

## The Spiritual Realm - Lesson 18: The Rapture

**Rapture definition:** The moment when God will resurrect all believers in Christ who have died, give them glorified bodies, and take them from the earth. God will also give glorified bodies to all living believers, known as the Church, who will be taken from the earth at that time.

### False claims:

- “Rapture Myth” - The teaching about a Rapture is not true or it is a fairytale.
- It is a recent teaching from 1800's by John Nelson Darby
- Darby's pre-tribulational view of the rapture was then picked up by a man named C. I. Scofield, who taught the view in the footnotes of his Scofield Reference Bible. Many Protestants who read the Scofield Reference Bible ignorantly adopted the pre-tribulational view, even though no Christian had heard of it in the previous 1800 years of Church history.
- Sometimes the name Margret McDonald is brought in suggesting she influenced Darby through her spiritual visions.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 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. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

- The Thessalonians were concerned that their loved ones would miss the soon coming of Jesus Christ and not get their resurrected bodies.
- “Caught up” - *Harpazo* (Greek) - *Rapturo* (Latin)
- “God will bring with Him” - When Jesus comes back, He will have those who have died in Christ with Him.
- Paul tells them that they will not miss out getting their new bodies, in fact they will be resurrected first then all believers who are alive will be resurrected in the air having never died physically.
- To say there is no Rapture is to be dishonest with the Scriptures. The question is not “is” there a Rapture, but “when” is the Rapture.
- “We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord” Paul expected to be alive when Jesus returned to receive them in the air.
- Jesus ascended into heaven as the disciples watched, the angel told them He would return in the same way.

**1 Thessalonians 3:13** *so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**1 Timothy 6:14** *to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*

**Titus 2:11-13** *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*

**Philippians 3:20-21** *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.*

**1 Corinthians 11:26** *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

**2 Peter 3:1-10** *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

- Peter is saying that there are scoffers or mockers or disbelievers that don't believe that Christ is returning. Or that God's judgment is coming.
- The Apostles were telling believers that Jesus is coming back and after 25-30 years some are thinking that Jesus is not coming back.
- God judged the earth with water and He will judge the earth by fire. He keeps His word. What He says will happen.
- God's timing is not our timing.
- God is allowing time for more to be saved. Until the "fulness of the Gentiles" comes in (Rom. 11:25).

**Romans 11:25** *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

- The end times events will come when it is not expected.

**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 imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*

- Paul is giving revelation or knowledge from God that has not previously been known.
- Living believers will get their resurrected bodies without dying.
- Believers will receive their resurrection bodies in a moment of time. It will happen when the Lord calls us to Him.
- Believers who have died will be raised with their resurrected bodies and believers who are alive will receive their resurrected bodies.



### **Reasons to believe in a Pre-Tribulational Rapture:**

1. The Rapture ends the Church Age (Rev. 4:1) and does not overlap into the 70th Seven of Daniel (final 7 years of Israel's timeline).

The Church Age is the gap in Israel's timeline between 69 sets of seven (483 years) and the 70th set of seven (7 years). This is also called Israel's blindness or hardening until the fulness of the Gentiles comes in (Rom. 11:25).

2. The 7 year tribulation is for Israel not the Church (Daniel 9:24-27).
3. The Rapture is described as occurring at any time without warning (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; 5:6).

The Rapture is life as usual and Christ could come at anytime.

The Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation is not life as usual and can be seen coming.

4. Believers are not destined for wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 5:6).
5. The Church or any church is not talked about in the tribulation of Revelation 4-19.

The wrath of the Lamb begins with the seals being opened, starting with the first seal (Rev. 6:1).

6. The Church (or churches) is promised to be kept from the Great Tribulation (Rev. 3:10).
7. The Apostles were looking for Jesus to come for them not the Great Tribulation of the end of time (John 14:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

### **Early Church (0–300 AD)**

- Apostles and early believers taught the **imminent return of Christ**
- Focus was on **Jesus coming for His Church**, not enduring tribulation
- Strong expectation: *He could come at any moment*

### **Roman Empire Shift (300–500 AD)**

- Christianity becomes state religion under Constantine
- Massive influx of **nominal (non-heart) conversions**
- Church begins shifting toward **institutional and political power**

### **Medieval Church Era (500–1500 AD)**

- Roman Church teaches:
  - Church = Kingdom of God on earth
  - **Replacement Theology** (Church replaces Israel)
  - Rise of **Amillennialism**
- Scripture largely **unavailable to common people**
- Christianity becomes **ritual-based** rather than Scripture-based

### **Reformation Period (1500s)**

- Led by Martin Luther and others
- Key recovery: **Salvation by faith alone**
- Bible translated into common languages
- However:
  - Reformers **did NOT revisit end-times theology deeply**
  - Continued holding to **Amillennialism and Replacement Theology**

### **Post-Reformation to Modern Era**

- Increased Bible study leads to:
  - Renewed interest in **literal interpretation of prophecy**
  - Rediscovery of **Israel's role in God's plan**
- Development and refinement of:
  - **Premillennialism**
  - **Pre-Tribulational Rapture teaching**
  - These were not invented—but **systematized and clarified**
  
- The issue isn't that the Rapture is *new*
- It's that **truth was obscured, then rediscovered through Scripture**