



## **W E L C O M E**

I hope you enjoy and learn from my notes  
for a Sunday School study of the Rapture.

I would be very happy to hear your thoughts,  
comments or questions concerning this study.

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## Rapture Questions

Circle **T** for true or **F** for false.

1. T F The word "rapture" is not found in the Bible.
2. T F The next prophetic event will be the rapture.
3. T F Jesus comes alone at the rapture.
4. T F Jesus comes to earth at the rapture.
5. T F The rapture will not be seen by the world.
6. T F The rapture will happen in a fraction of a second - in the "twinkling of an eye".
7. T F The rapture can happen at any moment.
8. T F The rapture will occur before the tribulation period.
9. T F Deceased Christians will not be part of the rapture.
10. T F Only Jesus Christ and His Father know the time of rapture.
11. T F The rapture will happen before the Antichrist appears.
12. T F The lost world will be persuaded to come to Christ after the rapture
13. T F The rapture is guaranteed for Christians – they need to do nothing
14. T F ALL Christians will leave in the rapture.

\* These statements will be discussed as we go through our study of the rapture.

## A Rapture Study

We begin with the etymology (origin) of the word "rapture"

Curiously, the word "rapture" is not in our Bible

Some have seized that fact to discount the rapture BUT

The rapture is a pillar of the Christian faith

The confusion lies in the translation of languages

Let us look at the rapture described in **I Thes 4:16-17**

*caught up* comes from the Greek word *harpadzo*

*harpadzo* > to seize; to catch or snatch away

When the Greek text was translated into Latin they used the word *rapture* for the Greek word *harpadzo*

They agree basically but the Latin word *rapture* inflects a more emotional or rapturous feeling

Over time the Latin word *rapture* became the commonly accepted title of the event

Here is a dictionary definition of the word "rapturous" <<<

We will explore the rapture by answering these 7 questions:

1. What is the rapture?
2. What happens at the rapture?
3. Will the rapture be a secret event (unseen)?
4. Will the rapture happen before the tribulation period?
5. What is the true tribulation period?
6. When will the rapture happen?
7. Is the rapture shown in the Revelation?

## 1. What is the rapture?

It is that future event when Jesus Christ returns and takes the church out of this world to be with Him

The rapture is a promise from Jesus **John 14:2-3**

He has gone to prepare a special place for us Why?

1. Jesus wants our presence with Him **John 14:3 17:24**

2. We are strangers in this world **Heb 11:13 I Pet 2:11**

Jesus does not come to earth at the rapture

Jesus will send His angels for us **Matt 24:30-31**

We will be *caught up* to meet the Lord in the air

**I Thes 4:16-17**

The rapture will be a grand "reception" for Jesus

The rapture is described as a "*gathering*" on 2 occasions

**Matt 24:30-31 II Thes 2:1**

The manner of Christ's return is noteworthy **Acts 1:9-11**

Angels told the disciples that Jesus would return in the same manner they saw Him leave

They watched Jesus bodily ascend into heaven

At the rapture He will return in His glorified body

He will be visible as He was when He ascended

There will be one world shattering difference:

Only the apostles saw Jesus ascend into heaven

All the world will see Him return at the rapture

**Matt 24:30 Rev 1:7**

## 2. What happens at the rapture?

The rapture is commonly thought to be a single instant event

Actually, several related actions occur before the rapture

The rapture is the seizing or snatching away of the church

It cannot happen until AFTER other related events occur

### [Hand-Out: What happens at the rapture]

1. **The appearing;** Jesus suddenly appears in earth's heaven with His angels **Matt 24:30**
2. **The resurrection;** Deceased Christians will rise from their graves with new bodies **I Cor 15:51-52**
3. **The transformation;** At the same moment the dead Christians are raised, the living Christians are instantly changed into their new bodies

*"twinkling of an eye"* speaks of the quickness of the resurrection and transformation of our bodies

Neither the resurrection nor the transformation is the rapture

The rapture is the removal of the church from this world

Before we leave in the rapture we must receive new bodies?

**I Cor 15:50-54**

Our earthly bodies are not fit for heaven

The transformation gives us incorruptible and immortal bodies to experience eternal life

The transformation will give us a glorious body like that of Jesus Christ **Philip 3:20-21** (I John 3:2)

4. **The Rapture;** Angels will accompany Jesus at the rapture **Matt 16:27** (Matt 25:31 II Thes 1:7)

They will be sent to gather the church from the world and deliver them to Jesus **Matt 24:31**

This is the rapture: a seizing; a snatching away

Jesus made a curious statement about angels  
**Luke 12:8-9** (Rev 3:5)

Might this aid the angels in their "gathering" of us?

The angels won't take anyone who has not confessed Christ or He them

5. **The reception;** Jesus will receive Christians in the air at the rapture **I Thes 4:16-17**

Jesus will suddenly appear in heaven with:

a shout What do you suppose He shouts

Could it be "come forth" (to Lazarus)

Could it be "come up hither" (to John)

the voice of the archangel commanding the angels trumpet of God (7<sup>th</sup> trumpet in Rev 11:15)

We'll be *caught up* to meet the Lord in the air

I believe we'll be *caught up* by the angels who gather us

The prospect of the rapture serves Christians as a good source of *comfort* **I Thes 4:18**

*comfort* > **means** to encourage or exhort one another

### **3. Will the rapture be a secret event (unseen)?**

It is generally believed that the world will not see the rapture

Surely they will notice millions of people missing  
They will try to explain it away or just shrug it off  
The world will be relieved at the absence of Christians  
The secret rapture fallacy is drawn mostly from 2 sources:

1<sup>st</sup> source - **I Cor 15:52** "... *the twinkling of an eye...*"

This phrase does NOT describe the rapture

It describes the quickness of the transformation

2<sup>nd</sup> source - **Matt 24:43** The parable of the thief

The moral of this parable is NOT the undetected thief

The point intended here is that the householder wasn't watching

If he had been watching he would have been ready for the thief

The thief in this parable equates to Jesus Christ

Jesus will come as a thief to the church **Rev 3:3**

He will come as a thief to those who are not *watching*

"Parable Of The Thief" doesn't teach a secret rapture

It's lesson is this: There will many Christians not watching when the rapture happens - they will be unready!

What happens to those who are not ready?

That will be answered in a later lesson AND

You don't want to miss it.

The rapture will NOT go unobserved. Contrarily, it will be a spectacle to all the world

Jesus will be visible at the rapture **Matt 24:30 Rev 1:7**

Echos of mourning will fill the world **Matt 24:30**

"*mourn*" > pictures the people beating their breasts in anguish

#### **4. Will the rapture happen before the tribulation period?**

The so-called "tribulation period" is the tribulation of the Revelation

The popular belief is the rapture occurs before the tribulation of the Revelation making it a pre-tribulation rapture

We will learn that the Bible teaches no such thing

**[Hand-Out: Pre-tribulation Rapture Explained]**

We'll now examine several Bible verses which supposedly teach a pre-tribulation rapture

**[Hand-Out: Pre-tribulation References? - and go over it]**

Special attention is required for Rev 3:10 and Rev 4:1-2

**Rev 3:10** Pre-tribulationists mistakenly place the rapture here

They do so by interpreting "*temptation*" as tribulation

Temptation is NOT tribulation or vice versa

"temptation" > is the act of tempting or being tempted;  
it is allurements; enticement

TRUTH: ALL churches are destined to suffer tribulation

Here are two examples: **II Thes 1:4 Rev 2:9**

Jesus said this about tribulation < John 16:33

Jesus could not promise the believers in Philadelphia freedom from tribulation



The "*hour of temptation*" (Rev 3:10) is the time during the Revelation when Christians will be strongly tempted

A powerful source of temptation for the church during the time of the Revelation will be the Antichrist

Jesus promised to keep the Christians in Philadelphia from the "*hour of temptation*"

He couldn't promise to keep them from tribulation Why?

The church is predestined to suffer tribulation < I Thes 3:4  
(John 16:33 Acts 14:22)

FACT: Christians have always suffered tribulation

Paul spoke of his tribulations < Eph 3:13

He praised the church in Thessalonica for enduring persecutions and tribulations (II Thes 1:3-4)

God promised delivery from His wrath – NOT tribulation  
< I Thes 5:9 (Rom 5:9 & I Thes 1:10)

A key to solving Rev 3:10 lies in the preposition "*from*"

"*from*" can mean "take away from" or "out of"

"*from*" can also mean: through; to prevail

Jesus promised to bring the church of Philadelphia....  
"through" temptation; to keep them from falling

Another defining word in Rev 3:10 is "*patience*" <<<

**Rev 4:1-2** Pre-tribulationists mistakenly pin the rapture here

1<sup>st</sup> Argument: John alone is called to heaven – NOT the church

His call to heaven is in keeping with Jesus' stated purpose  
in **Rev 1:1**

John is taken to heaven in the spirit – NOT bodily

**Rev 4:2 Rev 1:10**

2<sup>nd</sup> Argument: The language of other accepted rapture verses is absent here:

“the Son of Man” - Matt 24:30 Luke 21:27

“clouds” - Matt 24:30 Luke 21:27 Rev 1:7

“angels” - Matt 16:27 Matt 25:31

“mourning” or “wailing” Matt 24:30 Rev 1:7

3<sup>rd</sup> Argument: If the church went to heaven with John in Rev 4:1-2 the rest of the Revelation would not be needed

The church would be in heaven and would NOT return

Therefore the Revelation would not be necessary

Remember: The Revelation was written for the church

**Rev 1:10-11 Rev 22:16**

TRUTH: The church is neither mentioned nor indicated nor intended in Rev 4:1-2

After carefully reading all the Bible verses that supposedly promote a pre-tribulation rapture....

It must be concluded there is no pre-tribulation rapture

## **5. What is the true “tribulation period”**

The rapture is always discussed in relation to the so-called “tribulation period”

That supposed tribulation period is that of the Revelation

The Bible never speaks of the “*tribulation period*.”

“tribulation” is named 28 times in the Bible BUT

Not once is there a time specified as the "*tribulation period*"

It is indisputable that the Revelation contains tribulation BUT

Pre-tribulationists wrongly call the tribulation of the the Revelation the "*tribulation period*"

THE FACT IS: The church has always suffered tribulation

Jesus foresaw and foretold tribulation for the church

**John 16:33** (Acts 14:22 I Thes 3:4)

All the early church experienced extreme tribulation

**II Thes 1:3-4 Rev 2:8-9**

The church has suffered and will suffer tribulation until Jesus returns

The tribulation of the Revelation is NOT the "*tribulation period*"

It is the final stage of tribulation which the church has endured from the beginning

The true tribulation period....

Started with the first church in Jerusalem and

Will end when Christ returns at the rapture

## **6. When does the Rapture Happen?**

Many Christians believe the rapture is "imminent"

"imminent" means impending; at any moment

That is contrary to Bible prophecy

There is a definite point in God's prophetic plan when the rapture will occur

We cannot know the day or date of the rapture < Matt 24:36

We will recognize the general time for the rapture  
Jesus revealed much about the rapture in **Matt 24:30-31**  
It all begins with Jesus Appearing in the sky  
He will send His angels to gather the church and  
We'll be taken to meet the Lord in the air **II Thess 4:16-17**  
Jesus set the time of the rapture in **Matt 24:29**

The rapture comes "*after the tribulation of those days*"

This is the tribulation of the Revelation

**v21** shows that the rapture will come after "*great tribulation*"

**v15** The "*great tribulation*" follows the "*abomination of desolation*" perpetrated by the Antichrist

Jesus placed the rapture AFTER a time of *great tribulation*  
and the wicked Antichrist

Let us again see where Paul placed the rapture? **II Thes 2:1-4**

Both Jesus and Paul referred to the rapture as a "gathering"  
(Matt 24:31 II Thes 2:1)

Paul listed three things which must occur before the rapture

- (1) A time of falling away (apostasy)
- (2) The man of sin be revealed (Antichrist)
- (3) The abomination of desolation (temple desecration)

The rapture cannot be "imminent" if these prophetic events  
must happen first

This agrees with Jesus' prophecy in **Matt Chap 24**

**v 11** – many will fall away from the truth (apostasy)

Paul described this another way in **II Tim 4:2-4**

**v 15** - the "abomination of desolation" takes place

**v 21** - great tribulation follows the abomination of desolation

**vs 30-31**- The rapture happens here

TRUTH: The rapture will come AFTER the Revelation tribulation -  
not before

**[read]** the introduction to II Thessalonians in my Bible

## **7. Is the rapture shown in the Revelation?**

Paul did set a specific time for the rapture **I Cor 15:51-52**

The words "*last trump*" suggests a series of trumpet blasts

The Revelation contains a fateful series of 7 trumpets

The "*last trump*" is the trump of **I Thes 4:16 Rev 11:15**

The "last trump" or 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blown in **Rev 11:15**

The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet of Rev 11:15 heralds several things that will  
follow

One of them is the rapture alluded to in **v18**

Now, we'll locate the rapture in the Revelation

We know that the rapture will occur at the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet

The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is blown in Rev 11:15 BUT

The rapture doesn't occur until Rev Chap 14? Why?

Between the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet of Rev 11 and the rapture in Rev 14  
God's people come under ruthless attacks:

Rev 12 tells of Satan's life-long attack on Israel

Rev 13 tells of the Antichrist attacking the saints

Rev 14 reveals two final gatherings at the end of this world

FIRST GATHERING – **vs 13-16**

**v13** sheds light on the first gathering

The dead in Christ will be blessed henceforth

They will enjoy heavenly rest with Jesus forever more

The first gathering is metaphorically explained as a “*reaping*”

A reaping is suggestive of a harvest

Jesus spoke of this harvest in < Matt 9:37

Jesus was speaking of a harvest of lost souls

**v14** shows the reaper looking like the “Son of man” (Jesus)

The reaper carries a sickle to reap the harvest

The reaper is told to “*thrust in thy sickle*” and reap because the harvest of the earth is ripe

We know what ripe means in the case of fruits and vegetables

In terms of souls, what does ripe mean?

It means there are many souls ready to be saved BUT

They need to hear the gospel

I want us to focus on the “*sickle*” which is a metaphor

The sickle is something else in spiritual truth

A sickle is good for a fruit or vegetable crop BUT

The reaping of souls requires a different kind of sickle

How about the sword of the Spirit? < Eph 6:17

This FIRST GATHERING in Rev 14:13-16 is a reaping of souls by Jesus Christ at the rapture

## SECOND GATHERING - **vs 17-20**

This "gathering" depicts Christ executing His wrath at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev 19)

Instead of reaping souls the Battle of Armageddon will destroy souls

Jesus told a parable alluding to these gatherings **Matt 13:24-30**

It's called, The parable of Wheat and Tares

"the time of harvest" is the rapture **> v30**

The wheat corresponds to the FIRST GATHERING in Rev 14:14-16

The tares correspond to the SECOND GATHERING in Rev 14:17-20

We now have located the rapture in the Revelation

NOW, let us take note of what follows the rapture

**Rev 15:1 Rev 16:1**

We conclude our study of the rapture with these final thoughts:

Tribulation ends in Rev Chap 14 with the FIRST "gathering"

This "gathering" is the rapture according to both Jesus and Paul (Matt 24:31 II Thes 2:1)

The rapture ends tribulation – it doesn't precede it

< Quote from Marvin Rosenthal

Final Statement: There is no such thing as a pre-tribulation rapture!

**This completes our study of the rapture**

## **Pre-tribulation Rapture Explained**

The rapture is unavoidably linked to the so-called "tribulation period."

I don't know who coined that term or when but it has side-tracked the vast majority of Christians from the truth of the rapture. The tragic result of this prophetic misdirection is a multitude of Christians will be unprepared for our future.

The term "tribulation period" is not a Biblical term but is solidly ingrained in today's prophetic teaching. This fictitious "tribulation period" includes the seals, trumpets and vials of the Revelation. Pre-tribulationists classify them all as God's wrath. That is not true. They are mixing tribulation and wrath.

The rapture is always placed in one of three positions related to the so-called "tribulation period."

Pre-tribulation rapture - BEFORE the tribulation period begins  
– before Revelation Chapter 6

Mid-tribulation rapture - MIDDLE of the tribulation period  
which includes Revelation Chapters  
6-18. The real problem is  
establishing the midpoint.

Post-tribulation rapture – AFTER the tribulation of the  
Revelation

A pre-tribulationist – is one who believes that the rapture happens  
before the tribulation of the Revelation

There is another rapture view which compares well with the post-tribulation rapture. It is called the...

Pre-wrath rapture – The rapture comes BEFORE God's wrath  
is unleashed upon this earth. God's  
wrath occurs in Revelation Chapter 16  
and NOT before.



Understand that the Revelation contains both tribulation and wrath of God – they are NOT same. The church will experience the tribulation but NOT God's wrath.

The problem is Pre-tribulationists count all of the Revelation as God' wrath. If that were true then the rapture would be required before the Revelation because the church is exempt from God's wrath. **Rom 5:9**

As related to the church the tribulation period began with the first Christians and will end when Jesus Christ returns at the rapture for His church.

## Bible References

Definition of the word "rapturous"

*Pertaining to or characterized by rapture or mental transport or exaltation; also full of, or feeling, or showing rapture or ecstatic joy or delight*

John 16:33 Jesus said, *"In the world ye shall have tribulation..."*

I Thes 3:4 Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica and says:  
*"For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know."*

Eph 3:13 Paul said to the church at Ephesus:  
*"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory."*

I Thes 5:9 *"For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"*

"patience" comes from a Greek word meaning: endurance or  
continuance

Those words, endurance and continuance, describe one going through tribulation

Matt 24:36 Jesus said, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."*

Matt 9:37 Jesus said to His disciples: *"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few"*

Eph 6:17 Paul is instructing Christians to put on spiritual armor and he says:

*"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God:"*

*"To my knowledge, there is not a verse in the Bible that teaches a pre-tribulation rapture of the church."*

Written By:

Marvin J. Rosenthal, prophecy writer and teacher  
Zion's Fire Magazine  
November-December 2016 Issue

## Pre-tribulation References ?

Below are listed Bible references that relate to the rapture.

A great majority of Christians believe the rapture will happen before the tribulation of the Revelation.

Read each reference listed below and ask yourself....

Does it teach a pre-tribulation rapture? Does it tell me the rapture occurs before the tribulation of the Revelation?

**Matt 24:30-31** - Jesus describes His coming at the rapture

Notice: Jesus places the rapture after tribulation **v29**  
after great tribulation **v21**

**John 14:2-3** - Jesus promised His return for the church

**Acts 1:9-11** – After Jesus ascended into heaven, angels told the disciples that Jesus would return.

**I Cor 15:51-52** – The resurrection of deceased Christians and transformation of living Christians will occur at the rapture

**I Thes 4:16-17** – Paul describes the rapture.

**Hand-Out** -- "...and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

**Titus 2:13** – Titus views the rapture as being our blessed hope.

**Heb 9:28** – Paul explains that for those who look for Him Christ will appear a second time without sin for their salvation. This is the rapture.

The following two references will be given special attention

**Rev 3:10** – Jesus promises to keep the church at Philadelphia from "*the hour of temptation.*"

**Rev 4:1-2** – The Apostle John is called to heaven to receive the Revelation prophecy.

Keep this information sheet and repeat this exercise until the Holy Spirit leads you to the truth, **There is no pre-tribulation rapture!**

## **What Happens At The Rapture**

The rapture is that future event when Jesus Christ returns (appears in the sky) to take the church out of this world to be with Him.

It is commonly imagined that the rapture is a single instant event. That is simply not true.

Below is listed what I perceive to be five separate distinct actions which combined make up the rapture.

1. The Appearing - Jesus suddenly appears in earth's heaven as a brilliant spectacle **Matt 24:27 24:30**
2. The Resurrection - Deceased Christians will rise from their graves with new bodies **I Cor 15:51-52**
3. The Transformation - Christians who are alive at the rapture will be instantly changed into new bodies **I Cor 15:51-52**
4. The Gathering - Jesus will send His angels to gather the elect (the church) from this world **Matt 24:31**
5. The Reception - Jesus will receive His church in the air. **I Thess 4:16-17**

## What Happens At The Rapture

- Matt 24:30-31
- Jesus suddenly appears in earth's heaven – sky.
  - He does not come to earth at the rapture
  - The whole world will see Him **Rev 1:7**
  - Jesus sends His angels to gather His elect (the church) out of this world unto Himself
- I Thes 4:16-17
- Jesus descends from heaven with a shout and the urging of the archangel and the trumpet of God.
  - Dead Christians are first raised to life in their new bodies.
  - Then they, along with living Christians, both in new bodies will rise together to meet Jesus in the air.
- I Cor 15:51-52
- Our earthly bodies cannot enter the kingdom of God (heaven)
- Deceased Christians will first be raised from their graves with new bodies.
  - Living Christians will instantly be changed into their new bodies
  - In our new bodies we will be incorruptible and immortal
  - Death and the grave will have forever lost their power over us

## **Closing Comments To Our Rapture Study**

Two concluding comments by:

Marvin J. Rosenthal  
Editor-in-Chief  
Zion's Fire Magazine  
November-December 2016 Issue

Concerning an imminent (any moment) rapture He wrote:

*"To my knowledge, there is not a verse of scripture that teaches the concept of imminence - that the rapture can occur at any moment, is signless, and that no prophesied events will precede it."*

Concerning the pre-tribulation rapture theory he wrote:

*"If believers think they are exempt from the unique problems of the "Tribulation" period because they will not be present, then the warnings of danger for that time frame become irrelevant and lose their urgency."*

The following is taken from the introduction to II Thessalonians in my Bible:

*"There are certain things that must happen yet before Christ returns. Paul wrote: a "falling away" will occur (2:3), the "man of sin" will be revealed (2:3) the one who now holds lawlessness back will be "taken out of the way" (2:7) there will be "signs and lying wonders" (2:9) and God will send a "strong delusion" upon those who refuse to love the truth (2:11) Christians should not expect the Lord to return until these things have occurred."*

**CONCLUSION – The Bible does NOT teach a pre-tribulation rapture!**

Truth: The rapture is post-tribulation (after tribulation)  
because the rapture ends tribulation for the church.

## Final Rapture Quiz

Mark each statement **T** for true or **F** for false

1. \_\_\_\_ The word "rapture" is found only once in the Bible.
2. \_\_\_\_ The phrase "caught up together" in I Thes 4:17 is a valid description of the rapture.
3. \_\_\_\_ The rapture fulfills the promise of Jesus in John 14:3.
4. \_\_\_\_ Jesus will come to earth at the rapture.
5. \_\_\_\_ The rapture actually involves several separate actions.
6. \_\_\_\_ The rapture will happen in the "twinkling of an eye."
7. \_\_\_\_ Jesus will gather the church at the rapture.
8. \_\_\_\_ The world will not see the rapture.
9. \_\_\_\_ Jesus will come as a thief to Christians who aren't ready.
10. \_\_\_\_ The term "tribulation period" always refers to the time of the Revelation.
11. \_\_\_\_ The rapture will not occur before the "tribulation period."
12. \_\_\_\_ A pre-tribulationist is one who believes the rapture will happen during the "tribulation period."
13. \_\_\_\_ The "hour of temptation" in Rev 3:10 could aptly read "hour of tribulation."
14. \_\_\_\_ John's call to heaven in Rev 4:1-2 represents the rapture.
15. \_\_\_\_ The true tribulation period began with the church and ends when Christ returns for the church.
16. \_\_\_\_ The rapture can happen at any moment (it is imminent).



17. \_\_\_\_\_ Three things must occur before the rapture: (1) a falling away from the faith (apostasy) (2) the Antichrist will appear (3) a time of great tribulation.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ The Revelation does not actually present the rapture.