

The Rapture IV
March 24, 2007

Do you believe in the Rapture? Why? Why not? Will it be like the “Left Behind” series of books/movies? How does the theory match with the Bible?

The last 3 weeks, we looked at:

1. the history of the belief and found it is a fairly recent teaching – gaining in popularity since the 1800’s.
2. the scriptural bases most believers use to support their belief and found none were conclusive. In fact, some don’t even really apply.
 - a. "Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, 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." ([1 Corinthians](#) 15:51–52)
 - b. "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever." ([1 Thessalonians](#) 4:15–17)
 - c. "He [Christ] will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be formed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself." ([Philippians](#) 3:21)
 - d. "In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." ([John](#) 14:2–3)
 - e. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." ([Luke](#) 17:30-35)

3. Four major views on the timing of the rapture

- a. **Pre-Tribulation**
- b. **Mid-Tribulation**
- c. **Prewrath rapture**
- d. **Post-Tribulation**

We then looked at a variety of scriptures that reference the related events. We studied the scriptures above in context instead of taking them as “proof texts”.

We have determined thus far:

- Heaven can mean the throne of God, or simply the clouds or sky.
 - It can also mean air, happiness, power or eternity.

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- Strong's 3772 "ouranos"
- Base word is 3735 "oros" which means hill or mountain
- There are 3 levels of "heaven" discussed in the Bible
 - 1 the clouds
 - 2 the universe of stars and planets
 - 3 God's throne – also called the 3rd heaven
- None of the texts, thus far at least, prove anything conclusively except:
 - At the 7th trumpet sound, an angel of God will separate the "wheat from the chaff" or the "goats from the sheep"
- 726 "harpazo" = catch up, pluck, pull, take (by force). It is used only 4 times in 3 scriptures:
 - **1 Thessalonians 4**
 - 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.
 - **2 Corinthians 12**
 - 1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:
 - 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven.
 - 3 And I know such a man--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows--
 - 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
 - **Acts 8**
 - 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.
 - 40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Revelation 8:

- 1 ¶ When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.
- 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

Revelation 10:

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- 1 ¶ I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.
- 2 He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land,
- 3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.
- 4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."
- 5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven
- 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,
- 7 but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

Revelation 11:

- 3 ¶ "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."
- 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.
- 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.
- 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.
- 7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.
- 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.
- 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and -a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.
- 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.
- 11 Now after the three-and -a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.
 - The two witnesses are resurrected from the dead
 - They were "asleep" 3 and ½ days – could be 3 ½ years

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- 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.
 - They ascended as spirit beings – resurrected yet visible
- 13 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 14

- 14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.
- 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."
- 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.
- 17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.
- 18 And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."
- 19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.
- 20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Revelation 20

- 1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
- 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;
- 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.
- 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
- 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.
- 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.
 - 386 – anastasis – a standing up again – raised to life again – from death

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- 1815 – exanastasis – a rising from the dead - only Philippians 3.11
- 1454 – egersis – a resurgence from death – only Matthew 27.53
- Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,
- Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."
- Ecclesiastes 3:20 All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.
- Everyone must die the 1st death
- 1 Corinthians 15:
 - 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, 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.
 - The key here is the word “sleep”
 - 2837 – koimao – to expire – to be dead
 - Paul is not saying that we won’t die
 - Paul is saying that there will be no passing of time between our death and resurrection – we will not all “sleep” or be in the grave awaiting resurrection
- 1 Thessalonians 4:
 - 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.
 - 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.
- The resurrection of those who have “slept” or been dead for some time will coincide with the change from flesh to spirit of those who will not “sleep” – whose death and resurrection will occur instantaneously
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- 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.
- 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.
 - This is the 2nd resurrection of those who died without knowing of Christ or without accepting Him
- 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
- 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21

- 1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.
- 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
 - **John 14**
 - 1 "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.
 - 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.
- 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.
- 4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."
- 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."
- 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.
- 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.
- 8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
- 9 ¶ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

Conclusion:

1. There is no "rapture" if you mean a taking up of flesh and blood human beings to heaven in a mystical disappearance.
2. There will be a gathering of some sort of resurrected spirit beings – those being changed in an instant and those resurrected from a long sleep in death – in the clouds with Christ – not in God's heaven.
3. It will happen at the last, 7th, trumpet sounding