

Living Word Fellowship Church

A Biblical Outline of the Rapture

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Part I

I. A Biblical Outline of the Events of the Rapture

There are several different views concerning when the rapture occurs (Partial Rapture, Pre-tribulational Rapture, Mid-tribulational Rapture, Post-tribulational Rapture); this paper aligns with the Pre-tribulational view. It is my belief that it more consistently supports the rapture taking place before the tribulation period begins.

Please note that the rapture and the second coming of Christ are two separate events. The rapture takes place at the end of the church age before the Tribulation Period begins. The second coming of Christ occurs at the end of the Tribulation Period.

A. The Certainty of His Return:

There is no doubt whether it is Christ speaking, the Apostle John, angels, the Apostle Paul, or other apostles, Christ's return is an expectation that must galvanize our attention each day (Mark 13:32-33,35; Matt. 24:36-44). We tend to focus on when we pass away, what is next, rather than the rapture. John says that the uncertainty of this event should cause us to live pure before God (1 John 3:1-3).

1. Scripture, several times, mentions support for Christ's return:

a) **Christ states** this in His great discourse in Matthew 24-25. In verse 30, He says, *"Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."* This is highlighted specifically in Matthew 25:27, 37, 39, 42, 44.

b) **John** states that when they were gathered in the upper room, Jesus promised the disciples that He would return (John 14:1-4).

c) **The angels** support this during Christ's ascension (Acts 1:11).

d) **Paul wrote** about the second coming; *"But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself"* (Phil. 3:20-21).

e) Paul provides several other passages that state Christ's return as eminent, such as 1 Cor. 1:7; 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-16; 5:23; 2 Thess. 1:7,10; 2:1,8; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1,8; Tit. 2:13.

f) Other passages Hebrews 9:28; James 5:7-8; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 2 Pet. 1:16; 3:4,12; 1 John 2:28.

2. Scriptural support that the time of His return is unknown:

a) Christ states the uncertainty of the time in several passages (Mark 13:32-33,35; Matt. 24:36-44).

b) Christ used several parables to explain that there is a waiting period. They are as follows:

§ The nobleman who went to a far country in Luke 19:11-27

§ The wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-12).

§ The story of the talents in Matthew 25:19-30

§ The parable about the servants in Matthew 24:45-51.

c) During this waiting period, the following events must occur:

§ The temple must be destroyed (Matthew 24:2)

§ The gospel must be preached to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

3. Old Testament Support for His return:

a) Several passages support the resurrection in the Old Testament, such as Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Ezekiel 37:12-14; Ps. 16:8-11; 17:15; 49:15; 73:24-25; Prov. 23:14; Job 19:25-27.

B. The Character of the Resurrection:

1. Christ and His role:

- a) Christ Himself returns to take us to heaven to be presented before the Father. Christ does not send anyone to redeem us (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16; Acts 1:11).
- b) He will come on the clouds with great power and great glory (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27).
- c) Angels accompany Him (1 Thess. 4:16).

2. Circumstances surrounding His coming:

- a) It is a time when everyone feels secure just like in the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37; 1 Thess. 5:3).
- b) Some people pay no attention to the sign of the times (Matt. 25:1-13; 2 Pet. 3:3-4).
- b) He comes suddenly like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2).

3. The transformation of believers:

- a) Before Christ returns the bodies of Old and New Testament believers stay in the grave, but our spirits go to heaven (Luke 16:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6).
- b) At Christ return our bodies are transformed into a glorified body (Rom. 8:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:20-24, 35-40; 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

§ These bodies resemble our earthly bodies (Luke 24:38-39; John 20:27).

§ We can eat but have no need to eat (Luke 24:28-31; John 21:9-15).

§ It can go through walls (John 21:26). They made a point to say that they were locked in, but Christ came into the room.

§ It does not reproduce (Matt. 22:30; Rev. 20)

4. The 144,000 – not a part of the rapture:

a) They are all Jews (Rev. 7:4).

b) They are saved during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9,14). They survive and enter the Millennium in their earthly bodies (Matt. 25:34; Zech. 14:11).

C. The Order of Rapture:

1. Christ is first resurrected into a glorified body no longer subject to death (Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:23).

2. The dead believers rise first. There are two sets of events:

a) Those who died in the Old Testament times (Dan. 12:2)

b) Those who died during the Church age (1 Thess. 4:16).

3. Believers who are alive at the time of Christ are raptured (not resurrected) and transformed into glorified bodies (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

4. Unbelievers are resurrected after the millennial to stand before Christ at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-14).