

The Rapture Revelation: Our Blessed Hope

Part 1

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

The Rapture and Second Coming are similar but separate events

Both involve Jesus returning...Both are end-times events.
However, it is crucially important to recognize the differences.

What is the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming?

- The Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are often confused.
- Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a scripture verse is referring to the Rapture or the Second Coming.
- However, in studying end-times Bible prophecy, it is very important to differentiate between the two.

The Rapture is when Jesus Christ returns to remove the church (all believers in Christ) from the earth...

- The Rapture is described in *1 Thess. 4:13-18 and *1 Corinthians 15:50-54.
- Believers who have died will have their bodies resurrected and, along with believers who are still living, will meet the Lord in the air.
- This will all occur in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.

The Rapture is a message of hope and comfort...

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven 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 together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 John 3:2-3

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Our Final Victory...

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

The Second Coming is when Jesus returns to defeat the Antichrist, destroy evil, and establish His millennial kingdom...

- The Second Coming is described in *Revelation 19:11-16.

Revelation 19:11-14, 16

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns... 13 His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses... 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

There are some very important differences between the Rapture and Second Coming:

- At the Rapture, believers meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- At the Second Coming, believers return with the Lord to the earth (Rev. 19:14)
- The Rapture occurs before the tribulation (i.e., wrath/judgments of God) takes place (*1 Thessalonians 5:9; *Revelation 3:10; 6:17; 11:18)
- The Second Coming occurs after the tribulation (i.e., wrath/judgments of God) takes place. (Revelation chapters 6–19)

1 Thessalonians 5:9

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...

Revelation 3:10

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

- The Rapture is the removal of believers from the earth as an act of deliverance (1 Thess. 4:13-17, 5:9; cf. *Luke 21:36).
- The Second Coming involves the removal of unbelievers as an act of judgment (*Matthew 24:38-39)

Luke 21:36

Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:38-39

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

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Part 2

- The Rapture will be secret and instantaneous (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)
- The Second Coming will be visible to all (*Revelation 1:7; *Matthew 24:29-30)

Revelation 1:7

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Matthew 24:29-30

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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- The Rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment (Titus 2:13; Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-53)
- The Second Coming of Christ will not occur until after certain other end-times events take place (*2 Thess. 2:3-4; Matt. 24:15-30; Revelation chapters 6–18)

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

- In describing the tribulation period, Revelation chapters 4–19 nowhere mentions the church on the earth (but only in Heaven).
- During the tribulation, also called “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7), God will again turn His primary attention to Israel (cf. Romans 11:25-26)

Romans 11:25-26

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved.

Israel Is The Key To Understanding End Time Prophecy

The 70th Week of Daniel Prophecy...

Daniel 9:24

Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy One.

Zechariah 12:10-11

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. 11 In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem.

Why is it so important to keep the Rapture and the Second Coming distinct, and not conflate these two events?

If the Rapture and the Second Coming are the same event, the return of Christ is not imminent—there are many things which must occur before He can return (Matthew 24:4-30).

- A convergence and ever increasing ‘birth pangs’ of global events including false prophets, rise of the Antichrist and his global kingdom, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution, lawlessness, etc.
- If the Rapture and the Second Coming are the same event, believers will have to go through the tribulation and experience the “wrath” of God which we are promised exemption from by God (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

Summary:

- The Rapture is... the return of Christ in the clouds to remove all believers from the earth before the time of God’s wrath.
- The Second Coming is... the return of Christ to the earth to bring the tribulation to an end, to defeat the Antichrist and his evil world empire, and inaugurate His Millennial Kingdom on earth.

At The Rapture

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Christ comes in the air (v.16)
Christ comes for the saints (v. 15-17)
Effects only believers (v. 16)
Not visible to all (v. 16 cf 1 Cor. 15:52)
Rescue from judgments (Rev. 6-18))
Resurrection of believers (1 Cor. 15:51)
Imminent, with no preceding signs

At The Second Coming

Revelation 19:11-16

Christ comes to earth (Zech. 14:4)
Christ comes with the saints (v. 14)
Effects all earth dwellers (v. 15)
Visible to all (Matt. 24:27; Rev. 1:7)
A time of great judgement (v. 15)
No resurrection referenced
Many signs precede-Israel is key!

Epilogue: A Prophecy Of Concern for the church today...

2 Peter 3:3-5

Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” 5 For this they willfully forget...

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