



**“Come Up Here” Filling in the Blanks  
The Rapture of the Church Part 2  
Revelation 4:1-4  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11**

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In the book of Revelation, we go from the church age and the description that Jesus gives us of the high and low points, to heaven.

The change is abrupt and leaves us wondering, what just happened?



Contrary to what the trolls thought I said last time, you know, those who do not actually listen to the message online while they are dutifully doing all they can to let us know just how convoluted and totally unbiblical their ideas are, we are not told about the rapture of the church here in Revelation. One minute John is here on terra firma, the next, as a type or picture of the rapture, he is in heaven and notice the suddenness of the event.

Yes, we have indeed arrived. The teaching of Calvary Chapel Martin County is now being trolled online.

Why?

Simple, because we are teaching 1) a literal understanding of prophecy, 2) because we are filling in the spaces with the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture of the church and 3) all of the supernatural stuff going on which we will look at. This book is history in advance and is not an allegory. And it did not all take place in 70 AD either.

So, why the look at this important doctrine, the pretribulation rapture of the church? Let's look to our text.

Revelation 4:1–4

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and someone was sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.” (NASB 2020)

After the visions of the church age, after these things, John sees a door, hears a voice like a trumpet from the open portal, and then comes the command, yes, in the Greek it is indeed in the imperative, to come up here and a promise to show those things which will take place after the church age ends.

I have had folks ask, more than once, where is the rapture in Revelation? It is not here. This is a hint, a picture, a type of, but more than likely it is John now traveling in time to when the rapture will take place and he has arrived after it has all gone down and he, as a prophet, is called up to begin reporting on what he sees and hears.

I am not the only one who sees this here. We are not given all the details we would like to have. Is this a spiritual event only for John? Could be. Personally, I look at what happens here to John as a physical event.

He is to be a witness to future events, the Tribulation, the Kingdom and the restored earth. And he will explain this to us in terms which make sense to him.

So, John passes through a dimensional portal which also provides for his movement not only through space but through time as well.

That Christ would invite John to a scene in which he as the Lamb is an integral part is a problem only for those who approach the Apocalypse without a sympathetic imagination. John is about to see “what must take place after this.” This definitely assigns the content of the following chapters to a period of time yet future (although embedded in the material are sections that refer to times already past, e.g., 12:1–6). In 1:19 Christ had commanded John to write “what will take place later”; now he will show him those things. Since events on earth have their origin in heaven, the heavenly ascent is not unexpected. A true insight



into history is gained only when we view all things from the vantage point of the heavenly throne.  
(Mounce 1997, 118-119)

But back to the church. Where did it go? We heard warnings of being left behind, being taken before God's wrath comes down and the like in the church age. What has happened?

Well, the church has been raptured and is in heaven with Jesus as we come to chapter 4.

Paul made clear to the church in Thessalonica what some of them thought had already taken place. He describes the pretribulation rapture of the church for us.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. For we say this 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, who remain, 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. Therefore, comfort one another with these words. Now as to the periods and times, brothers and sisters, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord is coming just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then, let's not sleep as others do, but let's be alert and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk, get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let's be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you also are doing.” (NASB 2020)

- “The church and church age ends in → the rapture
- The entire church (of 2000 years) meets Him in → the rapture
- The entire church meets Him all together for the first time in → the rapture
- There are no signs, miracles, wonders, or events prior to → the rapture
- There is blessed hope in → the rapture
- There is promised comfort in → the rapture
- The entire church is to be prepared always to meet Him in → the rapture” (Olander 2009, 21)

As we have learned, there are no signs to be fulfilled letting us know the rapture is near. There are signs pointing to the nearness of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

We must remember that God has a plan for the Church, a plan for Israel, and a plan for the nations. Some of Israel is in the Church, but not all. The Church began at Pentecost and ends with the rapture. Paul included, along with other doctrines of the church, teaching on the rapture as part of his discipling program for the brand-new believers in Thessalonica.

Contrary to what my trolling friends' thought, we see several examples of the rapture in the scriptures starting in Genesis and running into the NT.



Genesis 5:21–24

“When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God for 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. The entire lifetime of Enoch was 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and then he disappeared because God took him away.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Enoch was raptured, removed before God’s wrath comes in the flood.

We also see types of the rapture in the life of Noah as well as Lot.

In other words, God has rescued His people before in the past as a means to teach us that yes, He will indeed do so in the future. He promises to do so in the future.

We see one of those promises reflected for us in Isaiah.

Isaiah 26:20–27:1

“Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain. In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.” (ESV)

Isaiah is telling us that “the Lord is about to come, and it is his counting of days which must color ours and not vice versa. With his perspective we will not lose hope, nor let our eyes slip from the supreme objective—Christ-likeness—to the day-to-day round. (When He says) to punish (it) is expressed by the verb *pqd*, which conveys the idea of personal visitation. In the end the master will return to set all things right and to balance all accounts.” (Oswalt 1986, 489)

As Isaiah continues the picture into chapter 27, he adds in the picture of Leviathan being destroyed and uses a term we see in Revelation multiple times, dragon. This is a picture of the events we see in detail in Revelation 20 as Satan and his minions are imprisoned and then eventually thrown into the lake of fire. But back to the idea of the rapture before the coming of wrath. In the cases of Noah and of Lot, first they were protected by God and lifted up into the ark or physically removed from the scene. One was rather prepared for the event; the other was rather shocked by it. I like how Dr. De Haan explains this.

The presence of Lot retarded and held back the destruction of Sodom, but it did not prevent it. God had promised that until Lot was safely out, He would not destroy the city of Sodom. He had promised that until Noah was safe, the flood would not come. While neither the flood nor the destruction of Sodom could come until Noah and Lot were safe, nevertheless the judgment of God did fall when finally they were taken out in safety. Noah is the type of the spiritual believer; Lot is the type of the carnal believer. (De Haan 1997, 116)

What we see with Lot is a type of the rapture from the perspective of someone who is not looking for the rapture to take place anytime soon. The wrath of God could not come down until Lot and his family were out of the way.

We have already seen the warnings to the churches, and they included this idea.

There are those who are looking for Jesus to return. They will not be caught off guard (Philadelphia). Then there are those who are believers but are too embedded in the culture and will be a bit surprised at what takes place (Sardis). And there are also those, who say they believe, but do not know Jesus



(Laodicea). In Revelation, we learn of a church that is characteristic of many churches here in the last days. Unfortunately, this Laodicean church is in denial and Jesus is on the outside knocking on the door. As the church, we are looking for the Day of Christ, not the Day of the Lord. The Day of Christ is a day of triumph, and for the true church, there are seven things anticipated.

### Day of Christ

1. the last days for the Church,
2. the resurrection of the bodies of the saints,
3. the translation of living saints,
4. the judgment seat of Christ,
5. the marriage of the Lamb,
6. the return of the Church with Christ, and
7. the reign of the Church with Christ. (Chafer 1993, 374)

Dr. Chafer referred to the last days of the church, we are in those days right now. There are indeed scriptures pointing to and describing the state of the church as we observe it currently.

“Those Scriptures which set forth the last days for the Church give no consideration to political or world conditions but are confined to the Church itself.

1. These Scriptures picture men as departing from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1–2).
2. There will be a manifestation of characteristics which belong to unregenerate men, though it is under the profession of “a form of godliness” (cf. 2 Timothy 3:1–5).
3. The indication is that, having denied the power of the blood of Christ (cf. 2 Timothy 3:5 with Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:23–24; 2 Timothy 4:2–4), the leaders in these forms of righteousness will be unregenerate men from whom nothing more spiritual than this could proceed (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14).

The following is a partial list of the passages which present the truth respecting the last days of the Church: 1 Timothy 4:1–3; 2 Timothy 3:1–5; 4:3–4; James 5:1–8; 2 Peter 2:1–22; 3:3–6; Jude 1:1–25.” (Chafer 1993, 375)

We have no signs for the imminent rapture of the church. But we do have signs, or rather warnings, about the condition of the church as Jesus returns.

Just as we looked at last week for some hints in the culture of the second coming, with Jesus providing hints of what the world will be doing right up to the rapture.

Luke 17:26–30.

“Also, at the time of the Son of Man, it will be just as it was at the time of Noach. People ate and drank, and men and women married, right up until the day Noach entered the ark; then the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was in the time of Lot—people ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built; but the day Lot left S’dom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. That is how it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed.” (CJB)

Got it, the culture will be trying to do business as usual in an unusual time. Overlaid on top of that all those things Jesus warned of happening before the second coming.

Matthew 24:6–8

“You will hear the noise of wars nearby and the news of wars far off; see to it that you don’t become frightened. Such things must happen, but the end is yet to come. For peoples will fight each other, nations



will fight each other, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various parts of the world; all this is but the beginning of the 'birth-pains.'" (CJB)

Then add to this, what we see about the last days of the church.

### **Last Days of the Church**

"These conditions center around a system of denials.

- There is a denial of God (Luke 17:26; 2 Timothy 3:4–5),
- a denial of Christ (1 John 2:18; 1 John 4:3; 2 Peter 2:6),
- a denial of Christ's return (2 Peter 3:3–4),
- a denial of the faith (1 Timothy 4:1–2; Jude 3),
- a denial of sound doctrine (2 Timothy 4:3–4),
- a denial of the separated life (2 Timothy 3:1–7),
- a denial of Christian liberty (1 Timothy 4:3–4);
- a denial of morals (2 Timothy 3:1–8, 13; Jude 18),
- a denial of authority (2 Timothy 3:4).

This condition at the close of the age is seen to coincide with the state within the Laodicean Church, before which Christ must stand to seek admission. In view of its close it is not surprising that the age is called an "evil age" in Scripture." (Pentecost 1958, 155)

Laodicea lurks inside every church today. We see some churches fully overtaken by this "spirit." They are the ones seriously resembling the picture drawn by Dr. Pentecost.

Once we see the open door in heaven and John instructed to "come up here." There is no more reference to the church.

Our attention moves from the church on earth, to the church in heaven and then those events taking place on those who dwell on the earth. As believers, we are citizens of heaven. For those who do not know Jesus, they are citizens of earth.

In chapter 4, we are with John and experiencing the glory of being in heaven and seeing the church there with all of the faithful heavenly host around the throne of God. Judgment is coming. So, why do we all need to be rapture ready?

2 Peter 3:3–9

"Above all, understand this: In the last days blatant scoffers will come, being propelled by their own evil urges and saying, "Where is his promised return? For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately suppress this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water. Through these things the world existing at that time was destroyed when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day. The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (NET 2nd ed.)

The rapture of the church is a central doctrine of the church. Here at Calvary, we are waiting for the soon return of Jesus Christ for His church. This is the next major prophetic event for the church. There are no



signs or warnings, we are to be ready to go as His return is imminent. We desire to be rapture ready at all times.

### **Our Program of Events**

Let's make sure we know what the primary events we are talking about are, when we discuss the pretribulation rapture of the church.

1. It is the promised return of Jesus for His church.
2. As He returns, all the church, only Christians, are resurrected and all at once. Other believers, OT, Tribulation saints, are resurrected later.
3. At almost the same moment in time, those of us who are alive will suddenly find ourselves in new bodies.
4. We are snatched away, forcefully caught up, taken, raptured to heaven meeting up with the resurrected church and Jesus in the air.

Strictly speaking, the word rapture relates only to the experience of living believers who are caught up into the Lord's presence. However, theologically speaking, rapture is used to label this entire event, including the resurrection of believers who have died as well as the translation of believers who are alive. (Ryrie 1981, 30)

What will that look like? Let me give you a possible scenario.

We will find ourselves in the middle of another day, doing what we normally do when suddenly everything changes, and nothing will ever be the same again.

No matter where you are or what you are doing, if you are a believer, you will suddenly be changed and commanded to "come up here (Revelation 4:1b)." At that point with no opportunity to say, "later everyone." You're gone.

Anyone you were with at that moment, if they do not know the Lord, all they will know is one moment they were talking with you, and now they aren't. For those who are left behind, some will know what just happened and will be devastated. For most though, they will be dealing with The Great Disappearance. What happened? Where did everyone go?

For the believer, we will finally be with Jesus as we see Him waiting for us just ahead in the clouds. And with Him are all our loved ones in Christ who have gone on before us in death.

We are reunited with our loved ones in Christ who have gone before us, and we will see and be with the Lord forever. We will not be thinking about this planet for awhile.

But globally, terror ensues, and economic ruin rules the day. Billions are now gone, and the impact is worldwide.

Every single follower of Jesus Christ...gone. All those jobs are now unfilled. All of those bill paying citizens, are no longer paying bills.

The economic impact will destroy the foundations of the world economy immediately. Stock markets plunge around the world and suddenly the world is staring at the worst depression in its history. That alone is bad, but it gets worse. At the moment that Jesus changed us and called us home, He also took people out of morgues and caskets in funeral homes, emptied out those facilities dealing with the mentally disabled. And then there are all the empty NICUs and birthing rooms all around the world as





every single baby is suddenly gone in a flash. All young children under the age of accountability, everywhere on the globe, gone.

Suddenly, elementary schools are completely empty except for a few teachers here and there. Cars on the freeway with no drivers will also cause problems along with pilotless aircraft. Then there are the missing crewmembers from submerged submarines or the ISS.

Fear takes over as police begin the search for missing prisoners who have suddenly disappeared from maximum security prisons.

Folks will flock to churches looking for answers and, in a few cases, the pastor will still be there. But here at Calvary, the phone will be picked up by an answering machine. We aren't here. We warned you and now we are gone.

Prison camps in North Korea and China, filled with Christians, aren't any longer.

Searches begin globally as families begin to look for loved ones. Parents try to piece together what happened to their children who disappeared from school, or their bedroom. Hospital security begins to examine how someone could have come in and kidnapped every single newborn. But it was everywhere around the world all at once.

In other words, when Jesus returns, the unsaved world panics and will have good reason to do so. Militaries around the globe mobilize not knowing what just happened. There are holes in their ranks as some of their members are missing and in government, even there will be seen empty holes as folks go missing.

War breaks out in a few places. The world turns to the Vatican for answers, and some will still be there to explain.

Telescopes all point to the heavens as the concern is this is the first wave of an alien invasion to take over the planet. Maybe the Avengers storyline isn't that far from the truth. That is getting dangerously close to the reality that is about to hit this planet, only it will not be an alien army from another planet they need to be worrying about, there is a military commander who will be coming to this planet seven or more years from the point all of this takes place, and He is coming to take over the planet and remove all of those from the planet who refuse to live under His conditions and laws. His name is Jesus Christ.

But with the church also leaving the earth is the Holy Spirit, the restrainer.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

"For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way, and then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth and wipe out by the manifestation of his arrival. The arrival of the lawless one will be by Satan's working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false wonders, and with every kind of evil deception directed against those who are perishing, because they found no place in their hearts for the truth so as to be saved. Consequently God sends on them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false. And so all of them who have not believed the truth but have delighted in evil will be condemned." (NET 2nd ed.)

Evil reigns supreme and violence suddenly hits everywhere as well. Why? When Jesus removed the church, He removed the Holy Spirit from this planet. Now the restrainer is gone, and Satan will have a field day.





When Jesus returns for His church, wrath falls. It is about to get very ugly very fast on this planet for anyone left behind. But for us. This doctrine is meant to provide us with comfort, the reassurance that death in this world is not the end but only the beginning.

With the church gone, God will once again turn His attention to the nation of Israel. The 70th week of Daniel is about to get going. This is what the rest of the book of Revelation is all about, the 70th week of years.

Daniel 9:24–27

“Seventy weeks have been determined concerning your people and your holy city to put an end to rebellion, to bring sin to completion, to atone for iniquity, to bring in perpetual righteousness, to seal up the prophetic vision, and to anoint a Most Holy Place. So know and understand: From the issuing of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an anointed one, a prince arrives, there will be a period of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times. Now after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing. As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy them. But his end will come speedily like a flood. Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction. He will confirm a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of that week he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt. On the wing of abominations will come one who destroys, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys.” (NET 2nd ed.)

In the Hebrew, it is seventy sevens, not weeks.

Verse 24 says seventy sevens have been decreed for your people.

The seventy sevens of v. 24 describe a period of time. In light of the 70 years of Dan 9:2, the seventy sevens would also naturally refer to the number of years; no longer 70 but now 70 times as many. (Hess 2011, 317)

We are talking about a period of time that is 70x7 years.

This period of 490 years had been “decreed” for the Jewish people and for the holy city of Jerusalem. The Hebrew word translated “decreed” literally means “to cut off” or “to determine.” (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 95)

A period of time has been decreed for the nation of Israel. There is a specific starting point for this period of time and there is a specific pause point as well.

The starting point took place at a point in time after the exile under Babylon. The Persian Empire defeated Babylon and took over. After that was when the decree to return was issued.

Sir Robert Anderson later determined that date to be March 14, 445 BC. It is, we believe, at that point, the clock started. “The edict in question was the decree issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus in the twentieth year of his reign, authorising Nehemiah to rebuild the fortifications of Jerusalem.” (Anderson 2004, 121)

The clock for Israel stopped when Jesus Christ presented Himself, on the exact day expected, as Messiah. We call that day Palm Sunday. That stopped the clock as He was cut off, He was killed. Daniel stated the city of Jerusalem, and the Temple would be destroyed, that was in 70 AD. The clock has stopped at 69 weeks of years with one week left to go.

Then it was all about the church, but once the church age ends and we are called up to Him as He fulfills His promise from John 14, then the stage is set for the final week to begin.



The great purpose of Daniel's Seventieth week is to bring Israel to the point that they will repent and to embrace the salvation that is provided by their Messiah, Jesus. (Benware 2018, Kindle Location 3764-3765)

For us, the church, we find ourselves waiting on the Lord. We know He is coming to get us, and He will do so without warning at any moment. We also know that those things to look for, they are indeed happening. The season is indeed here. Just as a Jewish bride would be looking for the bridegroom to come, we do the same.

The bride and her bridal party would therefore be anxiously watching and waiting for the exact moment.

"Even in the late evening, the bridal party was to keep their oil lamps burning (Luke 12:35) just in case the wedding was to begin. How would they know when the time had arrived? One custom was for a member of the groom's party to lead the way from the groom's house to the home of the bride, and to shout "Behold, the bridegroom comes!" This would be followed by the sound of the shofar (ram's horn), which was used to proclaim Jewish holy days and special events.

At the sound of the shofar, the groom would lead a wedding procession through the streets of the village to the house of the bride. The groomsmen would then carry (nissuin) the bride back to the groom's house where a huppah ("canopy") was once again set up." (Kasdan 1996, 51-52)

They would fly the bride to the bridegroom.

Jesus was looking forward to this day as He first described it to the disciples. So much so He prayed for it as well. But He also said "But as for that day and hour no one knows it—not even the angels in heaven—except the Father alone." (Matthew 24:36, NET 2nd ed.)

This event is imminent. When Christ says, "I am coming again," He is using a present tense verb to discuss a future event.

"First, use of the present tense for a future event: "I will come back" ("I am coming back") indicates the event's present immediacy.

Second, that He will personally come back implies a separate event. At the end of the Tribulation, at the Second Coming, when Christ returns to earth, it is not He but His angels who will gather the elect (Matt. 24:31). (That is not the church)

Third, Christ will take them to heaven to His Father's house, not keep them on earth to go into the kingdom as at the end of the Tribulation (the Second Coming—25:34)." (Geisler 2005, 623)

His coming is imminent and has been, from the moment He gave the first hint of it, meant to be.

Are you rapture ready? Are you ready to go? Does the idea of hearing Jesus say "come up here" excite you or concern you.

You can be rapture ready right now.

Romans 3:21–24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For



everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."" (NLT)

### **ABC's of Salvation**

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.



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