



**Doctrine: The Rapture
Preview - Elijah!
The Main Event
Part 6
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

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1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

“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." (NASB 2020)

There is one more rapture example I want to mention, Elijah.

2 Kings 2:1

"The time had come for the LORD to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal," (CSB)

Elisha refused to leave Elijah's side and walked with him to his appointment with God. We pick up in their walking discussion in verse 11.

2 Kings 2:11

"As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire with horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up into heaven in the whirlwind." (CSB)

As God had formerly taken Enoch away, so that he did not taste of death (see at Gen. 5:24), so did He also suddenly take Elijah away from Elisha, and carry him to heaven without dying. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 208)

Just as with Enoch, Elijah was changed and taken into heaven in a fiery war chariot.

This, too, foreshadows one of the purposes of the yet-future pretribulation rapture. Believers will not only escape the judgment of the tribulation; they will also receive the blessing of following the Lord. However, just as men questioned the disappearance of the prophet Elijah, so they will likely question the rapture of the church. (Hitchcock and Hindson 2018, 49)

And this brings us to the topic that has had others who say they are followers of Jesus Christ, reflect that He may not be who they are listening to at this exact moment as I have been advised this past week by several, online, that I am going to hell because I teach and believe in this solid sound Biblical doctrine. The pretribulation rapture of the church is a central doctrine of the church. Here at Calvary Chapel, we are waiting for the soon promised 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.

Our Program of Events

What are the primary events we are talking about 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 and 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, caught up, taken, raptured to heaven meeting up with the resurrected church and Jesus.



1 Corinthians 15:50–57

“Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. **Behold, I am telling 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.** For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: “DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP in victory. WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR VICTORY? WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (NASB 2020)

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?

Luke 17:34–36

“I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.” (NASB 2020)

This global event, characterized as such by Jesus making reference to an event taking place that impacts night, morning and daily activities all at once, will change everything. The day is just another day, but then Jesus enters the atmosphere and everything changes.

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 the Pope will most likely still be there to explain. Some will be missing in Vatican City, but not all.

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.

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

We talk about the doctrine of the rapture of the church. Yes, we are all so looking forward to being with Jesus and long for this event to take place. Paul believed it could happen in his day. Here is the thing though, when Jesus returns, wrath falls. It is about to get very ugly very fast on this planet for anyone left behind. But for us.

5. This doctrine is meant to provide us with comfort, the reassurance that death in this world is not the end but only the beginning.

As we do this, I want us to have a road map of where we are going. This map is as follows.



Our Map

- John 14:1-3 Jesus - I go to prepare a place and will come back and get you.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 First the harpazo or rapture of the church. The Day of Christ has arrived.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Then the Day of the Lord begins.
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 Details about what the resurrection and the rapture looks like.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3a First the removal and resulting apostasy.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3b Then the Beast, antichrist, man of sin, etc. is revealed.
- Then the Day of the Lord/Jacob's Troubles kicks off.

Are you ready to go?

John 14:1-3

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be." (NASB 2020)

Earlier in the day, Jesus had answered three questions for the disciples while on the Mount of Olives.

Matthew 24:3

"As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?'" (ESV)

As part of His answer, He gave details of events that will take place prior to His second coming. Things to be on the lookout for. He also implied, twice, an event that was coming that there was no sign attached to, that is the event we call the rapture of the church.

Here in John, later that evening, Jesus provides more detail and gives a dramatic truth for the first time.

Something new is now taking place. Jesus has just told His disciples that there is this new entity coming into existence, the church. Those in the church will be characterized as Christ followers. A major characteristic for the church, those in it love one another and operate in unity. The idea of the church was a mystery prior to the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Paul talked about that mystery in his letter to the church in Colossae.

Colossians 1:24-27

"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of **His body, which is the church**, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, **the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints**. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (NKJV)

The saving purpose of God was a major theme of the OT prophets, and that Gentiles as well as Israelites were embraced within its scope was also foreseen. But the manner in which that purpose would come to fruition—by the incorporation of Gentile and Jewish believers alike in the common life of the body of Christ—was not made known. That remained a secret, a mystery, until the time of fulfillment, and now Paul, as steward of this mystery, unfolds its wonder to his readers, (Bruce 1984, 85)



In the Bible, we see that the church is a separate program from Israel. The church does not replace Israel. God's work with Israel will restart, and His program for the nations will conclude; after Jesus returns to get His church, just as He promises here in John. When He returns, that will end the program He initiated regarding the church and completes what was started on the Day of Pentecost.

With the church gone, God then throws the program back to what Daniel talked about in Daniel 9, the remaining 70th week of years regarding Israel.

That is why most of Revelation, after chapter 3, sounds like an Old Testament book, it is about Israel and the nations. It is about the completion of the 70th week of Daniel.

What is the 70th week of Daniel?

We need to walk through Daniel 9:24-27 to understand this which we will do next time.

Let's pray.

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