

The Raptured Rapture

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Why such a confusing doctrine? We're going to learn there is ***no such thing as the rapture!*** In fact, all those who believe in it claim it's in the Bible, but the word *rapture* does not appear in the Bible.

This is a major Protestant belief: The rapture is basically this: If you believe in the Lord and accept Him as your Savior and you attend a Protestant church, when the Lord appears you'll be raptured away from the Tribulation to come.

There have been millions and millions of books sold in the series *Left Behind*. People believe this. Why is it that people believe so many doctrines that are not true? In this case, there are some indications in Scripture where they go to and they think they see a *rapture*. Why did they get it wrong? *Let's list eight of them:*

1. they believe in the immortality of the soul; the souls go to heaven

As a result of that:

2. they don't believe in the resurrection

Some of them speak the word *resurrection* they don't believe it the way the Bible teaches, so they're confused on that, or they downplay it or disregard it.

3. they are confused with Rev. 3:10 and Luke 21:36

The keys to understanding the things that happen in prophecy:

4. they reject the Sabbath and Holy Days

as a result of that:

5. they don't understand the flow of prophecy

as a result of that:

6. they don't understand about the return of Jesus Christ
7. believing in going to heaven, they do not define which one: the first, the second or the third heaven

The first heaven: While I'm speaking there are probably hundreds of thousands of people flying in planes. In that sense there are people in heaven, but they don't live there.

The second heaven: Outer space beyond the atmosphere of the earth.

The third heaven: Where God's throne is, which is called *in the sides of the north*.

The rapture is a great feature that people love, because they feel they are going to miss the Great Tribulation and all the wrath of God that's going to take place. If you are thinking on joining a

church, is that not the church you would want to join, so you would avoid all the things that are going to come to pass at the end?

Most people don't realize it, but they don't agree among themselves. I got this book, which is a compilation of four authors: Gleason L. Archer, Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo and Richard R. Retter: *Three Views on the Rapture*. They have versions of the rapture:

- ***before*** the Tribulation, the beginning of the last seven years
- ***in the middle*** of the Tribulation at the 3-1/2 year point
- ***at the end*** of the Tribulation

So, you have *pre, mid and post* raptures. Let me read from pg 133 of this book. I'm not going to read very much from the book because I'm going to get into the Scriptures and explain those.

From *Three Views on the Rapture*, pg 133:

The Nature of the Comfort Derived from the Rapture:

So people feel comfortable; they can look out and see all the evil out there and say, 'It won't touch me; God is going to take me away.' They even show the movie *Left Behind*. ***There is no secret rapture! There is no rapture, and no secret rapture!*** How can it be secret when we read the Scripture "every eye shall see Him"? Pray tell, how is that secret?

I remember one time I was doing something and my mom was coming after me and I hid under the bed. She knew I was there and would go through the house, 'Freddie, Freddie! Where are you?' I hid under the bed to escape her wrath. Her wrath was a thin willow switch that I had to go pick off the tree. She would get me on my legs. She knew I was there and I didn't miss the wrath. As a matter of fact, I got ten more strokes because of hiding under the bed. The third time she came around and lifted up the bedspread and looked down and said, 'There you are!'

So, people like their comfort zone. One of the most prominent factors emphasized by the advocates of the theory 'the any moment rapture'...

Here's a key: When you see someone like Billy Graham's son Franklin Graham and someone says, 'When is Christ going to return?' He says, 'It could be any minute.' You think: How could he say that? Then he turns around and says, 'Well, it could be further out.' When they say it's any minute, that's

referring to the ‘secret rapture.’ Jesus gave definite signs leading up to His return.

The advocates of the theory of any moment rapture consists of the comfort this doctrine bestows upon the believer who embraces it.

When you’re in a comfort zone what comes next? *Lazy zone! Then Laodicean zone and you’re going to miss it!* You’re going to miss the rapture.

The view of the post-tribulation rapture is impossible for the simple reason that it makes meaningless the very argument that Paul was presenting to the Thessalonians in the second letter. Paul was arguing for the imminence of the Lord’s return. This has to be the source of major comfort for believers.

If Christ would not come until after the Tribulation, that is a special period of unusual intense suffering still in the future, then the return of the Lord is not imminent. The tribulation, rather than deliverance is what we must expect.

He’s admitting here that if their doctrine is not true they’re going to go into the Tribulation. They have books and books on this, and theological papers, and great learned men and scholars and so forth.

Why do they believe these kinds of doctrines? *Because they don’t believe the Truth!* So, God is going to send upon them *strong delusion that they should believe a lie!*

The Scriptures we’re going to cover are all in the New Testament, because this what we’re talking about. Let’s see where they get the understanding of the ‘blessed hope’ and ‘the appearing.’ The appearing comes from the Greek ‘parousia’—which they say means *the rapture*. But that just means *appearing*. If you appear in a room, you ‘parousia.’ His appearing is not going to be secret.

And it isn’t going to be as some of them say, ‘Well, the secret rapture is going to be...’ and ‘only those who hear His voice will be those who will be raptured away, and you can be anywhere: in your car, in your home, in an airplane, on a train, in bed, visiting relatives and all of a sudden you’re gone!’

As the movie *Left Behind* showed, planes crash, trains crash, cars crash, fires start and everybody thinks when they see that: *wonderful, I’m going to escape.*

Titus 2:11: “For the grace of God, which brings salvation for all men, has appeared; teaching us that, having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live moderately and righteously and

Godly in this present world, **looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our Savior and great God, Jesus Christ**” (vs 11-13). They take this and phrase “...**looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the [His] glory...**” as substantiating a rapture.

One of the premises that they have is that the Church will not suffer the wrath of God.

2-Thessalonians 1:7: “And to you, who are persecuted, rest with us, **at the revelation** of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels.” There is revelation, very similar to appear. Only in this it is ‘apokalupsis.’

“...of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels; dealing out vengeance with flaming fire upon those who do not know God, and those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will suffer *the* penalty of eternal destruction from *the* presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His strength, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in that day in all those who believe (because our testimony was believed by you)” (vs 7-10). Missing the wrath of God is an important thing!

Let’s talk about the wrath of God. Does the wrath of God come only in one set time? **or** Can the wrath of God come at any time? If you read the Old Testament you’ll understand that the wrath and anger of God can come upon sinners at any time.

Romans 5:9^[transcriber’s correction]: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” What is the wrath of God? *It is expressed in:*

- His anger
- destroying the wicked
- it can come upon you at any time

Let’s see two things concerning the wrath of God in the book of Revelation. This is what they are referring to. We will see what the ultimate wrath of God is and what this is talking about here.

Revelation 6:14: “Then *the* heaven departed like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the powerful men, and every bondman, and every free *man* hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from *the* face of Him Who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (vs 14-16). When does this take place? *This is two years into the Great Tribulation!* {note sermon series *Daniel/Revelation*}

The wrath of God is going to come! You have the wrath of God in Rev. 7-10—because there are things that come from God. Rev. 15 is a *special wrath of God* that is going to be poured out on the wicked after the resurrection of the saints.

Revelation 15:5: “And after these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And the seven angels who had the seven *last* plagues came out of the temple; they were clothed in linen, pure and bright, and girded about the chest with golden breastplates. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden vials, **full of the wrath of God**, Who lives into the ages of eternity” (vs 5-7). These are poured out in Rev. 16.

That is the last that God is going to bring His wrath upon human beings, as Christ is returning. But let’s look at the ultimate wrath of God. What is the ultimate wrath of God? What do you suppose the ultimate wrath of God is?

Revelation 20:14: “And death and *the* grave were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death.” That is the ultimate. God’s wrath is final, complete, you’ve had it all!

Revelation 21:6: “And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life. The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But *the* cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; **which is *the* second death**” (vs 6-8).

The ultimate wrath of God is the *second death!* When Paul says that we are going to be spared from wrath, that’s what he’s talking about, compared to salvation. Here we have the comparison. We have salvation first then we have the wrath of God. That’s very important to understand. The wrath of God can come in different ways at different times, and we will see that not all are going to be spared the wrath of God.

Let’s also understand one other thing that is very important: ***Christ can come upon you at any time in judgment!*** Another mistake that is made is the same thing that happens within any Church of God of those who want to go to a place of safety. They think that they are the Philadelphia Era of the Church of God.

Well, the Churches of God are not the only ones that make that assumption. Those who believe in the rapture make that assumption. However, when

you read Rev. 2 & 3, how many churches do you find? *Seven!* If these follow along in historical order—which they do—then we have the Church at Ephesus:

Revelation 2:5: “Therefore, remember from where you have fallen, and repent... [they’re given an opportunity to repent] ...and do the first works; for if *you do not*, I will come to you quickly...” Nothing to do with the return of Jesus Christ. Remember the Scripture that says, ‘Wherever two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in the midst of them. Jesus can come upon anyone for judgment at any time!

“...and I will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent” (v 5). Then we have the Church at Pergamos, who hold the doctrines of Balaam and eat things sacrificed to idols and practice the doctrines of the Nicolaitans.

Verse 16: “Repent! For if *you do not repent*, I will come to you quickly, and will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.” *This is God’s correction!*

If you have Christ in you and God is dealing with you for salvation, and you are doing things you ought not do, and God gives you warning after warning and you don’t pay attention, He’s going to come on you quickly with something that is going to make you wake up and pay attention to God dealing in your life.

We have the same thing in the world today, given over to ‘pleasures’ of all kinds. If it is good, feels good and you have fun it’s got to be good. It can’t be sin! So, that’s why there are going to be more disasters coming, because God is going to send the disasters upon them and His judgment upon them, which is not an expression of His total wrath, but His anger and correction. The Bible shows in Jer., Ezek. and Deut. 28 that it will increase in intensity until people wake up and start repenting, or go to their death in destruction. “...I will come to you quickly...”

Now let’s look at the Church at Thyatira and see what He says to them. They have all the things that they have done: committed fornication with the woman Jezebel—all the doctrines of Balaam—and God gave her time to repent, but she didn’t.

Verse 21: “And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her **into great tribulation...**” (vs 21-22). This does not mean *the* Great Tribulation at the end. Jesus explains about that. There have been times of tribulation in the history of the world and of the Church—have there not? *Yes, indeed!*

“...unless they repent of their works. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Who searches *the* reins and hearts; and I will give to each of you according to your works” (vs 22-23).

- Where does it say that they are going to escape trouble and difficulty? *It doesn't!*
- Where does it say that they're going to be raptured away? *It doesn't!*

Revelation 3:10: “Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the time of temptation, which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.”

They think this **time of temptation** relates to the Great Tribulation. But He doesn't say *tribulation* here. It's a different Greek word than we find in Rev. 2:22. {Note sermon: *What is the Temptation to Try the Whole World?*} I think you will find that that has to do with *idol worship* and *the mark of the beast*. We will also see some things having to do with escape from things that are coming.

Let's follow along with the sequence of the prophecy as Jesus has given it in Matt. 24. That's why it's important to get the sermon series: *Daniel/Revelation*, because we go through all of these things. Also, sermons on Day 49 and Pentecost, and sermons on the events before Pentecost and events after Pentecost, which will help you understand it.

Let's look at the things that Jesus talked about and understand when the Great Tribulation starts. We will look at some other Scriptures and see some things about being able to escape.

Summary of Matt. 24:

Matthew 24:4: “...[let] no one deceives you. For many shall come in My name...” (vs 4-5).

Verse 6: “...you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars....” That's all that there have been.

Delores said the other day, ‘The United States has always been at war.’ Hardly a generation has gone by when we haven't been at war.

- the pilgrims came over here and they had to fight the Indians—the French and Indian War
- the wars between the colonies—little skirmishes and so forth
- the Revolutionary War
- the War of 1812
- the Civil War
- wars leading up to WWI

- wars in between
- WWII
- Korean War
- Vietnam War
- War in Iraq
- War in Afghanistan

We are in wars all the time! Jesus said, “...the end is not yet” (v 6).

Verse 8: “Now, all these *things are* the beginning of sorrows.... [when they all multiply] ...Then shall they deliver you up to affliction... [persecution] ...and shall kill you...” (vs 8-9)—martyrdom. How is this a *place of safety*? How is this being raptured off into heaven?

“...and you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be led into sin, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another; and many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many” (vs 9-11). What is one of the big deceptions in Jesus' name? ‘*Brother, if you believe in Jesus you'll be raptured away; you won't have to suffer the Tribulation!*’

That's like some of the missionaries found out when they went to Africa. They're getting all of these African ‘converts’ but they weren't converts. The missionaries would feed them and then say, ‘Do you believe in Jesus?’ *Oh yes, I believe in Jesus!* They would get the food, sing the songs, clap their hands, be nice with the missionaries, run back to their village and worship their idols, go to their shamans and practice witchcraft. Then come back next Sunday, ‘Yes, Lord Jesus.’

NO! That's much like those who were fed—the 5,000—they came looking for Jesus because they wanted the food. If you live in an impoverished land and there are missionaries there giving you food, where are you going to go? It's the same thing!

Here's what we're beginning to experience, v 12: “And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold. But **the one who endures to the end...**” (vs 12-13). This doesn't say that you are necessarily going to be raptured away. It doesn't say that at all!

“...the one who endures to *the end...*” There are two ways to endure to the end:

1. the end of your life
2. the end when Jesus returns if you're still alive

“...that one shall be saved” (v 13).

Verse 14: “And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come.”

Here is a key thing that shows when the Tribulation is going to be. *Nowhere* do we find that people are *raptured away* from the Tribulation! We're going to see one class of people here who will be fleeing for their lives. That is not a *rapture*! If you're running on your little pitter-patters trying to get away, you're not being raptured up into heaven.

Verse 15: Therefore, **when** you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy place.' (The one who reads, let him understand.)" That was inserted there by the Apostle John, Philip and the other elders that were with John when they were canonizing the New Testament. They saw the destruction of Jerusalem and knew that the *abomination of desolation* was not there. They understood what Paul wrote concerning it in 2-Thess. 2 that a man is going to go into the temple of God in Jerusalem and proclaim himself to be God. So, they put in here 'we don't know what this means, but when you read it, understand it.'

Daniel was told by God when he was given the prophecies, '**At the end the wise shall understand.**' So, the only time you're going to understand this is when you come to the end. If you don't understand it, we're not at the end, yet. We're beginning to understand some of these things.

Verse 16: "**Then...** [you always have a *when* and then a *then*] ...let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains"—only those in Judea. It doesn't say whether they're converted or not. It could be talking to the Church, or it could be talking in general.

When Jerusalem was surrounded and destroyed in 70_{A.D.} and again in 135_{A.D.} did some people escape? *Yes, they did!* Where did they go? *East into the mountains!* This is *not a rapture!* This is 'hurry up and get out of there, and if you can find a place in the mountains where you can hide I'll spare you.'

Then Jesus says that it's going to be so urgent, v 17: "Let the one *who is* on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; and let the one *who is* in the field not go back to take his garments. But woe to those *women* who are expecting a child, and to those who are nursing infants in those days! And pray that your flight... [not rapture] ...be not in *the* winter, nor on *the* Sabbath" (vs 17-20). This shows at the end-time they will be keeping the Sabbath.

Verse 21: "For **then** shall there be great tribulation... [this is *the* Great Tribulation at the end that all Bible prophecies culminate in] ...such as has not been from *the* beginning of *the* world until this time, nor ever shall be *again*. And if those days were

not limited, there would no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be limited" (vs 21-22). It doesn't say *they are raptured away!*

How are there going to be martyrdoms of the saints if they're all raptured up into heaven? *They explain it by saying that those who are left behind that you witness to will go through the Tribulation and be martyred and be saved that way!*

Here is the parallel account that Jesus was talking about and Luke recorded it. There are some extra things that are here:

Luke 21:29: "Then He spoke a parable to them: 'Observe the fig tree, and all the trees. When they have already begun to bud, *and* you look at *them*, you yourselves know that summer is near. In the same way also, when you see these things coming to pass, know that the Kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, *there is* no way that this generation shall pass away until all *these things* have taken place" (vs 29-32). {Note sermon: *Two Generations*}

The key thing is that you must have "...all *these things*..." Not some of them, not 90% of them, not 95% of them, but 100% of them!

Verse 33: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away."

(go to the next track)

Verse 34: "Watch yourselves, lest your hearts be preoccupied with high living and drinking and *the* cares of *this* life, and that day come upon you suddenly." It's going to come suddenly!

If you are comforted with the rapture, what are you going to be caring about? *The things of this life, because 'I'm going to be taken away'!*

Verse 35: "For as a snare it shall come upon all those who dwell on the face of the earth. **Watch, therefore, and pray at all times that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man**" (vs 35-36).

Here's a verse that they say, 'See, you pray that you escape them.'

- It doesn't say by a rapture!
- It doesn't say how!

Read all of Psalms 91. How do you escape things?

1. by God's protection wherever you are! {note Isa. 57:1-3}
2. because your life comes to an end; where it says 'none considering that the righteous have been taken away from the evil to come.'

That's how you escape!

3. 'flee to the mountains' if you are in Judea

In all these cases there is nothing about going to heaven.

Rev. 12 is where they say, 'See, this talks about a rapture.' Let's look at it and then we will compare that with Luke 17.

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God. **But they overcame him** through the blood of the Lamb... [having their sins forgiven] ...and through the word of their testimony... [what they believe and what they testified] ...and **they loved not their lives unto death**' (vs 9-12). **No rapture here!** We're coming to the verses that look like it.

Verse 12: "Therefore, rejoice you heavens and those who dwell in them. Woe to those who inhabit the earth and the sea! For **the Devil has come down to you, having great wrath** because he knows that he has *only* a short time."

They don't talk about the wrath of Satan in any of these *rapture theories* that they have. So, Satan has wrath! He comes after the Church because he knows that he only has a short time.

Verse 13: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth the man-Child." In this case the *woman* is the Church.

Now, let's notice that v 14 looks like a rapture. But **it is not a rapture**; it is being transported from one place on the earth to another. This is where those who believe in going to a place of safety put a lot of their hope in it. Just like the Protestants claim, if you're a Protestant and you believe in Jesus you will be raptured away. Likewise, as it has been taught in many Churches of God that 'if you are in *this* corporate church' that you are going to be taken to a place of safety. And they have said that that *place of safety* is probably Petra.

That's over east of the Holy Land in the area of Jordan down in the area of the wilderness. If you look at it you know for sure that that place cannot hold millions and millions of people, which if the *rapture theory* were true, there would be literally millions and millions—maybe hundreds of millions—of people *raptured away!* They hear the

secret voice of Jesus and He's called them to heaven and they're gone!

Here it says something a little different, v 14: "And **two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman...** [that's Divine protection] ...**so that she might fly to her place in the wilderness...**" Never at any time has heaven, even the first heaven, been referred to as the wilderness. That is referred to as *the firmament, the expanse or the air*. This is the wilderness, so this is a place on the earth!

"...where she is nourished *for* a time, and times, and half a time, from *the* face of the serpent" (v 14). That is escaping the Great Tribulation. We're going to see that they are **NOT** raptured away to heaven. But they are taken to another place on the earth, which is called *the wilderness!*

Here's one thing to understand: If you know where that place is and you don't go there, your knowledge of it doesn't do you any good. If you don't know where it is, and you're taken there, you will know where it is when you arrive!

- It's not based upon knowledge!
- It's not based upon being in any particular church.

As we saw, there are seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3, and the only one that has promise to be spared from the temptation coming on the whole world is the Church at Philadelphia. That doesn't refer to the Great Tribulation necessarily.

Verse 15: "And the serpent cast water out of his mouth as a river, so that he might cause her *to be* carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed up the river that the dragon had cast out of his mouth. Then the dragon was furious with the woman and went to make war **with the rest of her seed...**" (vs 15-17). The *KJV* unfortunately says 'remnant.' Remnant is not correct. It means "...the rest..." because those who are not taken to a place of safety are probably more in number than those who are taken.

If you look at those who are of the Church of God, all the various Churches of God, there are probably not many more than 200,000, so if a few of those are taken—say 10%—you're looking at 20,000 max. Notice what they do:

"...who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v 17). They're converted! What happens to them? *They become martyrs!*

- they are converted
- they keep the commandments of God
- they have the testimony of Jesus Christ

- they are not taken to a place of safety
- they give their lives in martyrdom

Rev. 6:9—this is down into the Tribulation. When do those who are taken to a *place of safety* go? *Just before the last three and a half years of the last seven!* This is where those who say, ‘mid-tribulation rapture.’ We’re going to see that they mix that up with the resurrection. Let’s see about those who are not taken before we see about those who are taken.

Revelation 6:9: “And when He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony that they held; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, Holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ And white robes were given to each of them; and they were told that they should rest a short time, yet, until *it* be fulfilled *that* both their fellow servants and their brethren also would be killed, just as they had been” (vs 9-11).

- they are martyred
- they have the Spirit of God
- they love God
- they keep His commandments
- they overcome Satan and this persecution by loving God and ‘not loving their lives unto death’

Let’s see how that those who are counted worthy to escape—by being given Divine protection—are taken from where they are on the earth to wherever the *place of safety* is in the wilderness. Jesus talked about this, and we will see some very important things here about those who do escape. They are not raptured away into heaven. They are taken from one place on the earth to another place on the earth, and they are spared the Tribulation, which is a very small number of them. Not the million like in the book series *Left Behind*.

Luke 17:20: “Now, when the Pharisees demanded *of Him* when the Kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The Kingdom of God does not come with observation.’” Just because you’re looking for it, it’s not going to come when you expect it. Anybody who sets a date, know that they are wrong! Jesus said, ‘No man knows the day or the hour.’ If you set a date you’ve got to be wrong.

Verse 21: “Neither shall they say, ‘Behold, *it is here!*’ Or, ‘Behold, *it is there!*’....” It says in Matt. 24 that ‘He’s in the desert’ or in ‘a secret chamber’; don’t believe it.

“...For behold, the Kingdom of God is *standing* in the midst of you” (v 21). Jesus was that

representative. He was the King of the Kingdom of God. And the King and the Kingdom are synonymous. If He was there, the Kingdom of God was there. But it was not the Kingdom of God as prophesied to fill the whole earth ruled by Jesus Christ. Therefore, He answered them in an enigmatic way.

Verse 22: “Then He said to the disciples, ‘The days...’ The Day of the Lord includes everything from the beginning of the Tribulation to the return of Jesus Christ on this earth.

“...‘The days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see *it*. And they shall say to you, “Look here,” or, “Look there.” Do not go, neither follow *them*. For as the light of day, whose light shines from *one end* under heaven to the *other end* under heaven, so also shall the Son of man be in His day. But first it is necessary *for* Him to suffer many things and to be rejected by this generation. Now, as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the days of the Son of man” (vs 22-26).

One year is pictured by *a day*; we’re talking about *days*—plural.

Verse 27: “They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day *that* Noah went into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed *them* all. And it was the same way...” (vs 27-28). Here we begin to get a clue as to how those who got to a place of safety, the very few, small in number that go there.

Verse 28: “And it was the same way in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day *that* Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed *them* all” (vs 28-29).

How did Lot and his wife and daughters leave Sodom? God didn’t pick them up and carry them off. He sent two angels and the angels led them out by hand and they walked. That’s what’s going to happen to some of those who are left in Judea and flee to the mountains:

- they’re going to walk
- they’re going to run
- they’re going to hike
- they’re going to get away by the skin of their teeth

Now let’s see how He carries this forward a little more, v 30: “This *is* how it shall be in the day *that* the Son of man is revealed. In that day, let not the one who is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, come down to take them away...(vs 30-31).

That ties in with Matt. 24 and the abomination of desolation. That's when the Son of man is beginning to be revealed, by that starting.

"...and likewise, let not the one who is in the field return to the things behind. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whoever shall lose *his life* shall preserve it. I tell you..." (vs 31-34). Here is where He's talking about those who are going to be taken to a *place of safety*. This is NOT a rapture! **They will be taken by the angels, transported!** If they can't walk there then God is going to send the angels to take them.

Verse 34: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two *women* shall be grinding together; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two men shall be in the field; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.' And they answered, saying to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And He said to them, 'Where the body *is*, there will the eagles be gathered together'" (vs 34-37).

He didn't say in heaven. There's one thing interesting about the area of Petra. They have a multitude of eagles and storks that nest there. This may be kind of an inkling of it.

He left it this way, because you know what would happen if you knew exactly where it was. I tell you what would happen: There was one of the ministers of the Church of God who went over to Jordan to talk to King Hussein to buy Petra so that he could own it, and he could bring his people there when the time came. However, he was turned down.

- How are you going to get there? *We'll go on jets!*
- How do you know the government will let you go?
- If you get up in the air how do you know the government of Jordan will let you land?
- How do you know there are enough donkeys, jackasses, camels and jeeps to drive you down to Petra?
- Where are you going to buy your food?
- *Your Petra box will not last you very long!*

You can pack it full of beef jerky but that's going to be gone in a short period of time, which some people did. Some people actually came to services and always had a Petra box in the trunk of their car in case they got a call from the leader of the Church that now is the time to flee to Petra.

The article that was one of the most widely disseminated by that church was entitled: *There is a Way of Escape!* After they read *1975 in Prophecy* about all the Tribulation... Everybody wants to get

away; that why there were a lot of people joining that church. They wanted to escape and save their skins, rather than love and serve God and receive eternal life the way that God has said.

Now let's look at the appearance of Christ. When He appears! Then we will talk about the resurrection. They confuse the resurrection with the rapture. There is no such thing as a *secret appearing* of Jesus. There is no such thing as a *silent whisper* in your ear, 'Come, let's be raptured away!' and only you hear it.

Revelation 1:7: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, **and every eye shall see Him...**" It is going to be quite an event! When will they first see Him? *Rev. 6, way down into the Tribulation!*

Revelation 6:12: "And when He opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as *the hair of sackcloth*, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its untimely figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then *the* heaven departed like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place" (vs 12-14).

That's why they hid themselves, because they saw the sign of the Son of man coming! That is the beginning of the great day of His wrath (Rev. 8-16). Let's see how it is going to appear. We haven't yet come to the resurrection. Let's see what Jesus said about the rolling back of the heavens like a scroll. I think of that as a runaway window shade.

Matthew 24:23: "Then if anyone says to you, "Behold, here *is* the Christ," or, "*He is there,*" do not believe *it*. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, if possible, **even the elect**. Behold, I have foretold *it* to you. Therefore, if they say to you, "*Come and see! He is in the wilderness*"; do not go forth. "*Come and see! He is in the secret chambers*"; do not believe *it*. For **as the light of day...**" (vs 23-27).

Jesus said **that every eye shall see Him!** He's coming in the clouds and the clouds are not on the moon or Mars, they are on the earth!

"...which comes forth from *the* east and shines as far as *the* west, **so also shall the coming of the Son of man be**" (v 27).

- Everyone is going to see it!
- No secret rapture!

Verse 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 upon the clouds of heaven with

power and great glory.”

This is going to be an awesome event, the whole world is going to see this. {go online and see any of the sermons on Pentecost} This is going to be quite a thing! When is this going to take place?

Verse 29: “But immediately after the tribulation of those days...”—ties in with Rev. 6:12; we come down to two years of tribulation of man against man, before the wrath of God starts (Rev. 8), which brings a greater tribulation.

“...the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man...” (vs 29-30). It’s going to look like a brand new sun coming out of the heavens. It’s going to be declared as an alien invasion force coming against the earth.

Now we come to the time of the resurrection, and the resurrection will be at the seventh trump, or the last trump. Let’s see where the seventh trumpet sounds. That’s the last trumpet. We are down to the time of Pentecost, about three years and three months into the three and a half year Tribulation.

Revelation 11:15: “Then the seventh angel sounded *his* trumpet; and *there* were great voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign into the ages of eternity.’ And the twenty-four elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; for You have taken *to Yourself* Your great power, and have reigned. For **the nations were angry, and Your wrath has come...** [that’s the final wrath described in Rev. 16] ...and the time for the dead to be judged, and to give reward to Your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to *all* those who fear Your name, the small and the great; and to destroy those who destroy the earth” (vs 15-18). That’s talking about the resurrection. What’s going to happen when they’re resurrected?

The reason that we’re going through these things and the Scriptures is very simple. God tells us that it’s *line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little*, and we’ve got to put it together to get the whole picture. The reason that they confuse these things, especially the resurrection and the rapture, is because they don’t understand the prophecies. You can’t understand the prophecies unless you keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days.

They can have all their theories, all of these guesses, all of these deceptive doctrines, which

people believe, because it looks Scriptural. They use Scriptures, but please understand that if you don’t ‘rightly divide the Word of God,’ and you wrongly put it together you can come up with a false doctrine that sounds good. Their version of the rapture ignores the events concerning the resurrection.

Here’s what’s going to happen, Matthew 24:31: “And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet...”—the seventh trumpet. Everybody is going to know this; *this is not a rapture, this is a resurrection!* This is being born again, being changed from flesh to spirit.

“...and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to *the other*” (v 31).

Where are they going to go? *They’re going to be raised from the earth!* This is going to be something that all the earth is going to see.

Let’s understand what these Scriptures are saying. We will see that it is talking about the resurrection and *not a rapture*. It’s talking about those who are dead, then it talks about those who are alive. It’s talking about the resurrection. Most people who believe in the rapture believe they’re going to be raptured away because they are living. But here it is talking about those who are dead first.

1-Thessalonians 4:13: “But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep... [died] ...that you be not grieved, even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him” (vs 13-14). They’re going to be resurrected out of the grave and meet Christ in the air.

Verse 15: “For this we say to you by *the Word of the Lord...* [we saw how that would be. Not a secret coming! Not a ‘parousia’ that no one else knows] “...that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede those who have fallen asleep, because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with *a shout of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God; and **the dead in Christ shall rise first***” (vs 15-16). ***That’s the resurrection!***

Verse 17: “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in *the clouds for the meeting with the Lord in the air*; and so shall we always be with *the Lord*.” There are other Scriptures that they like to use:

John 14:1-3—saying they go to heaven because the mansions are in heaven. He goes to prepare a place for you, but He doesn’t tell you that you receive that when He returns. That goes clear

into the time of New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.

They confuse the resurrection of the dead with what they believe is the rapture!

1-Corinthians 15:42: “So also is the resurrection of the dead.... [1-Thess. 4, the dead shall rise first] ...It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.”

Verse 50: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* Kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep... [1-Thess. 4] ...but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (vs 50-52). That is the resurrection, NOT a rapture.

Where, when we are raised from the dead, do the angels take all of the saints who are resurrected, whether they were dead and buried or whether they were alive at that time and are changed ‘in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye.’

After the harvest takes place (Rev. 14) another type of the resurrection; Revelation 15:1: “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and awesome: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is filled up.” This is the wrath that those who are saved by the resurrection are going to escape. Rev. 16 shows that it’s poured out on the earth.

Verse 2: “And I saw a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast...” Where is that going to be? If you’re going to meet Christ in the air, in the clouds, where is that going to be? It’s going to be in the air, in the clouds. It will probably be somewhere over Jerusalem. The seven last plagues are going to be poured out and the final battle is going to be in Armageddon, which is north of Jerusalem.

“...and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, standing on the Sea of Glass, having *the* lyres of God” (v 2). That’s where they will meet Christ. ***That is the resurrection!***

The way out of the deception of a rapture is this:

- you properly put the Scriptures together
- you know and keep the commandments of God
- you understand the difference between the very few who are going to be taken to a place of safety

- the resurrection when Jesus returns

When you understand that, you will realize that *there is no such thing as the rapture*, pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation or post-tribulation. ***There is no such thing as a secret rapture where people will be lifted out from the Tribulation that is coming by the millions!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Titus 2:11-13
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10
- 3) Romans 5:9
- 4) Revelation 6:14-16
- 5) Revelation 15:5-7
- 6) Revelation 20:14
- 7) Revelation 21:6-8
- 8) Revelation 2:5, 16, 21-23
- 9) Revelation 3:10
- 10) Matthew 24:4-6, 8-22
- 11) Luke 21:29-36
- 12) Revelation 12:9-17
- 13) Revelation 6:9-11
- 14) Luke 17:20-37
- 15) Revelation 1:7
- 16) Revelation 6:12-14
- 17) Matthew 24:23-27, 30, 29-30
- 18) Revelation 11:15-18
- 19) Matthew 24:31
- 20) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- 21) 1 Corinthians 15:42, 50-52
- 22) Revelation 15:1-2

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 7-10; 16
- Deuteronomy 28
- 2 Thessalonians 2
- Psalm 91
- Isaiah 57:1-3
- John 14:1-3
- Revelation 14

Also referenced:

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- Book: *Three Views on the Rapture* by Gleason L. Archer, Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo and Richard R. Retter
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 - ✓ *Two Generations*

FRC:bo
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