

When Is the Rapture?

Overview: The events in the Old Testament are there as examples by which we can learn. God never changes; His Word shall never pass away. Therefore, the Book of Revelation (BOR) does not stand alone. Though it may seem to be very different, the BOR is consistent with and builds upon the previously declared Word of God. In short, the Rapture and the events of the BOR are just the logical and gradual unfolding of the foregone conclusions of Biblical themes and declarations of God, which have previously been recorded in the Scriptures from Genesis to the BOR.

Foundational Scripture: Matt 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

A. Scriptural Foundations.

1. Themes.

a) The three major themes of the Bible are: Love, Salvation and Power.

The Bible is a book of **three major** themes: Love, Salvation and Power. Because God loved us, He provided Salvation through the redemptive work of Jesus, Who accomplished this by defeating satan and returning the power (i.e., authority and dominion) over the earth to the children of God (saved mankind).

b) The four secondary themes.

With the redemptive work of Jesus, the clock has been reset and redeemed mankind can now focus on the original commissions given by God to Adam. These commissions must be completed because not one word of God shall pass away. The original Adamic Commissions consist of **four secondary themes** of the Bible. and they come to fulfillment in the Ending Days as described in the Book of Revelation.

These are: #1 Replenish the Earth; #2 Dominion over the Earth;

#3 Living in the Image and Likeness of God; #4 The Last Enemy.

Note: All four themes are studied in detail in the series on the Book of Revelation. Themes 3 and 4 are beyond the scope of this teaching. Themes 1 and 2 are well known and so are only briefly covered below.

Refer: BookofRevelationMadePlain.org (Hereinafter, referenced as BOR site).

c) Replenish the Earth.

Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

d) Dominion over the Earth.

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Gen 1:28 and man should subdue the earth: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

2. Declarations.

Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Joh 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Joh 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

3. Examples.

a) Moses.

Exo 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

2 Co 5:20a Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.

Moses as God's representative foreshadows the church as ambassadors of Heaven.

b) The Plagues of Moses on Egypt.

1) Three Plagues affected all the land and waters of Egypt.

2) Four Plagues affected only the Egyptians.

3) Two Plagues around the Hebrews but affected only the Egyptians,

4) The Tenth Plague was the death of the first born of all; but the Hebrews were protected by obedience to the directions for the Passover, which foreshadowed the Communion Table.

Note: These plagues foreshadowed the wrath of God in the BOR. Refer BOR Site.

c) Elijah.

1) 2 Ki 1:10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I [be] a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

2) Luk 9:54 ISV When his disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them, as Elijah did?"

3) Rev 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

B. Theories on the timing of the Rapture.

1. Common Theories.

a) All the common beliefs concerning when the Rapture will take place fall into 4 categories, which are all relative to the occurrence of the Great Tribulation. The three most well know are: Pre-Tribulation, Mid-Tribulation and Post-Tribulation. The Pre-Wrath belief sees the Rapture and the return of the Lord as **one event** sometime in the second half of the tribulation immediately followed by a "shortened" time of Great Tribulation. Some refer to this as the $\frac{3}{4}$ Tribulation. In another perspective, all predictions can be condensed into two major categories.

b) Two Major categories.

Escaping the Wrath (of God).

Most end-times believing Christians and eschatologists think that the church will be **removed from the Earth** at some point in order to spare the believers all, or at least a part, of the terrible times of the Great Tribulation. For many of these theorists, it is not clear which of these challenges are from God and, if so, when they start. Therefore, I have put the words "of God" in parentheses.

Living through the Tribulation.

A very small minority of Christians believe that the church will be present for the entire period of the Tribulation.

c) It is worth noting that the expression "The Great Tribulation" does not appear in the Bible (KJ). However the words, "great tribulation," do appear 3 times. The first time is in Matt 24:21 when Jesus prophesied of the coming worst time in history; and again in Rev 7:14 which identifies those who had died in the time of great tribulation. This

timing before the opening of the Seventh Seal is way too early in the chronology of the ending events to be useful to the Mid-tribulationists. Refer BOR site.

2. Foundational Thematic Problems with Escaping the Wrath.

a) Removing the church from the Earth.

These theories postulate that the church will be removed from Earth to Heaven while Satan is loosed on earth to wreak havoc during the Tribulation period.

Luke 3:38 states that Adam was a son of God and since God told him to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth, then the children of God cannot be removed from the Earth until after it has been replenished. After all, God never changes and His Word never fails nor passes away.

b) Accepting defeat by leaving the Earth.

Gen 1:28 God told man to subdue the Earth. Abandoning the Earth to the enemy for a season can in no way be perceived as subduing it.

Eph 2:6 Jesus defeated Satan and his minions, so Satan is below our feet, for we are seated in Heavenly places with Jesus (Eph 2:6) and God placed Jesus above "all principality, power, might and dominion" (Eph 1:21); so why do we want to leave?

c) Satan has already been defeated.

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Question: *Do you think that by leaving the Earth behind to Satan, we would be allowing hell to prevail for a season?*

d) The Hebrews did not leave Egypt during the plagues.

The Hebrew slave nation was delivered by the plagues, which is a foreshadowing of the tribulation period in the ending days. Note that the first four Trumpet Judgments are similar to the first 3 plagues of Moses, affecting primarily things on the Earth. The fifth and sixth Trumpets are similar to Moses' next four, intended for the ungodly. The Seventh is very special. Refer to the BOR site.

3. Scriptural problems with escaping the wrath.

a) Our Salvation Plan.

1) Our salvation included much more than being born again and destined for Heaven. Jesus purchased for us everything which we need for life and godliness.

2) Every promise of a blessing in the Bible belongs to us. However, every promise has a condition; if you meet the condition, you get the manifestation of the blessing. This was true even of the free gift of salvation.

3) We were saved by grace through faith. Grace is God's part. It is free but the faith is our part. Salvation belongs to every person on earth but most are going to hell. They need to receive the free gift of salvation.

4) Healing belongs to us but we need to learn how to receive it. This is also true for protection, all protection, even from the wrath to come. Most have not yet learned how to receive their healing; how much less do they understand how to allow God to protect them.

5) Similarly, the right to be raptured belongs to us but we need to meet the conditions. We need to partner with God by hearing and doing.

6) Joh 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed;

Joh 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

- b) We need to be accounted worthy.
Luk 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be **accounted worthy to escape all these things** that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.
- 1) The Promise.
1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are **alive [and] remain** unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
 - 2) The Conditions.
The dead in Christ will first rise but the goal is to be an overcomer, one who overcomes death by being caught up alive.
This is the true power of the Rapture. To accomplish this, you must be **alive**. To be alive requires learning how to partner with God so He can protect you. To accomplish this, as best as you can, you must **remain** true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not just to a part of it but to all that you currently know and understand. Most importantly, you must always be desiring to learn more about God so you can continue to take one step closer to Him. James 4:8
- c) The Perspective of Protection.
- 1) There are many web sites teaching that the Rapture cannot be Post-Tribulation because God has promised that His children would escape the wrath to come. They have many Scriptures which show God's promises of protection.
 - 2) God will protect His family but God cannot and will not go against His Word. In these Ending Days, God will keep His Word, just as He has always done everywhere in the Bible starting in Genesis.
 - 3) God's promise of protection has always been dependent on the actions of His people. In fact, that is probably the most recurring theme in the Bible. God will protect us when we allow Him to do so by following His instructions; otherwise God would have to break His Word.
 - 4) For example, we are told to "Watch and pray" four times, in Matt 26:41, Mark 13:33, Mark 14:38 and Luke 21:36. Do you think these are suggestions?
 - 5) 2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. v11 [Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved, **what manner [of persons] ought ye to be** in [all] holy conversation and godliness.
Note: Regardless of when these things occur, it is clear that our behavior and spiritual conditions have a bearing on how they affect us.
 - 6) **Summary**: God's protection has always been conditional.

C. Living through the Tribulation. (For more information, refer to Rapture Part 4)

1. Foundational Themes.

- a) Jesus defeated satan and turned the Earth back over to us.
2 Cor 5:20 We are ambassadors of Heaven on Earth. We are the standing army left to maintain the peace. The enemy has been defeated. (Col 2:15)
Matt 22:44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? (Mar 12:36)
In subduing the earth and establishing dominion over the enemy, we make him a footstool for Jesus.
- b) Gen 1:28 We must subdue the earth and everything that moves on it. Our primary goal is to have dominion over satan, the devils, the demons and the evil spirits.

- c) We, mankind, must stay on earth to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth. Rom 8:37 states that we are more than conquerors in all things. Why run from satan, the defeated enemy who is under our feet?
Luk 10:17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.
Note: This was even before Jesus defeated satan.
- d) Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
2. Scriptural Reasons.
- 1 Th 5:23 The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Note: If all believers are to be raptured, why pray to "be preserved blameless"?
Luk 18:8 When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?
Note: If every live believer is automatically raptured, where is the need for faith?
Luk 21:36 **Watch ye therefore, and pray always,** that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.
Joh 17:15 **I pray not that thou should take them out of the world,** but that thou should keep them from the evil.
*Note: I, for one, believe that God always answers the prayers of Jesus.
Here is Jesus praying for us to stay on earth but be protected from evil.*
Phi 2:12 My beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
Eph 4:30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
Note: Here is the seal of the believer referenced in Rev 7:3. Note that, although they are born again, there is still a day of redemption ahead. That is the Rapture.
1 Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: *The last 2 are fulfilled in our lives and bodies in these Ending Days as we partner with God.*
Rom 8:23 And not only [they], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, [to wit], the redemption of our body.
Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also **glorified.**
1 Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (i.e., die), but we shall all be changed.
Note: As we stay in faith, remain true to the Gospel, our change begins here on Earth, now in this life, allowing God, Who is the multiplier, to manifest His glory in our bodies at the time of the Rapture.
1 Co 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
3. Becoming Overcomers.
- a) Maturing into Adults in the Family of God.
The Rapture must be Post-Tribulation in order to give us the opportunity to mature into adulthood in the family of God and to grow into overcomers. Each of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation is admonished to be an overcomer.
Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
Gal 4:1 Now I say, [That] the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;
Gal 4:2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

- b) Milk to meat to strong meat of the Word.
Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.
Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
- c) Overcomers become adults.
Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
Rev 21:7 **He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.**

D. The Rapture Itself. (For more information, refer to Rapture Part 4)

1. Major Evidence.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for a Post-Tribulation Rapture is found in the actual wording of the Scriptures themselves.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

2. Meet the Lord.

a) U-Turn.

Two aspects of the popular theories on the Rapture have always bothered me; they just didn't sit right in my spirit. One is leaving the Earth to satan for a season, which we have already covered in some detail. The other is that we meet Jesus in the air and He makes a u-turn and goes back from whence He came. To me, Jesus is just not a u-turn type of person.

b) Welcoming Home the Victor.

1) The word "meet" is used 23 times in the New Testament. However, different Greek words have been translated into this one English word "meet." Here in 1 Th 4:17, the Greek word is *apantesis* (Strong's Concordance G529).

2) This word has the special meaning of going out to meet the person or party and bringing them back (into the city) with you. This was the Greek and Roman cultures' way for welcoming home conquering heroes. Today, we still do it to welcome home our athletic champions after an NBA Championship, World Series or a Super Bowl.

3) *Apantesis* is used only 4 times in the New Testament. In context, three are obvious in the meaning of greeting and bringing them back with you. The 4th is the Rapture. We greet the Lord and return to finish the purging of the earth with the Battle of Armageddon. **The Rapture and the Second Coming are one and the same event.**

c) *Apantesis* Scriptures.

Mat 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Mat 25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Act 28:14 and so we went toward Rome.

Act 28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Act 28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

3. Alive and Remaining true to the Gospel. (For more information, refer to Rapture Part 4) The Rapture or Catching Away is a promise of God. It belongs to all believers in Christ Jesus but, as previously discussed, all the promises have conditions. As we have seen, to be raptured, one must be alive and remain true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1 Jo 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, **when he shall appear, we shall be like him;** for we shall see him as he is.

- a) Partnering with God where He does most of the work.

1 Jo 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Eph 5:25 even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Gal 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, **are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**

Questions: Did you save yourself?
Did you re-create your born-again spirit man?
Did you pay for your sins?
Did you make yourself righteous? (2 Cor 5:21)
Are you going to rapture yourself?

Answer: No! No! No! No! No! It is by the Holy Spirit.
Your part is having Faith in the Word.

- b) Partnering with God where you do most of the work.

Jam 1:3 Knowing [this], that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Jam 1:4 But let patience have [her] perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Very Strong Suggestion: Stay alive and remain true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!!
Do not be a victim of the Great Apostasy!

For more information, please refer to RaptureMadePlain.org

Footnote: Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures are quoted from the King James Bible.

Prayers

Affirmation Prayers to help you get prepared for the Rapture.

In the Name of Jesus, God has made the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart pleasing to Him. Ps 19:14

In the Name of Jesus, I have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16

In the Name of Jesus, I reckon myself dead to sin. Rom 6:11

In the Name of Jesus, the Holy Spirit helps me to purify myself. 1 John 3:3

In the Name of Jesus, I shall be alive and remain until Jesus returns. 1 Th 4:17

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