

The Rapture Part 2

Welcome to Part 2 on our study on The Rapture. In Part 1, we established the fact that the Bible cannot mean what it never meant. The futurist rapture ideology is a distortion of Biblical prophecy.

It is, in fact, a delusion. Webster's Dictionary defines "[delusion](#)" as a ***"false persistent belief maintained in spite of evidence to the contrary"***. Like the brethren of Berea, we must search the Scriptures to see if the things which are taught in Church today are Biblically sound doctrine. (Acts 17:11)

The word "**rapture**" is not a Bible word. It comes from the Latin word "**raptizo**" which means "**caught up**". The teaching of a secret pre-tribulation rapture of the Church from the Earth was not taught or believed in the first-century Church.

It was relatively unheard of and never taught until the early 1800's and was not widespread until the early 1900's. In Part 1 of our study on "**The Rapture**", we traced the historic development of this doctrine of a secret pre-tribulation rapture.

Most scholars agree that around 1830, a secret pre-tribulation rapture came into prominence by a group of people in Scotland known as the Plymouth Brethren led by John Nelson Darby. (1800-1882)

This group had started having prophetic conferences. At one of these conferences, a charismatic utterance came forth as a prophetic message through a 15-year-old girl named Margaret MacDonald.

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While in a trance, she received a private vision and revelation that only a select group of believers would be removed from the Earth before the days of the Antichrist.

Soon, Darby coupled this vision with another idea that originated from the Jesuit priest named Francisco Ribera. Back around 1591, Ribera had introduced the idea of interrupting Daniel's 70-week-end-time prophecy by inserting a "**gap**" between the 69th and the 70th week.

Darby connected his "**rapture**" to the beginning of that final week and changed that 70th week from a 7-year period of covenantal confirmation to one of tribulation.

He introduced this "**pre-tribulation rapture**" theory in Europe and later in America.

When it was included in the notes of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1917, this theory grew in popularity and became the dominant view in many Churches in America.

The central Scriptures used to support this **“pre-tribulation rapture”** are found in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** and in **1 Corinthians 15:51-58**.

A very important thing to notice about these two passages of Scripture, Paul is speaking of the same event. Paul uses the pronouns **“we”** and **“you”** several times in these passages.

The **“we”** was **“them”** back in the first century. Paul says **“we”** and **“you”** multiple times which means Paul was including himself, his brethren and the recipients of his letters. Jesus referred to this same event in **Matthew 24:31**. Where Paul uses the word **“caught up”**, Jesus uses the word **“gather”**.

Let’s take a closer look at **1 Thessalonians 4:17**. The New Testament was written in Greek which is a more elaborate and descriptive language than English.

A better understanding of the Greek meaning will help to better grasp the reality Paul was expressing to his first century readers. We have an example of this as we look at the Greek word translated as **“air”** in English.

Two words are translated as “air”; one is “Ouranos”.

1Th 4:17 Then^{G1899} we^{G2249} which are alive^{G2198} and remain^{G4035} shall be caught up^{G726} together^{G260} with^{G4862} them^{G846} in^{G1722} the clouds,^{G3507} to meet^{G1519 G529} the^{G3588} Lord^{G2962} in^{G1519} the air:^{G109} and^{G2532} so^{G3779} shall we ever^{G3842} be^{G2071} with^{G4862} the Lord.^{G2962}

G109

ἀήρ

aēr

ah-ayr'

From ἀήμι aēmi (to *breathe unconsciously*, that is, *respire*; by analogy to *blow*); “air” (as naturally *circumambient*): - air. Compare [G5594](#).

This refers to the air where birds fly, the air high above mountains, the air up in the atmosphere.

The other word for **“air”** is the Greek word **Strong's G#109 “aer”**. This is the one that Paul uses in **1 Thessalonians 4:17** as can be seen above.

Its meaning has to do with internal breath and proximity to location, realm or dimension. In other words, you don't have to leave the ground to get **"caught up"** in the air or in the spiritual dimension with the Lord.

Jesus said the Kingdom of God is within you, in your midst. **(Luke 17:21)**

Luke 17:21 neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, ***the kingdom of God is within you.***

The Greeks viewed breath and spirit synonymously. Paul's passages are filled with symbolic language. Clouds often symbolize humans, spirit-realm beings, and those who have died in the Lord rather than atmospheric clouds.

Some examples of this usage are found in **Hebrews 12:1** and in **Jude 12**.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great ***a cloud of witnesses***, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Jude 12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: ***clouds they are*** without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

In the Old Testament, God came against Nations in or on clouds. **(Joel 2:1-2, Isaiah 19:1, Psalms 104:3)** It was through the action of humans or armies. Jesus promised to do the same. **(Matthew 24:30)**

Joel 2:1-2,1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; ***2*** a day of darkness and of gloominess, ***a day of clouds*** and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

Isaiah 19:1 *The burden of Egypt. Behold, **the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud**, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.*

Psalms 104:3 *who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: **who maketh the clouds his chariot**: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:*

Matthew 24:30 *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.*

Today, for many the idea of a great escape is deceptively appealing. Many are afraid of dying and hope to avoid a trip to the grave to reach heaven.

The rapture offers them a quick and easy way out. It offers the most convenient excuse to avoid the believer's responsibilities here on Earth in this life.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the powerful expectation verses that we have read in the New Testament demand a literal rapture. Jesus marked his coming and the gathering of His Elect to happen at the time Jerusalem and the temple was destroyed. **(Matthew 24:1-3, 31, 34)**

History tells us that this happened in AD 70. We must be so careful to base everything we believe upon book, chapter, and verse of the Bible **not on traditional man-made ideologies.**

We must always remember to keep the basic principle of audience relevance in mind when studying Scripture.

Audience relevance simply says the Scriptures were written to living people almost 2,000 years ago about things that were happening and about to happen **in their lifetime** and **in their generation.**

They were the generation of the Last Days. This is what the Scripture clearly states. The Holy Spirit comforts us by His presence dwelling in our hearts.

The Scriptures sustain us as we await our personal call into the heavenly realm. May the Lord bless us toward a richer, fuller, and more accurate understanding of the Apostles' Doctrine.

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