until after the consummation.	<p>Jesus removes His Church for the 7 year Tribulation Period. We will see Jesus face to face.</p> <p><i>"Then we who are alive &amp; remain will 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 Thes 4:17</i></p> <p><i>For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 1 Cor 13:12;</i></p> <p><i>We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 1 John 3:1</i></p>

3. The Marriage Supper	Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Marriage has been consummated & wedding guests make merry for 7 days.	<p>We shall celebrate with Christ in person &amp; be with Him forever.</p> <p><i>“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” Rev 19:7</i></p>

### Overview of Jewish Wedding & the Church

Jewish Wedding	The Church
Marriage Covenant	Salvation
Wedding Ceremony	Final Redemption
Marriage Supper	Eternity