

The Rapture

It's the event in which all who have put their trust in Jesus Christ will be suddenly caught up from the earth and taken into Heaven by Him. It is set to occur at an unspecified time in the future.

The word "Rapture" is a translation of the Greek word "_____." It occurs fourteen times in the New Testament and it means "to carry off by force, to catch up, to snatch away." The word "Harpazo" is used in Acts 8:39 when the Holy Spirit snatched up Philip, transporting him physically from one location to another. Paul would use the word "Harpazo" when he would describe being caught up in to the third heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.

Many scholars and Pastors alike believe that the Rapture will be the next event in the end times to take place. Lets hope so!

Understanding the Rapture:

Paul would write the most concise and logical truth about this event in the book of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Lets look.

"I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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 shall rise first. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

Paul gives us 5 truths about the Rapture:

- 1) The Rapture is _____: Matthew 24 & 25 give us many signs that point to the SECOND COMING. Jesus would describe wars, rumors of wars, famine, pestilences, and earthquakes before He would return for the 2nd time. The Rapture doesn't come with signs. It can occur at any moment. Its called the DOCTRINE OF IMMINENCY. Imminent means "hanging over ones head, ready to befall or overtake." An imminent event is one that is always at hand. Other things may happen before the event, but nothing else must take place before it happens. Without any signs or warnings, Jesus will appear to rapture His Church. Paul would urge Titus in chapter 2, verse 13, "wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..."
- 2) The Rapture is _____: Paul would write in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, "Concerning times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." To claim knowledge of the exact time of the Lord's coming is to know what even the angels and Jesus do not know! Jesus himself would say' "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." (Matthew 24:36) The Bible doesn't give us specific information on the date of His return for this reason: awareness that He could return at any time encourages us to be ready at all times. Verse 44 of chapter 24 reads' "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

3) The Rapture is _____: 1 Corinthians 15:23, says, “Those who are Christ’s at His coming.” Paul is describing the rapture participants. He would conclude the passage on the rapture with encouragement directly to the Church: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul’s main passage on the rapture, he affirmed it selectively in triplicate. First he opens with referring to his readers as brethren. Second he identified them in verse 14 as those who “believe that Jesus died and rose again.” Third, in verse 16 he described the deceased family members of the church as dead “in Christ.”

4) The Rapture is _____: Paul identifies 5 aspects of the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4.

1) The _____: When Jesus descends from heaven he will begin by summoning to himself “those who are asleep”. (vs. 15) The word used here to describe that state is “KOIMAO”. One of its meanings is “to sleep in death”. The same word is used to describe Lazarus’ death, David’s death and Jesus Christ. It also where we get our word cemetery. The thought is that when Christians die, its as if we are slumbering in rest, ready to be awakened at the return of Jesus. They convey the concept that for the believer death is not final but temporary.

2) The _____: “The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.” (vs 16) Jesus will come in the physical and the personal. He will also bring with him all the souls of those who have died. “God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” (Vs 14)

- 3) The _____: Paul also spoke of those who are “alive and remain”. We will also be changed, transformed into glorified bodies. Paul would describe this in 1 Corinthians 15: 51-54,
“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”
- 4) The _____: God is going to hover over this universe, and all who have accepted Jesus as Savior, those who have been resurrected and those who have never died, are going to be snatched up like particles of iron drawn up by a magnet, pulled right out of the population, no time to get ready, no prelude, no preliminaries.
- 5) The _____: Verse 17 reads, “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 this we shall be with the Lord.” Notice the sequence: dead bodies reunited with their spirits, resurrected believers reunited with living believers, resurrected believers and raptured believers meet the Lord. And we are with Him forever! Uninterrupted and Eternal!

5) The Rapture is _____ (to believers!) 1 Thessalonians 5:18
“Therefore comfort one another with these words.” Our understanding of the Rapture should spur us on to 2 actions: 1) Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Word, Deed, Signs and Wonders! 2) Encourage one another with the news He’s coming back one day for His Bride! The Rapture isn’t a rescue mission! It a pickup for a wedding date!

Why the Delay? 2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”