

The Rapture of the Church

by Bryan Newberry

Introduction

The Greatest and Most Important moments in Human History:

1. Birth of Christ Jesus
2. The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ Jesus our LORD
3. Will be "The Rapture of the Church – which is yet to come"

These 3 events have and will affect the whole human race. And after these events the history of mankind is forever changed.

- We Create a moment every year and Celebrate Jesus' Birth – Christmas
- We Create a moment every year and Celebrate Jesus' Resurrection – Easter
- But, Discerning "The Signs of the Times", (i.e. Prophecies of Scripture concerning the Generation that will be a part of "The Rapture") – we should Create at Least a Moment every year (i.e. I did New Year's Eve for Years), if not every month, or for a few minutes every Sunday (i.e. as I know Some Calvary Chapels do this).

Today, and for the next few Sunday's, we will!

Let us Start with the Topic of:

"What is the Rapture, and When is it Coming?"

For us who are "Believers" this is a message of Comfort!!

Just look at what Jesus said to His disciples to comfort them the night before He went to the cross:

John 14:2-3(NASB)

2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

3 "**If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.**

Jesus' Prayer for us:

John 17:20

20 "I do not pray for these alone, **but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;**

John 17:24

24 "Father, **I desire that they also whom You gave Me MAY BE WITH ME WHERE I AM,** that **they may behold My glory** which You have given Me; ...

Paul, Talking about this subject, ends his dissertation on the rapture with these words:

1 Thes 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Note: (There are Actually Two - 2nd Comings of Christ)

Before we move forward I want to distinguish between the 2 different comings of Christ. People often say, “The Second Coming of Christ”, and sometimes they mean “The Rapture”, and sometimes they are referring to the actual “2nd Coming of Christ to the Earth”, which happens at the end of a 7 Years Tribulation Period on the Earth” (Rev 19-20).

Let’s Clarify:

1. The next coming of Christ is in the “Clouds”, and we will be caught up to Him.
2. The 2nd or the two “Coming of Christ”, will actually be to the Earth. This 2nd Coming happens at the end of the Tribulation Period (Rev 19-20)

Rapture vs. Second Coming:

<u>Rapture</u>	<u>Second Coming</u>
1. Taking up or Rapture of all believers	1. No taking up at all
2. Imminent or could happen any-moment	2. Jesus comes to the <i>earth (Mount of Olivet)</i>
3. No one knows the exact time	3. <i>We know the exact time 3 1/2 after the Abomination of Desolation (help the reader to understand)</i>
4. He comes in the <i>air, not to earth</i>	4. Every eye shall see Him
5. We are caught up in the clouds to Him	5. The Believers return with Christ to the earth
6. All “Believers” will receive our New Bodies	6. Jesus comes as Mighty Warrior and King
7. Only His own see Him, not the world	7. Concludes with the day of wrath, (which comes at the very end of the Tribulation)
8. We are taken up to heaven	8. All men are Judged on Judgement Day
9. He claims us (The Church) as His bride	9. Satan Judged to Hell and is bound
10. 7 Year marriage supper of the Lamb	10. Earth is ruled by Christ & righteousness established
11. Before the Tribulation begins	11. Millennial kingdom begins
12. Tribulation begins soon after	

I. 5 Key Aspects of the Rapture, we should know and consider

A. 1st It brings about our deliverance!

As we get closer to the type of Generation of Wickedness like that of Sodom and Gomorrah and like those of the Days of Noah, we will see the great wickedness of mankind. The world is in store for an enormous outpouring of God’s wrath on the whole earth, called the Great Tribulation.

The most obvious teaching about the rapture is that it is God’s rescue plan for the church from the tribulation that He will be sending upon the world.

Matt 24:21(NASB)

21 “**For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.**”

1 Thes 1:10(NASB)

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, **that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.**

Rev 3:10(NASB)

10'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, **I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world,** to test those who dwell on the earth.

1 Thes 5:9-11 (NASB)

9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, **we should live together with Him.** 11 **Therefore comfort each other** and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

We don't want to be around when God is pouring out His wrath, as He judges the world. And because of God's Great Mercy on us who believe, we won't have to be here for it.

- So that's the first aspect of the rapture.
- Jesus will remove us.
- He'll literally **snatch us (i.e. rapture)** up to remove us from the Great Tribulation that is on its way and the God is sending upon all the earth.

B. 2nd that we shall be with Christ Forever and ever!!

What a Great Day of joy that will be!!!

Song/Hymn: When we all get to Heaven!!

"When we all get to heave what a Day of Rejoicing that will be, when we all see Jesus we will sing and shout the victory".

Looking at John 14, once again:

John 14:2-3(NASB)

2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.**

We, the church are the bride of Christ. He has left His bride in the world temporarily so that He might sanctify her, but He promised to come back and get us.

- When Jesus promised His disciples to come again, "... **I will come again and receive you to Myself**" (John 14:3), He was specifically speaking of the rapture.
- Though He must now leave them, the time would come when He'd return for them and take them up to be with Him (i.e. The Bride of Christ, which is the church).

Looking at John 14, once again, Jesus says:

John 17:24

24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, **be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory** which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

- Jesus expresses the desire for us to be with Him.
- That desire has NOT yet been fulfilled.
- Right now, Jesus is in heaven seated at the right hand of the Father.
- We, His church, are still here on earth, but Jesus' prayer will, of course, be answered and His desire will be fulfilled.
- When we are raptured, Jesus' prayer will be answered and we will from then on be forever with Him!

Note: (Jesus will make sure that we are equally in His glory with Him).

Eph 5:27 (NASB)

27 that **He (Christ) might present to Himself the church in all her glory**, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

2 Cor 5:21

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, **that we might become** (i.e. our very nature changed) **the righteousness of God in Him**.

Rev 19:7-8

7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready**." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, **for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints**.

Or take a look in first Thessalonians where Paul gives a detailed explanation of the rapture.

1 Thes 4:16-17

16 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.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Caught up:

The Greek word (Harpazo) - means to seize, pluck, pull, take (by force).

In the Latin-Vulgate Bible the word (raptura; *rapturos*) – which we have English-ized it to sound out as, "Rapture".

When Jesus raptures us, regardless of where we are or what we are doing, we will literally be seized and forcibly taken up to meet Him in the air. This speaks or the grooms passion and desire for the bride He loves.

C. 3rd is the Transformation of our Bodies

So, we get to get out of this sin-stained body and get a brand new perfect body that's perfectly suitable for heaven!

It is a bodily resurrection just like Christ.

Rom 6:4

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, **that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

Rom 8:11

11 **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**

1 Cor 6:14 And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

Rev 1:5

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, **the firstborn from the dead**, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

1 Cor 15:37-38

37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain. 38 But **God gives it a body as He pleases**, and to each seed **its own body.**

1 Cor 15:42

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

1 Cor 15:43

43 It is sown in dishonor, **it is raised in glory.** It is sown in weakness, **it is raised in power.**

1 Cor 15:44

44 It is sown a natural body, **it is raised a spiritual body.** There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

1 Cor 15:48

48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the **heavenly Man**, so also are those **who are heavenly.**

1 Cor 15:50-53 (NASB)

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but **we will 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 will be changed.

53 For **this perishable must put on the imperishable**, and this **mortal must put on immortality**.

Phil 3:20-21

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, **the Lord Jesus Christ;**

21 **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

- These old bodies that are hobbled by sin will be discarded, never again to succumb to temptation.
- No longer will we find ourselves doing the things we don't want to do or not practicing what we want to do. (Rom 7)
- That will all become a faint memory when Jesus gives us a new glorious, sinless, perfect body when we meet Him in the air.

1 John 3:2 (NASB)

2 Beloved, **now we are children of God (John 1:12)**, and **it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him**, because we will see Him just as He is.

Did you notice what our new body is going to be like?

- It's going to be like His body.
- We're going to get a body like Jesus'!
- Wow, is that exciting or what?!

Knowing about what will happen when we meet the Lord in the air, we should really be looking forward with eagerness to the event, which brings us to our next point...

D. 4th is that Believers should be eagerly waiting for the Rapture!!

Personal Story: Just had a vacation with all the kids and grandkids, and the young grandkids had no since of time at this age. And every day for months they would ask, "is it this week?", and then would want to get on Facetime and talk about the upcoming vacation.

God's intentions was to create such a beautiful tension for us!!

Titus 2:13

13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

Heb 9:28

28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.**

One of the last things Paul ever said, before his death:

2 Tim 4:8

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

We all should have an excitement and joy concerning Jesus' coming back for us and our being united with Him forever.

John reminds us in the passage we just looked at:

1 John 3:2-3

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3 **And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

E. 5th answering this question, "Are YOU Rapture ready"?

- Let us be Prepared!
- Don't be ill-prepared!

Here are some verses that will hopefully help us to be prepared for this season of time before the Rapture of the Church and Lord's arrival:

1. It is a season or a generation that must endure:

James 5:7-8 (NASB)

7 **Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it,** until it gets the early and late rains.

8 **You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.**

Rev 2:25 (NASB) 'Nevertheless what you have, **hold fast until I come.**

2. Get our eyes on Jesus and be expecting His imminent return.

Matt 24:36-42

36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. 37 "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Jude 1:20-25

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction;

23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless

Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

25 To God our Savior,

Who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty,

Dominion and power,

Both now and forever. Amen.

3. **Be a Faithful servant to the end!**

Mark 13:32-37

34 It is like a man going to a far country, **who left his house and gave authority to his servants**, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

35 "Watch therefore, **for you do not know when the master of the house is coming**--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—

36 "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

37 "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

Matt 24:43-47

45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

47 "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

2 Tim 2:3-7

3 You therefore must endure hardship **as a good soldier** of Jesus Christ.

4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

5 And also if anyone competes **in athletics**, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The **hardworking farmer** must be first to partake of the crops.

7 Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

4. **Be faithful to be a part on a regular basis of the church:**

Christ Loves the Church (i.e. The Bride of Christ) and died for her. And He is excited about snatching His Bride away.

Eph 5:25b... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Heb 10:24-25

24 And let us **consider** (i.e. *provoke; irritate*) one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

5. **Time to "PRAY" like never before!**

Mark 13:32-33

32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

33 "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

1 Peter 4:7

7 But the end of all things is at hand; **therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.**

6. Abide in Him

Jesus says about abiding in Him that it's an essential requirement for us.

John 15:4-7

4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

- Not abiding we bear No Fruit
- Abide in Him we bear Much Fruit
- Abide in Him and we pray and God answers your prayers

To be rapture ready, we need to be abiding.

1 John 2:28 (NASB)

28 Now, little children, **abide in Him**, so that when He appears, **we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.**

7. As we abide, we pursue to live a "HOLY LIFE", worthy and expectable to God.**1 Peter 1:13-15**

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

2 Peter 1:10-11

10 Therefore, **brethren, be even more diligent** to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 **for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

Titus 2:11-13

11 For **the grace of God that brings salvation** has appeared to all men,

12 **teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,**

13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Conclusion

It says that if we've been abiding in Christ, we'll have confidence at His coming (1 John 2:28).

- How about you today?
- Are you abiding in Christ or will you be among those who shrink away from Him in shame at His coming?

I've compiled a list of some qualities and practices that characterize someone who is abiding in Christ, maybe this will help you?

1. You have a hunger for and devotion to God's Word.
2. You have hatred for sin and repent of all known sin.
3. Your life is being transformed, so that you are becoming more Christ-like.
4. You are eagerly looking forward to the Lord's return.
5. You demonstrate genuine humility by dying to yourself and putting others first.
6. You are devoted to glorifying God.
7. You separate yourself from the world.
8. You devote yourself to prayer.
9. You are obedient to God's will as He reveals it to you.
10. Your love for God is greater than your love for anything else.

This is a fairly general list, but I think it covers most of the basic aspects of abiding in Christ. We've seen this morning that Jesus is coming back to get all Christians and take them back with Him to heaven.

Today we have covered:

- The event is called the rapture.
- It will take place immediately before the Great Tribulation so that Christians will be delivered from the wrath of God that will be poured out on the world.
- It will be a joyful reunion with our Savior at which time we will receive new glorified bodies suitable for heaven.
- We should be eagerly waiting with anticipation for this glorious event.
- Lastly, and most importantly, we should currently be faithfully abiding in Christ so that we will have confidence when He appears and we will not shrink back from Him in shame.