

Series: Revealing The Revelation

Text: Revelation 1:3

Title: "It's All A Matter of Perspective"

Its been well said, "What you believe about Jesus Christ says the most about you." The point being what we believe, I mean what we truly believe about Jesus Christ will shape our lives and how we live and what we think about the world in which we live.

As we begin our journey through the Book of Revelation, I am excited for us as we are truly about to be blessed, because out of all the sixty-six individual books that make up our Bible, only the book of Revelation has a unique promise attached to it.

Revelation 1:3, **"God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near."**

Pray!

There is no reason then to be hesitant about studying the book of Revelation for the Lord Himself says there is a blessing to those who study it and put it to practice. The word “revelation” means: “**the revealing, the unveiling**” and Jesus even provides the outline as to how we can get the most out of our study of the book of Revelation when Jesus instructs John,

In Revelation 1:19, Jesus tells John to, “**Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen.**”

Section I (chapter 1) presents Jesus whom John **has seen**— in His glory.

Section II (chapters 2–3) addresses the things **that are**—the Lord’s people. John addresses 7 literal churches in Asia Minor (modern-day

Turkey), which also represent church history throughout the ages, as well as 7 different types of believers throughout the ages. It makes for a very interesting study!

Section III (chapters 4–22) details the things **yet to come**—the Lord’s program. We see the church taken up to heaven in chapter 4. Here is another reason to believe in a pretribulation rapture of the church.

It's interesting that 19 times in most English translations, we find the word “church” in chapters 2-3, and then the church is not mentioned again until chapter 19, leading many scholars to believe the church is “Raptured” in chapter 4. The church is not seen again until Jesus comes back at His Second Coming with His bride, the church. While the church is in heaven in the Father’s house, God turns his focus on Israel and pours out his wrath on an unbelieving world before returning and establishing his kingdom and ultimately making all things new, both heaven and earth.

As you study the book of Revelation, you can't help but wonder about the Rapture of the church and when it takes place.

Sadly, some people argue that the "Rapture" is not even mentioned in the bible.

1. The word "Rapture" is a biblical word
2. The teaching of the "Rapture" is found in the bible even if the word is absent.

Regarding the word "Rapture", we need to recognize that "the Bible" has changed form over time. Originally, the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. But for most of the history of the Church, the Bible used by the majority of people was not in these original languages. Instead, people used a translation in their native language, just as we use an English translation today. And for the greater part of the history of the Church, the translation used by most in the West was the Latin Vulgate.

For over 1000 years "the Bible" translation used

entirely in the West was the Latin Vulgate, and it dominated Bible study and doctrine for a period far longer than any other translation. It reigned supreme in the West until the time of the Reformation when men began to return to study the original language texts and translate them into the vulgar tongues (e.g., German, English).

The term rapture means **“to seize”** and **“to carry off,”** and is taken from the phrase **“caught up”** in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 in the Latin Vulgate. So, we see that the term “rapture” is in the Bible—it just depends which Bible you are talking about! If you mean one of the recent translations which have only been on the scene for decades, or even the KJV which is hundreds of years old, then you won’t find the term. But if you are talking about the Grand Daddy of all Bibles which ruled for a millennium (the Vulgate), then the term is indeed there!

Even if we could not find the actual term “rapture” in a Bible, it would not indicate that the doctrine of the Rapture is not taught within

Scripture. When you think about it, we don't find the terms Trinity, omnipresence, or omniscience in Scripture, but these doctrines are clearly taught by Scripture. All that is necessary to establish the truth of a teaching is whether the concept is found in Scripture, and "The Rapture" easily passes that test.

What is the Rapture?

If we go back to the original language of the New Testament. We find in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 in the Vulgate to be a translation of the Greek term "har-pagē-s-ometha" which is the 1st person, plural, future tense, passive voice, indicative mood form of the verb "harpazō" meaning to "snatch, seize, take suddenly and vehemently" "by force" and which can also mean, "rescue from a threatening danger."

The Scriptures present 6 raptures. 4 have already taken place. 2 are still to come. . . . The 4 raptures that have taken place include when

1. Enoch and
2. Elijah were taken up from earth to heaven

without experiencing death (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; 2K. 2:1, 11),

3. The Lord Jesus ascended to heaven after His death and resurrection (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 12:5+),

4. When Paul referred to the rapture of a man (probably Paul himself) taken to the third heaven (2Cor. 12:2-4). . . .

5. The future raptures are (The Church) in 1 Thessalonians 4:17

6. The two witnesses of the future Tribulation period who ascend to heaven after God has resurrected them from the dead (Rev. 11:3+, 11-12+).

The Rapture, in the sense we are using the term, is the “**catching away**” of persons to a new location by the power of God without their initiation or control.

We are specifically interested in the Rapture of the Church—the event which describes the translation of the living and dead in Christ to be caught up in the clouds forever to be with Him

(1Thessalonians 4:17).

As we go through our study of the book of Revelation, I'll be looking at the Rapture from a "Pre-Tribulation" Rapture Perspective. I believe that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture best fits the character of God and the structure of the book of Revelation, especially when viewed through the eyes of the church.

In Revelation 3:10 Jesus says, **"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."**

In eschatology (the study of end times or last things) it is important to remember that almost all Christians agree on the following...

- 1) There is coming a time of great tribulation such as the world has never seen,
- 2) Following the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return to earth and establish His kingdom
- 3) There will be a Rapture, a "Catching Away" of believers from mortality to immortality (John

14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The million dollar question is when does the Rapture occur in relation to the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ? The timing of the Rapture is where some scholars can't agree.

There are primarily three theories about the timing of the Rapture:

1. Pretribulationism (the belief that the Rapture will occur before the Tribulation begins),
2. Midtribulationism (the belief that the Rapture will occur at the midpoint of the Tribulation 3-1/2 years),
3. Posttribulationism (the belief that the Rapture will occur at the end of the Tribulation).

In our study of Revelation, I will try to point out some of the strengths and weaknesses of each position for you. Today, let me give you....

Six Reasons to believe in a Pretribulational

view of the Rapture

I. The Distinction Between Israel and the Church

One of the keys to understanding the end times is to realize that God has separate programs for Israel and for the Church. I truly believe what you believe about the nation of Israel and the Jewish people will determine much as to how you view the end times.

Romans 11:25–26 reminds us that a "partial hardening" has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

The Church age is a unique one. It began with the coming of the Holy Spirit, a Holy Spirit-indwelt church that began at Pentecost (Acts 2) and will end at the Rapture 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The Tribulation — often called “**the time of Jacob’s trouble**” in Jeremiah 30:7 — is specifically designed to bring the nation of

Israel back to repentance and usher in the Kingdom promises made to her.

The Church, as the Bride of Christ, is not destined to endure that wrath but to be rescued before it begins.

II. The Promise of Deliverance from Wrath

Paul's letters clearly teach that the Church is not appointed to wrath, but to salvation.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 — “And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God’s Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV) — “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NLT) “For God chose to

save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us”

The wrath described in Revelation—beginning with the opening of the seals in chapter 6—is divine judgment poured out on a Christ-rejecting world.

Before that judgment begins, the Bride is taken out of harm’s way, just as Noah was lifted above the flood and Lot was escorted out of Sodom before fire fell.

Christ’s love for His Bride ensures He does not leave her to face His fury upon a rebellious world.

III. The Structure of Revelation Supports a Pre-Trib View

When studying Revelation from the Church’s perspective, we see a clear pattern:

Chapters 2-3 — The Church Age (messages to the seven churches).

Chapters 4-19 — The Church disappears from the narrative.

Notice what happens in Revelation 4:1–2: John hears a trumpet voice saying, “**Come up here,**” and immediately finds himself in heaven. This mirrors 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, where the Church is called up at the sound of a trumpet and the voice of the Archangel.

Chapters 4-19, the Church is never mentioned again until she returns with Christ in Revelation 19. Instead, the focus turns entirely to Israel and the nations.

Chapter 19, Jesus returns at His Second Coming with His bride, the church which is something entirely different than Jesus coming for His bride, the church in the Rapture.

This shift strongly suggests that the Church is no longer on earth during the judgments that follow.

We see elders in heaven, clothed in white robes and crowns — a picture of the rewarded Church present with her Lord before the Tribulation unfolds.

IV. The Nature of the Church: A Bride, Not a Victim

The relationship between Christ and His Church is portrayed as that of a Groom and His Bride in Ephesians 5:25–27. **“25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26 to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. 27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.”**

It’s unthinkable that the Bridegroom would allow His Bride to be battered and broken in the hour of divine wrath meant for unbelievers.

Just as ancient Jewish bridegrooms came for their brides before the time of wrath or judgment, Jesus will come for His Bride suddenly, lovingly, and securely — to take her to the Father’s house John 14:1–3, **“I go to**

prepare a place for you... I will come again and receive you unto Myself.”

V. The Imminence of Christ's Return

Throughout the New Testament, believers are taught to look for Christ Himself, not a series of catastrophic signs.

Titus 2:13 — “while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed”

Philippians 3:20 — “20 But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.”

Only a Pre-Tribulation Rapture preserves this sense of imminence — that Jesus could return at any moment.

Mid-Tribulation or Post-Tribulation views, by contrast, require specific events (seals, trumpets, antichrist's rise) to happen first,

robbing the Church of that eager expectation.

VI. Comfort and Hope for the Church

Paul concludes his explanation of the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:18 with these words:

“Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

If the Church were destined to endure the horrors of Revelation 6–19, these would not be comforting words.

The doctrine of the Pre-Trib Rapture is the only position that offers true hope — a reminder that our deliverance could come at any moment, and our reunion with Jesus is imminent.

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture best fits:

The distinction between Israel and the Church.
The promises of deliverance from wrath.
The structure of the book of Revelation.
The nature of Christ’s love for His Bride, the

church.

The hope and imminence of the believer's expectation.

It's no wonder the apostle Paul would remind the church to comfort one another with words concerning the "Rapture"

Regardless of your position, I know you will be blessed as you study the book of Revelation, as God Himself promises us we will.

Don't miss the rapture! Jesus could come back at any moment. Are you ready? Have you received the forgiveness for your sins? Put your trust in God. Receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Lets pray!