



Will Young Children Be Raptured?

For those of us who believe the “End Times” are near (thus thinking more about the “Rapture of the Church”) a few questions might come to mind. I know they have for me and a few of my friends.

Here are the questions:

- What will happen to young children at the Rapture?
- Will they ALL go, just because they are children?
- Will the children’s status depend on the "salvation status" of their parents?
- And if yes to this last question, what if only one of two parents is saved?

Let’s be clear – the answer to these exact questions does not appear directly in the Scriptures. I reached out to a few trusted Bible scholars I know to see what their response might be. One of the email responses I received was nicely documented. Here is the response (for your research and consideration):

Cited from Dr. Ron Rhodes, personal email correspondence.

For more on this issue, see Ron Rhodes, BIBLE PROPHECY ANSWER BOOK (Harvest House Publishers).

As I see it, there are three primary positions:

1. ALL CHILDREN WILL BE LEFT BEHIND (NO CHILDREN WILL BE RAPTURED)

Some believe that an absolute requirement for being caught up in the rapture is being born again, having trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation (see John 3:16-17; Acts 16:31).

Those who have not trusted in Christ—including young children, who are incapable of believing—are ineligible for the rapture.

Proponents of this perspective point to other periods of divine judgment in Bible times.

For example, when the universal flood of Noah’s time fell upon the world, none of the children of unbelievers were taken aboard Noah’s boat. Rather, they were left behind to die with everyone else.

Likewise, the children of unbelievers will be left behind at the rapture to experience the full brunt of God’s judgments during the tribulation period.

2. ALL CHILDREN WILL BE RAPTURED

Other Christians believe virtually all children will be raptured. Christians who hold to this view appeal to various Bible verses that seem to support the salvation of infants and young children. Since infants and young children go to heaven at the moment of death, it also stands to reason that they must go to heaven at the moment of the rapture.

Following are some of the primary theological considerations cited in support of this view:

God's Wondrous Grace

Scripture speaks of God's grace and mercy. Would the "riches of God's grace" be displayed in leaving infants and young children behind at the rapture? Many think not. "Grace" refers to God's undeserved favor. "Mercy" refers to the withholding of deserved punishment. How could God be gracious and merciful if He failed to incorporate in His sovereign plan a means of rescuing infants and young children from the judgments of the tribulation?

Christ's Great Love

God is also characterized by love (1 John 4:16). It is in keeping with the love of God to incorporate in His sovereign plan of salvation a means of saving infants and young children from the judgments of the tribulation. Jesus certainly expressed great love for children during His earthly ministry (Matthew 18:1-14).

God Is Good

Scripture says God is good. Surely God, in His goodness, would see to it that infants and young children were delivered from the horrific trials of the tribulation period.

God Is Just

God is also characterized by justice. Surely in His justice the Lord would not demand of a creature—such as an infant or a young child—something that the creature was utterly incapable of, such as exercising saving faith in order to escape the coming tribulation.

David's Expectation

When King David's son died, David was confident of seeing him again in the afterlife (2 Samuel 12:22-23). Since God saved David's young son from the judgment of hell, does it not make sense that God will also deliver infants and young children from the judgments of the tribulation period? Many think so.

The Basis of the Judgment

When God judges people, the judgment is always based on what people have done. They are held accountable for their choices and their actions. Infants and young children cannot possibly be the objects of such a judgment because they are not responsible for their deeds. Therefore, infants and young children must be exempt from the judgments of the tribulation period.

3. ONLY CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS ARE RAPTURED

Despite the arguments offered above, other Christian thinkers believe that only the children of believers will be raptured. (I assume this would be true if even only one parent is a believer.)

Such individuals generally concede that infants and small children who die go to heaven to be with Christ—regardless of whether their parents are believers. But death and the rapture are two different matters.

Those who hold to this view offer a number of scriptural evidences.

Foundationally, the apostle Paul reveals in 1 Corinthians 7:14 that in the Christian family, children are "set apart for Him."

Further biblical evidences for this view include the following:

- When the flood fell during Noah's day, God did not save the children of unbelievers. God delivered only Noah, his wife, and his three sons and their wives.

- When Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God, the children of unbelievers were not exempted. Only Lot and his two daughters were permitted to escape.
- The firstborn among the Egyptians did not survive God's plague, whereas the firstborn among the Jews survived, in homes where the blood of the lamb was applied to the doorpost.

In view of such factors, it would seem that a case can be made that only the children of believers will participate in the rapture, while the children of unbelievers will be left behind.

In my thinking, only positions #2 and #3 are viable. I lean toward position #2 but recognize great merit in position #3 as well.

Dr. Ron Rhodes

So, if you have children or grandchildren who are unsaved, my heart goes out to you.

The bottom line is – **GOD IS GOOD!** And **ONLY HE** gets to determine what is right or wrong, good or evil. We are not called to make decisions of this magnitude as we are incapable of doing so. **We must TRUST in His goodness** – no matter what. Reaffirm this in prayer, ask what you will, and believe in His goodness for now and all eternity.

*Philippians 4:4-7 **Rejoice** in the Lord **always**. I will say it again: **Rejoice!** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, **will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

Be sure to pray with thanksgiving and allow His peace to guard your heart and mind so that you do not sin in this regard.

Blessings my friends and siblings in Christ Jesus!
Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!