



God's Revelation of the Future

The Rapture of the Church



The Rapture: A Definition

The Rapture of the Church refers to a future, pre-Tribulation event that will take place entirely and exclusively for the Church, the body of Christ, which includes the following: (1) the resurrection of Church saints, (2) the removal by Christ from the earth to heaven of these resurrected saints along with those saints already alive, and (3) the changing of all their bodies to be like that of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.



The Rapture of the Church

- Three questions ...
 - **Participants** – Who is included in this event?
 - **Timing** – When will this event take place?
 - **Nature** – What is this event going to involve?



The Rapture: Participants

- Who is included in this event?



The Rapture: Participants

- The Rapture is for the Church entirely.
 - All believers currently alive will be included.
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:17** – We [believers] who are alive, who are left, will be caught up ... to meet the Lord in the air.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:51** – We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.



The Rapture: Participants

- The Rapture is for the Church entirely.
 - All believers currently alive will be included.
 - Church believers who have died will be raised and included.
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:16 – the dead in Christ will rise first



The Rapture: Participants

- The Rapture is for the Church exclusively.
 - Believers of earlier times are not raised and included in the Rapture.
 - This means that neither Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, nor David will be included.



The Rapture: Timing

- When will this event take place?



The Rapture: Timing

- Timewise, it will be a pre-Tribulation Rapture.
 - According to this view, Christ will come (almost to earth) and catch away the Church, his Bride, before the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy begins.



The Rapture: Timing

- Reasons for a pre-Tribulation Rapture.
 - It is based on a literal method of interpretation.
 - It is based on the purpose for the Tribulation.
 - It is based on the imminence of Christ's coming.



The Rapture: Timing

- Reasons for a pre-Tribulation Rapture.
 - **Philippians 3:20-21** – our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ
 - **1 Thessalonians 1:10** - [The Thessalonians turned to God to serve] and to wait for his Son from heaven.
 - **Titus 2:11-14** – [we live] waiting for ... the appearing ... of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ



The Rapture: Timing

- Reasons for a pre-Tribulation Rapture.
 - It is based on a literal method of interpretation.
 - It is based on the purpose for the Tribulation.
 - It is based on the imminence of Christ's coming.
 - It is based on explicit statements that the Church will be preserved from such a period.



The Rapture: Timing

- Reasons for a pre-Tribulation Rapture.
 - **1 Thessalonians 1:10** – [You Thessalonians turned to God to serve him] and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 - **Revelation 3:10** – [To the church in Philadelphia, Christ says,] Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.



The Rapture: Nature

- What is this event going to involve?



The Rapture: Nature

- What is this event going to involve?
 - Two passages help us understand what will occur at the time of the Rapture.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:51-53
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17



The Rapture: Nature

- **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² 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 shall be changed.

⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.



The Rapture: Nature

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

¹⁶ [Don't grieve for those who have died,] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.



The Rapture: Nature

- The Lord's Descent
 - Three "audibles"
 - The Lord will shout (1Th 4:16)
 - The archangel will speak (1Th 4:16)
 - The trumpet will sound (1Th 4:16; 1Cor 15:52)



The Rapture: Nature

- The Lord's Descent
 - Three "results"
 - The "dead in Christ" will be resurrected (1Th 4:16; 1Cor 15:52)
 - Those just resurrected and those already alive will be changed (1Cor 15:51-52)
 - The now all-living Church of Christ will be "caught up" to ever be with the Lord (1Th 4:17; 1Cor 15:52)



The Rapture: Nature

- The Church's Change
 - We will get new glorified bodies.

Philippians 3:20-21 – ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.



The Rapture: Nature

- The Church's Change
 - We will get new glorified bodies.

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.



The Rapture: Nature

- The Church's Change
 - We will get new glorified bodies.
 - Other passages ...
 - Luke 24:16,31 – recognizable
 - Luke 24:39 – physical, not just spiritual
 - Luke 24:41-43 – able to eat



The Rapture: Nature

- The Church's Change
 - We will get new glorified bodies.
 - **1 Corinthians** mentions two significant changes.

1 Corinthians 15:53 – [We shall be changed,] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.



The Rapture: Two Observations

- As a result of the Rapture ...
 - When Christ comes and catches up the Church, this will be the first time the entire universal Church will be gathered into one place.
 - Since all believers will be taken from the earth, at that point, there will only be unbelievers remaining here on the earth.



The Rapture: Subsequent Events

- What happens to the Church during the period between the Rapture and the Return of Christ?



The Rapture: Subsequent Events

- What happens to the Church between the Rapture and the Return of Christ?
 - **Judgment of the Church** – This is the judgment in which the Church appears before Christ at his “Judgment Seat.”



The Judgment of the Church

- Certainty of this Judgment
 - Three passages that refer to this judgment ...
 - **2 Corinthians 5:9-10** – we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ
 - **Romans 14:10-12** – we will all stand before the judgment seat of God (Christ [KJV])
 - **1 Corinthians 3:5-15** – each one's work will become manifest



The Judgment of the Church

- Certainty of this Judgment
 - Three passages that refer to this judgment ...
 - From these passages we can conclude ...
 - We will all stand before Christ in judgment.
 - This judgment is something for which we should prepare.



The Judgment of the Church

- Basis for this Judgment
 - **What will be judged at this judgment?**
 - Not the believer's sins
 - But the believer's works



The Judgment of the Church

- Basis for this Judgment
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2 Corinthians 5:9-10 - ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or [bad].



The Judgment of the Church

- Basis for this Judgment
 - **What will be judged at this judgment?**
 - Not the believer's sins
 - But the believer's works

1 John 4:17 – By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.



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Lesson 1 continued ...