



**Doctrine: The Rapture  
The Great Removal Is Coming Very Soon!  
Part 2  
Thessalonians 4:13-5:11**

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Due to the growing numbers of folks who are busy trying to mislead us and deceive us ala 2 Peter 2, we are going to ground ourselves in the Biblical Doctrine of the Pretribulation Rapture of the Church. Peter seriously locks this down for us in 2 Peter 3.



Peter 3:3–9

“knowing this first of all, that **scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 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.” 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, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.** 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. **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. 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.**” (ESV)

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)

Last week we ended just before the Tribulation, I mean the overview of it from 50,000 feet.

### **The Tribulation from 50,000 Feet**

1. The Tribulation does not begin with the rapture of the church. There are so many who are confused about this but no, that is not the starting point. It begins when a globally known political leader who rises up post rapture. This person is most likely someone currently alive and possibly serving in government or business somewhere on the planet. The scripture calls this person the antichrist and it is he who makes a seven-year treaty with Israel allowing them to rebuild the Temple, begins Temple worship and offering military protection (Daniel 9:27). That is what begins the Tribulation.
2. The first half of this 7-year period is known as the Tribulation. We see this in the seven seal judgments in the book of Revelation. There are wars (Revelation 6:1-11), famines, unprecedented natural disasters and the martyrdom of those who come to Christ during this time at the hands of highly organized religious zealots who are experienced in hunting down heresy and punish those who do not agree with their religion by beheading Revelation 20:4). During this time, the Antichrist



defends Israel and Israel restarts Temple worship and rebuilds the Temple most likely using architectural renderings which already exist.

3. Halfway through the seven-year treaty, the war in heaven sees Satan and all the fallen kicked out and limited to only the surface of this planet (Revelation 12:7-9). It is at this time, after a smoke and mirrors job surrounding an attempted assassination of the Antichrist, that he ceases being a him and becomes an It (Revelation 13). It is at this 3 ½ year point, the Antichrist will stop the sacrifices (Daniel 9:27) in the Temple and declare he is god, demand worship, and has the False Prophet set up an image of the Beast in the Temple (Revelation 13:14) and elsewhere. This kicks off the Great Tribulation also known as the time of Jacob's trouble.
4. Using existing and currently deployed global cyber technology, the Antichrist (Beast) takes over all economics of the planet requiring, compelling obedience or death. This is most likely done using mind control and V2K technology anyone wanting to participate to take some type of mark, chip or injection (Revelation 13:16-18). Those who don't, Jews and Christians, will be martyred.
5. When all this begins, at least 1/3 of all the Jews in Israel will make it to protection in the hills and be supernaturally protected by the Lord for 3 ½ years (Zechariah 13:9). They are the ones who will pray for Messiah to return (Hosea 5:15) and eligible to enter the Millennial Kingdom of Messiah (Zechariah 12:10-14) at the end of Armageddon in human bodies. As they pray for protection, it is because of the closing events of the Great Tribulation.
6. All of the armies of the world will gather into Israel. They will surround Jerusalem and capture a portion of it before the faithful pray for Messiah to return (Zechariah 12:1-9, 13:9).
7. Jesus Christ returns and intervenes freeing and empowering His people as He and the armies of Israel eliminate every last vestige of the armies of the planet and the Beast (Zechariah 14).
8. King Jesus takes over. All of Israel is saved. OT saints are resurrected, and Tribulation saints are resurrected. Sheep and goats judgment takes place. Satan is imprisoned and the Kingdom begins.

The sheep and goats judgment means, that at the end of Armageddon, there are those who are to be judged and those who are to be rewarded. This is one of the items that makes it difficult to defend a post tribulation rapture.

One more thing, once chapter 3 of Revelation is completed and John is told to come up here, the church is no longer referenced at all in the book and it is all about Israel. "In any event, like the church, from that point on John views the Tribulation from heaven." (Geisler 2005, 612)

That is not a lot of detail but enough to provide us a picture that the Tribulation is all intended to be thought of as part of the Day of the Lord, it is indeed the wrath of God being poured out on an unbelieving world and as believers, we have indeed been rescued by Jesus Himself to be with Him. Nowhere though in the book of Revelation is there any hint of a post tribulation rapture. Richard Mayhew adds to this. "The most damaging evidence against posttribulationism in the New Testament is found in the Apocalypse. There is no prima facie evidence that mildly resembles a posttribulation rapture in John's capstone to prophetic literature. If Revelation gives the most detailed account of the events in Jacob's time of trouble, then conspicuously absent from the vivid coverage of our Lord's return to earth (Revelation 19) is any hint of a posttribulation rapture. If any passage of Scripture would be expected to explicitly teach posttribulationism, this is the prime candidate. However, the silence is significant." (Mayhue 2001, 6)



There is also a midtribulation view, a partial rapture view (only the ready go) and most recently, a pre-wrath view. “Those who hold to a midtribulation rapture believe the rapture takes Christians from the earth at the middle of this seven-year tribulation. The prewrath rapture view suggests that the rapture occurs about three-fourths through the seven-year tribulation.” (Hart 2015, 19)

The harpazo, the taking of the church suddenly and with no warning, is indeed a doctrine as taught by the Apostle Paul to the church in Thessalonica.

The rapture of the church is a biblical doctrine. Here in Thessalonians 4 we find a “passage of scripture that speaks of a meeting with the Lord Jesus in the air concerning those who are alive and those who are asleep. This very special meeting with the Lord to be with Him forever is of primary importance since it involves the entire church. It is even more significant since this passage concerns the entire church age, every believer in Christ since the day of Pentecost.” (Olander 2009, 11)

We are, as followers of Jesus Christ, looking for this day. The day that all of the promises move to, done.

Titus 2:11–14

**“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”** (ESV)

The coming of Christ for His church is imminent and has been since Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians. He can come at any moment. Paul identified with the living who might experience the rapture here in 1 Thessalonians 4 as well as in 1 Corinthians 15.

The greeting expressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:22 was also a way for the early church, and Paul, to express their belief in the imminent return of Christ for the church.

1 Corinthians 16:21–22

“The greeting is in my own hand—that of Paul. If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha!” (NASB 2020)

Maranatha is an Aramaic expression transliterated into Greek (1 Cor. 16:22; Didache 10:6) meaning ‘Our Lord has come’ (maran atha) or ‘Our Lord, come’ (marana tha). (Achte-meier 1985, 602)

This term, only makes sense in light of the imminency of the coming of Jesus Christ for His church.

It’s instructive that the early church coined this special greeting to reflect their hourly hope, eager expectation, and ardent anticipation of the Rapture. No doubt this expectation motivated them to pursue personal purity, devoted service, and evangelism. Think of how the church would change today if we were to adopt this greeting for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Think of how our lives would change if this simple greeting were always on the lips of an expectant people. (Hitchcock 2012, 172)

As each day ends, it brings the believer one day closer to the time when the rapture may occur. Because of this imminency, it is time for believers to awaken out of sleep and to live a life consistent with the position of being sons of light. (Fruchtenbaum 2019, 407-408)

The half-brother of Jesus Christ was also in expectation of the imminent return of Jesus.



James 5:7–9

“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. **You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.** Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. **Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!**” (NKJV)

As applied to the coming of the Lord, imminency consists of three things: the certainty that He may come at any moment, the uncertainty of the time of that arrival, and the fact that no prophesied event stands between the believer and that hour. (Vanhetloo 1959, 20)

Two important facts we now know. First, the rapture will occur before the Tribulation. Biblically based, yes. And it is imminent.

That doesn't mean it is soon, it simply means nothing has to precede it at all. We have no idea how much more time we have left to tell our friends and neighbors about Jesus Christ. Weh don't know how much time we truly have, Paul did not know either. Thus the encouragement we find.

Ephesians 5:15–17

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (NKJV)

We do this because at any moment we may begin to experience the following. And yes, this is indeed a military operation as the enemy, Satan, the prince of the power of the air will try and prevent this event from taking place.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

“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.” (NASB 2020)

First Jesus personally departs heaven arriving in the atmosphere of earth.

As He arrives in our atmosphere, there is a shout, κλεῦσμα, literally a word of command. As the adjutant for all parades, it was my responsibility to notify everyone of the coming parade. I would do so by “duck walking,” yes that is what it is called, to the middle of the parade field, totally empty but for me, and then using command voice exclaim, “Attention to orders.” And with that the military parade would begin. The shout is attention to orders. At that, the dead resurrect, and our living bodies change.

Then comes the voice of the archangel, the chief angel, Michael. We have no idea what his command will be, but as the head honcho of the angels, He is once again putting God's plan into motion. I would yell attention to orders. The next voice, that of the commander of the troops, would be to repeat the phrase and then present colors. And the parade is off and running.

The next step we see is the trumpet of God. In military actions, a trumpet can be a call to gather. The note sounded is specific and those who are waiting to hear it know what it means. The trumpet triggers the rapture, the “come up here.”

The first to respond will be those in Christ who are being resurrected. This limits it to the church. All other saints will rise later.



Then those of us who are alive are also included and both groups are forcibly snatched up by the Lord. Yes, harpazo does indeed carry the idea of this being a taken by force. So much for Satan stopping this.

Then we meet the Lord, right in the air and once with Him, we return to heaven and will permanently be with Him forever, just as He promised in John 14:1-3.

Are we done? Not hardly, there is more to cover on this doctrine before we say enough, for now.

Let's pray.

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