

Revelation 4:1-2 Rapture

Today is super bowl Sunday!

A) An estimated 70K pp will be on hand to watch the Giants and the Patriots battle it out.

B) Imagine – mid way through the 3rd quarter – 10K pp suddenly disappear!

1) What would be the reaction? How long would it take for people to notice?

C) A person could be driving in a car – suddenly notice – the driver in front of them – Vanishes

1) Empty car rolling down the fwy – Scarry

D) **Class room full of 30 kids** – suddenly 5 vanish
Science Fiction

E) Pastor Rob watching the sci-fi channel – reruns of the twigh light zone? – No

No, I am describing a real event that the Bible predicts will happen in the latter days.

A) Days that I believe we are definitely in - An event that could happen at any moment

An event known as the **THE RAPTURE!**

B) Believers in Jesus are suddenly vanish from this earth and are taken to heaven to be with Jesus!

C) Does the Bible really speak of such a day?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Paul is describing an event when Jesus comes from Heaven – there is a shout! – Sound of a trumpet.

A) He **comes to the clouds** – those who are dead – believers who have already died are with Him

B) **They have risen already** – Then we who are alive and remain on the earth – are caught up to meet them in the clouds

1) Glorious reunion! – RAPTURE

C) Wait – wait wait – the scholar argues – that word rapture is not in the BIBLE.

Cc) You are right – you will not find the word Rapture in our English Bibles –

D) The phrase in verse 17, translated “caught up,” is the Greek word *harpazo*, which means to “**be snatched away or to be taken away.**”

E) When the New Testament was translated into Latin, translators used the word *raptus* for *harpazo*—from which we get our word “**rapture.**”

Jesus alluded to the Rapture in John 14:1-3

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. {I am going to heaven – to prepare a place for you}

3 And 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.

Receive = to take to one's self!

Paul also describes this event in 1 Corinthians 15

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Heaven requires a change in our bodies – How will it happen?

*51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, {Die} but we shall 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 incorruptible, and we **shall be changed**. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Paul is describing an event where the dead are raised incorruptible = new bodies - and those who are alive – changed – Metamorphosis

A) Same idea – Caterpillar becomes a butterfly

Aa) Corruption – these bodies – to incorruption – MORTAL – IMMORTALITY – change - heaven

B) Twinkling of an eye - now see me now you don't!

C) The Lord comes at an unexpected time - but we need to be ready!

1) And we believe that this event is the next event on the prophetic calendar –

D) We watch as Iran – pursues nuclear capability

1) Continued hostility toward Israel – their seeking of control of the Persian gulf

E) Many believe – the purpose is to get a battleship in place that could fire – Nuclear weapon into Israel

UPDATED AT 6:00PM EASTERN, FRIDAY: The genocidal plans of the Iranian regime were made crystal clear today.

“The Zionist regime is a cancerous tumor and it will be removed,” Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told a prayer service on Friday at Tehran University.

United States Secretary of Defense – Leon Panetta
“Israel will launch a pre-emptive strike before April.”

A) The economic Crisis in Europe/China/ Japan- and the USA are setting the stage for the events that are laid out for us in Revelation 6-19 the Tribulation
{JASON WED}

B) But before the Tribulation starts – this event known as the rapture will take place first.

C) And for the rest of our time today – I want to discuss why the Bible teaches that the rapture will happen before the tribulation.

D) Note: 6yrs ago – 4week study on the rapture
1) Answered many questions – order at book cart
Go online – CCV archives – 1 Thessalonians

E) Today I want to give you 4 reasons why the rapture will take place before the tribulation.

Reason #1 The Message in 1 Thess 4:18 - "Comfort one another with these words."

A) In this section where Paul is talking about the rapture – how we are going to be caught up to meet the Lord

B) He ends that thought w/ this Exhortation 18
Therefore comfort one another with these words.

C) See, this is a Key thing / This Teaching is to comfort us - not freak us out!

1) Comfort here means – Be encouraged by !

D) Now if rapture is at the end or middle of Trib - that is not very comforting!

Flee and hide – try to avoid Anti-Christ – tortured and try not to be Martyred

E) Not comfort – Bear up and prepare for the worst.

REASON #2 We are not appointed unto wrath!

1 Thess 5:1-11

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

The Day of the Lord – time period – 1000 yrs is as one day – one day – 1,000 yrs

The day of the Lord – starts at the rapture – concludes at the end of the 1,000 year reign – So it includes the 7 year period – known as the Trib.

That is the time period – Paul is referring to here.
3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden **destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. **And they shall not escape.****

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this **Day** should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 **Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.** 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

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** {ALIVE} **or sleep**, {DEAD} we should **live together with Him.**

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

So here In 1 Thes. 5 Paul continues discussing this theme of the Rapture of the Church – which He says comes as **a Thief in the night to an unbelieving World** – {Thieves don't send post cards}

A)The Rapture is followed by the tribulation – all under the banner of the **THE DAY OF THE LORD**

B)And on that thought Paul offers these words of Encouragement

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.

Now why hasn't He appointed us to wrath?

A) The wrath we deserve was paid for at **Calvary!**

B) It was poured out on Jesus, **absorbed by Jesus!**

1) If we go through any part of the Tribulation we are enduring part of the Wrath of God .

C)Escapism? Yes, but that is Biblical!

1)Paul – said in V. 3 They will not escape –

D)But Jesus talking about the same time period of the Trib, in Luke 21:34-36 - Said

And in v.36 - Jesus says “*Watch and pray that you will be counted worthy to escape and stand before the Son of Man.*”

Now if this wasn't an option Jesus would have said - watch and buy weapons, gold, store food, get ready to go through it!

A)But He doesn't - He says - pray counted worthy to escape!

B)Worthy to escape by living in a right relationship with Jesus

C)Get rid of our American / western mindset –not fair that we don't suffer

1)Most of the Church – suffers greatly and lives in great poverty.

Reason #3 The Flow of the book of Revelation

Turn to Rev Ch. 1 v.19

The book of Rev. is the only book w/ a Divine outline

A) Understanding this is a key to understanding the book of Rev. (Often confusing but never meant to be)

V.19 3 part outline 19 *"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.*

B) This is a key to Understanding the book of Rev. / -
SECTION 1 The things that you have SEEN –
VISION OF CH. 1

C) **SECTION 2** / The things that **ARE** / The letters to the Churches CH.2-3

1) Represents the whole Church age !!!!!

D) Ephesus – Early church – to Present day / Phil. & Laodicea

Section 3 Write the things that will take place After this – after what? –

A) After the Church age is completed /

B) **Think about this** : the Word Church is used 19 times in the first 3 Ch.'s of the book of Rev. /

C) From ch. 4 on never used again/ Why ?

1) Church is not seen again on the earth

D) Infact the next time that we see the Church is when the Lord coming Back Ch. 19

1) We are seen coming back with Him!

So the 3rd Phase of the Book starts with these words
After these things - what things – the Church age

4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

A) After the Church age is completed John sees a door standing open in Heaven – voice like a trumpet – says *Come up here and I will show the things that must take place after this*

B) Now what does this remind you of Voice like a Trumpet – **1Thes. 4 / 1 Cor. 15** – trumpet of God – Calling us up

This I believe is a wonderful picture of the Rapture – Trumpet sounding & John being called up to meet the Lord

A) And See the things that take place after the Church age – Church is not seen again **on the Earth** in Rev. – until after the trib at the 2nd coming

B) **Chapter 4-5 Church in heaven** –

1) Ch.6 The tribulation starts – **GOD'S WRATH**

Rev 6:1-2 First Seal: The Conqueror

6 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

A)The Tribulation opens with the coming of the Anti-Christ on the scene – not Jesus –

B)Counterfeit – Looks similar – white horse and all.

C)But this is what I want you to catch – this is all **ORIGINATING FROM HEAVEN –**

Important to Understand that the whole time of the Trib is a time when God is pouring out His wrath on a Christ rejecting World

A)Nothing is happen stance – It is all originating from the throne of God.

B)Starts with the opening of the first 6 Seals / 1st – AntiChrist comes on the Seen / Solve Problem of the Rapture /

C)Solve Problem in the Middle East – Arab / Israeli Conflict - He will make Peace w/ Israel

D)But He gains power by force – What follows is War Famine and death 1/4 of the earths population.

1)1.7 Billion pp that will die during that time.

And all of this is originating from Heaven – As part of the wrath of God / which is evidenced by the response after the 6th Seal V.15

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne/ God the Father - and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

I pointed that out because those who believe that the Rapture happens at the mid way point of the Trib

A)To refute the argument that in 1 Thess 5 that we are not appointed unto wrath – they Say:

B)The first 31/2 yrs is the wrath of the Lamb
The 2nd 31/2 yrs – THE GREAT TRIB –is the wrath of God.

C)My Bible doesn't make that distinction- this is all originating from the throne – He who sits Lamb

D)NOTE: The trib is split into two 31/2 yr periods
1)Distinction? – The first 31/2 yrs the Anti-christ is at peace with Israel – the 2nd 3/12 yrs – he is at War

S0 #3The flow of the book of Revelation

Reason #4 We are to be Looking for the Coming of Jesus Christ.

Titus 2: 11-13 “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.”

A) So here in Titus we are instructed on how we are to be looking for the coming of Jesus Christ

B) But those who embrace the mid & Post Trib. view points are not looking for Jesus appearing / but the appearing of AntiChrist { Has to come first

C) LISTEN: No where in Scripture are we -told to be looking for Anti- Christ !

1) Why? We are not going to be here!

Pastor Rob – Why are you making such a big deal of this? Does it really Matter ? – Yes

A) Our whole outlook on life – changes if we think that the Rapture isn't real -

B) Or that it happens at the midway pt or the end of the tribulation –

1) We are looking for Anti-Christ –

C) We are gearing up for tough time

D) We are hoping that we have more time – it is the thing we want to avoid –

E) We should be storing up food – guns –

1) Food banks to help unbelievers –

But the Bible doesn't instruct us in that way! – What does it tell us to be doing? Our Response?

2 Peter 1:10 - *Brethren, give diligence to make calling election sure.*

1 John 3:3 “Whoever has this hope in Him purifies himself even as he is pure.”

A) Grown tired of waiting – dropped guard – oil lamp

**Luke 19 Parable of a Master – who left with a promise to return – exhortation to his servants
Luke 19:13- “Do business until I come back!”**

Quit our jobs – charge of credit cards ?

A) No concept of the big Picture – the Kingdom

**B) Retreat Solomon – Blessed – 2nd half – lost focus
That which was meant to be the MEANS– Became the end – His Focus.**

C) His wealth and power were a means – serve Israel

Your Job / Position/ where live – not the end – it is the means to accomplish – the End

A) HIS KINGDOM – IMPACT!

B) Why we are still here – Not raptured

C) Don't grow weary in doing good!

Why does the Lord wait? 2 Peter 3:8-9

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Neighbors, friends -

C) Waiting for you – today is the day of Salvation

D) The Devil wants you to think other wise !

fictional story - meeting Satan held w/ demons where trying to figure out how to trick people into eternal damnation

A.) 1st demon: "There is no God" – no, Satan said - creation declares the reality of God.

B) People too smart to deny His existence

A few idiots might get sucked in but not the masses

B.) 2nd demon: "No Hell". No, said Satan - "People understand there needs to be retribution and judgment - people won't buy that

C.) 3rd demon: "Instead of saying no God or no hell - no hurry!

1) Satan responded that is it! no hurry! Spread the word

D) Sad but true many have lost their sense of urgency but the cry will soon come.

Love of many cold - Parable ten virgins

Make calling and election sure – Be pure

Communion: Not saved – Jesus bore the wrath so you would not have to – open heart

Not sure: Follow – Believe – Commit – confess Lord

Sure saved: Big picture – commit ourselves to DOING BUSINESS