



Week Seven: Pinpointing the Rapture of the Church

First, let's get an overview of **FUTURE EVENTS** from a Premillennial viewpoint:

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST – for believers in heaven – 2 Corinthians 5:10

THE SEVEN YEAR TRIBULATION PERIOD – in two 3 ½ year segments

- The first purpose is the salvation of Israel and Gentiles and bringing them under the New Covenant.
- The second purpose is to bring severe judgment on the earth.
- It will be a time of unique activity of Satan before he gets locked up for 1000 years – Revelation 13

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST TO EARTH

- Begins with the judgment of the surviving Gentiles – Matthew 25:31-46
- Then the judgment of Israel – Ezekiel 20:33-38
- Resurrection of the Old Testament and tribulation saints – Daniel 12:2; Rev. 20:4-6
- Binding of Satan – Revelation 20:1-3
- Establishing the global Messianic Kingdom – Daniel 2:44-45

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST – Isaiah 2:1-4

- God, who cannot lie, will fulfill every promise He made to Israel.
- The earth will be full of worship, righteousness, love, peace, and joy.
- Begins with believers (surviving from the tribulation period) but increasingly unbelievers will be born and finally rebel against God. Some will be punished during the Millennial Kingdom – Isaiah 11:4; 65:20

FINAL JUDGMENTS

- Judgment of Satan and the fallen angels – Rev. 20:27-15.
- Judgment of all unbelievers of all ages at the Great White Throne Judgment - Rev. 20:12-13.
- The heavens and the earth will be purged by fire – 2 Peter 3:7-10.

THE ETERNAL STATE – Revelation 22:1-5

THE PRETRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The word “rapture” comes from the Latin translation of the Greek word “harpadzo” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, translated in English as “caught up.” Both words mean a sudden, irresistible carrying off by force. (See Matt. 13:19, John 10:12, 2 Cor. 12:2)

Christ clearly promised to come for His people:

John 14:1-3 promises Jesus would come and receive us to Himself.

Titus 2:13 describes Christ’s return for His people as the “blessed hope.”

Philippians 3:20-21 says Christ will change our bodies to be just like His at the rapture.

1 Corinthians 1:7 urges us to “wait eagerly” (apo+ek+dekomai) for Christ’s return.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 describes our instantaneous change at the rapture.

THE RAPTURE EVENT

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we, who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Co 15:51-52

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Three Inaugural Sounds:

- A cry of command – keleusma.
- The voice of an archangel – probably Michael, the only archangel we know.
- The trumpet of God – used historically to gather God’s people together.

The Realm of the Rapture – in the clouds of the air, earth’s atmosphere.

Participants in the Rapture

- First and foremost, the Lord Himself. He’s coming for His bride.
- Those who are “in Christ.” No unbelievers mentioned in this passage.
- Dead believers go first with brand new, resurrected bodies.
- Living believers then take off with brand new, transformed bodies.

- It will happen fast according to 1 Corinthians 15:52 – “in a moment” or “a+tom”, a moment so fast you can’t cut it down any smaller, plus in the “glint of an eye.” FAST!

Results of the Rapture

- Fulfills Christ’s promise to come for His people.
- Completes our salvation: justification, sanctification, now glorification.
- Unites all believers of the church age.

Time of the Rapture

Ah, here’s the problem! Pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib, pre-wrath trib, partial rapture. All views have hermeneutical difficulties. We believe the pre-tribulation view has the fewest and squares most reasonably with the biblical data. Here’s why we believe in a pre-tribulation rapture (from *Christ’s Prophetic Plan*, ch. 4):

- The church is not mentioned in Revelation 6-19 as being on earth. Revelation 1-3 speaks of the church nineteen times, and then only once more in Revelation 22:16. Why is the church not mentioned?
- The rapture is rendered inconsequential if it is post-tribulational. If all tribulation believers are raptured and glorified just prior to the beginning of the millennial kingdom, there would be no non-glorified saved humans to populate and propagate the kingdom.
- The epistles contain no preparatory warnings of an impending tribulation for church age believers. True, we are assured we will face trials and tribulations, but nothing even close to what John describes in Revelation 6-18.
- First Thessalonians 4:13-18 demands a pre-tribulation rapture. There is nothing in the context about enduring a horrendous tribulation just before the rapture.
- John 14:1-3 parallels 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Christ promises us that He is coming to take us to the Father’s house, not to bring us to earth.
- The events at Christ’s second coming to earth at the end of the tribulation period differ radically from what happens at the rapture of the church. (p. 93)

Rapture – For His People	Second Coming – With His People
Jesus returns to earth’s atmosphere and returns to heaven.	Christ returns to earth to set up His kingdom.
Christ personally catches up His people to be with Him.	Angels gather the elect from the nations.
Christ comes to reward.	Christ comes to judge.
Believers depart from the earth.	Believers stay on the earth (Matthew 24:37-41).

<p>No mention of Christ setting up His kingdom.</p> <p>Believers receive glorified bodies.</p>	<p>Christ comes to set up His kingdom (Revelation 19-20).</p> <p>No one receives glorified bodies – saved Jews and Gentiles enter the kingdom in non-glorified bodies.</p>
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- Revelation 3:10 indicates the church will be removed prior to Daniel’s 70th week (the 7 year tribulation period). *“Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will **keep you from the hour of testing**, that hour which is about to come **upon the whole world**, to test those who dwell on the earth.”* Revelation 3:10 The Greek prepositional phrase “tereso ek” means “will keep out,” best understood, not as preserved in but completely kept out of this coming world-wide tribulation period.
- The epistles indicate an imminent or “at any time” return of Christ for the church. The church isn’t looking for any signs that precede His coming.

The Blessed Hope of the Rapture

- Should motivate us to godly living – Titus 2:11-13.
- Should keep us from setting dates or seeing definite fulfillments of prophecies.
- Should give us a desire to be with Christ (eagerly waiting for Him) but also keep us busy serving Him until He comes.

Other Views of the Time of the Rapture

The post-tribulation view (part of Historical Premillennialism) has various views of the tribulation period. Some believe the entire church age is the tribulation period. Others see a literal seven year tribulation period. Some see no special place for Israel; others believe God still has a redemptive plan for Israel. All believe the church goes through the tribulation and will be raptured when Christ returns to earth. Believers will be caught up and then come right back down with Christ.

The mid-tribulation view sees the church being raptured before the second half of the tribulation period, when God’s wrath is poured out in the six bowls of wrath.

The pre-wrath view sees the Day of the Lord beginning sometime within the last half of the tribulation period, which is when the Day of the Lord begins and the church will be raptured.