

Is there a Rapture?

Does the bible talk about a rapture?

The belief of the secret rapture asserts that the followers of Jesus will be suddenly and steadily raptured from the earth and taken to heaven. Then any people left on earth will face a period of great difficulty.

Rapture is derived from the Medieval Latin *raptura* ("seizure, kidnapping"), which derives from the Latin *raptus* ("a carrying off").

The idea of a rapture is not found in historic Christianity, and is a recent doctrine originating from the 1830s. The term is used frequently among fundamentalist theologians in the United States.

History

The Rapture theory was developed in 1830. The early church did not believe this.

Most scholars agree that the secret Rapture theory was launched into prominence by a group of people in Scotland who had become known as the Plymouth Brethren. Under the direction of John Nelson Darby and others, they began to hold Prophetic Conferences.

Supposedly, during one of those conferences, or from a sick bed during those conferences, a charismatic utterance came forth as a prophetic message as though from the Lord through a young, fifteen-year-old Scottish girl named Margaret Macdonald.

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. But she also saw other believers enduring the tribulation, something most rapturists nowadays do not teach.

Darby coupled this highly questionable vision of a secret, pre-tribulation Rapture with another idea originated by the Jesuit priest, Francisco Ribera.

Francisco Ribera

In 1585 A.D., Ribera invented the idea of interrupting Daniel's 70-week, end-time prophecy and inserting a "gap" between the 69th and 70th weeks. This was done to deflect accusations from the Reformers who were fueling reformation fervor by claiming the Pope was the Antichrist and the Catholic Church the beast of Revelation.

Ribera surmised that the first 69 weeks (483 years) concluded at the baptism of Jesus in 27 A.D., but God had extended the 70th week into the future. Therefore, the Pope and the Catholic Church could not be so accused.

Darby grabbed hold of Ribera's severance idea, connected his "Rapture" to the beginning of that final week, and changed that week from a 7-year period of covenantal confirmation to one of tribulation.

(Notably, the Bible **never** mentions a future 7-year period of tribulation.) Darby then introduced this now fully developed, pre-tribulation Rapture view (theory) in Europe and later in America.

It was popularized in American by inclusion in the notes of the *Scofield Reference Bible* in 1917 and by elaborate End Time event charts published in Clarence Larkin's *Dispensational Truth* in 1918.

Matthew 24:42-44

42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

This **does not** imply a secret event, but emphasizes the importance of spiritual readiness.

Matthew 24:37-41 (one taken & the other left)

37But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

38For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

39and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

40Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

41Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

This is about the day of the Lord, when Jesus returns.

2 Peter 3:10

10But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

This is echoed in **Revelation 6:12-17**.

12I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

13And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

14Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15And 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,

16and 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!"

17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

This is not a secret event but will be a powerful, visible and glorious occurrence witnessed by all.

Here is a breakdown of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 & 17 (important words are highlighted)

1 Thessalonians 4:16&17

*16 For the Lord Himself will descend from **heaven (Ouranos)** with a **shout**, with the **voice** of an archangel, and with the **trumpet** of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up (harpazo)** together with them in the clouds to **meet** the Lord **in the air (aer)**. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

Harpazo means to seize to oneself, like someone seizing bounty (spoil, a prize); to take by an *open display* of force. Imagine a jewelry thief smashing the counter and grabbing the jewels to himself. This is what the word Harpazo implies.

- The destination is not heaven (Ouranos) which is the word used in v.16. Ouranos means the visible sky. The imagery is the royal return of a king to His city. The destination is a returning entourage with Christ to earth to reign on the earth.
- The purpose of the catching away underlines this divine/human encounter, to meet the Lord in the air. **“To meet” (eis apantēsin)** was almost a technical term that described the custom of sending a delegation outside the city to receive a dignitary who was on the way to town.
- In Acts 28:15 Luke utilizes this word in his description of the way a delegation of Christians from Rome went out to receive Paul and his companions when he approached the imperial city, *“The brothers there*

had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us” (eis apantēsin).

- The customary procedure was for the delegation to return to the city with the visiting dignitaries (Acts 28:16; also Matt. 25:6). We see the same thing when Jesus enters Jerusalem. The crowd goes out into the air to meet Him and escort him back into the city.
- Josephus, tells how the citizens of Rome went out to meet Vespasian as their new emperor.
- You have a walled city with a watchman on the wall like in **Psalm 24:7-10** 7

The king's herald calls out:

- “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

The watchman replies/challenges:

- **8** Who is this King of glory?

The herald responds:

- The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 & 17, Paul is using a metaphor. This is a royal entrance liturgy. Paul is depicting the return of Christ like a king coming back to his city. Everybody who lived in a walled city knew what the protocol was. Once you knew it was the king, and you heard his herald blow the trumpet, you send out the greeting committee.

They go out from the city, meet the king on the road, and where they go from there is NOT back down the road but back into the city. Similarly, Christ is coming from heaven (the sky) with his angelic and saints entourage, the people on the earth go forth to meet him in a “cloud of witnesses” and return to reign with him on the earth. This is a story about the return of the king and to welcome him back to earth to reign on the earth with those who are raised in Christ.

The return of Christ is a major event.

“Caught up into the air” does not mean into heaven. The Lord will descend to the earth (Job 19:25; Acts 1:11) where the judgment shall take place.

The word “aer” which is spelled in the english as “air” literally means “the air we breath”. Its like saying; “let’s go outside” not into heaven.

Revelation 19:11-16

11 Then I saw heaven (ouranos) opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

In this description Jesus is a mighty warrior ready to strike down the nations and rule them with an iron scepter. The nations are here on the earth.

This is called The “Parousia” in the Greek. Which is translated “the coming of the Lord”.

John 14:3

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Where is He going to prepare a place for us? He’s going to the cross.

“In my Father’s house (dwelling) are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”

Where is His father’s dwelling? In Him.

Colossians 2:9 - *“For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily”*

Jesus Himself is the temple:

John's vision of heaven is of the New Jerusalem without a temple, for **Jesus Himself is its temple** (Rev. 21:22). The symbolism of God dwelling among His people on earth will come to pass (John 14:2; Rev. 21:3).

John 2:19, 22: "'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' ... he was speaking about the temple of his body”

Revelation 3:10

10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.



Matthew 24:30-31

29 “Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

30 “**Then** will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And **then** all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

31 And He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Philippians 3:20-21

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior **from there**, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Daniel 12:1-2

1 “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.

2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—

52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

All of this happens at His return.

Luke 17:34-37 plus context from. V 26

26 “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

31 On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.

32 Remember Lot's wife!

33 Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. (*He continues on this vein of thought*)

34 I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.

35 Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. ”

Who was taken in the days of Noah? The wicked.

Who was Judged in Lots day? The wicked.

Who is taken from the bed, the field and the grinding mill? The wicked.

Which is why He says the following in verse 37:

37 “Where, Lord?” they asked. He replied, “Where there is a **dead body**, there the **vultures will gather**.”

1 Thessalonians 5:9 ESV

For God has not appointed us for **wrath (orgé)**, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

There are two words used for “wrath” in the new testament; Thumos and Orge. Thumos is used for having explosive anger. Orge is used in describing the lake of fire.

Luke 4:28

“And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath” (Thumos - explosive anger).

So 1 Thessalonians 5:9 says that God has not appointed us for the lake of fire.

John 14:1-3 ESV

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go (*to the cross*) to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

So in conclusion, there is no rapture based on scriptural evidence. Just a changing into His likeness at His return.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when he appears** we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.