

Chapter 12

"The Rapture"

So, what's on the horizon for the church or the bride of Christ? When we examined the Olivet Discourse, we talked about Jesus' Second Coming in two phases, (in the third question the disciples asked in [Matthew 24](#)) one unexpected and one calculable. We also talked about the coming of the Messiah at the end of the age to be visible and with power and great glory. But only after a seven year period known by several names including the Day of Wrath, Jacob's Trouble, and the Tribulation. We also talked about the earth and people going through such awful ecological, pandemic, and catastrophic calamities before Christ returns as a judge when we bookmarked the Jewish narrative.

Remember, according to Strong's #G1577 the term for the "church" is "ekklēsia." It is used 115 times in the New Testament. We looked at the historical Gentile eras with the seven churches listed in [Revelation 2 and 3](#). After [Revelation 3:22](#) the term "ekklēsia" is not mentioned again until [Revelation 22:16 \(NKJV\)](#) "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." The obvious questions are "why the gap?", "what happened to the church?", and "how did they get to heaven in the first place if they are to return with Christ?" In [Revelation 19:6-8 and 14](#) "6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." and "14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." [Revelation 21:9 \(NKJV\)](#) "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." The text clearly indicates it is the Bride of Christ, which we earlier established as the body of believers called the church that returns with Christ for the final battle between Christ the Conqueror vs. the Beast (Antichrist) and his earthly kings. If they are to return with Christ how or when did they get to heaven in the first place?

Bible scholars and theologians have coined the word Rapture for this event. Paul writes in [1 Thessalonians 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." According to Strong's #G726 the original Greek word for "caught up" is "harpazo," which is defined as a quick, sudden seizure or quick snatch. As an example of "harpazo," is to be forcibly pulling somebody out of the way of an oncoming bus. St. Jerome's Vulgate Latin translation of "harpazo" to the Latin was "rapio." The term rapio was later Anglicized to Rapture. The most common argument opposing against this concept is that the word Rapture is not in the Bible. True and neither is the word Trinity yet there is a general acceptance among believers that it refers to the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Christmas and Easter are not in the Bible either, but we celebrate these holidays yearly. The other passage Paul talks about the Rapture is [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#) "51 Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The question of timing is a point of discussion or contention among students of prophecy. There are three main schools of thought with some minor delineations in each of those: Pre-Tribulation, Mid-Tribulation, and Post-Tribulation. These are defined just as they are simply labeled Pre-trib is before the Tribulation, Mid-trib is in the middle and Post-trib is at the end. For our purpose, we will stay with the one this author thinks is the most logical, Pre-Tribulation, for the following reasons;

- In [Revelation 4:1 \(NKJV\)](#) "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." John is transported from

earth to heaven by voice command by God. The same voice that called creation into being. This can be seen as an example of what we can expect when He gives the command to His church to join Him. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#) “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: 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.” [Colossians 3:4](#) “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Not to mention that we just looked at the fact that the church is not mentioned between chapters of [Revelation 6-19](#).

- [Revelation 3:10-11 \(NKJV\)](#) “¹⁰ Because you (the church in Philadelphia) have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” This clearly gives those believers who remain faithful a measure of protection to keep us out of harm’s way when judgment comes.
- When we ended the section of the end of days with the Jews, we learned that one of the names of that time was the Day of Wrath. We noted that it will affect the Jews and the Gentile unbelievers. There are more than a few scripture passages that God promises He will provide a way for believers to avoid the Day of Wrath. As we have already confirmed, God keeps His promises. [1 Thessalonians 1:9-10](#) “⁹ For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; ¹⁰ And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” [Colossians 3:6-7](#) “⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: ⁷ In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.” [Romans 1:18-21](#) “¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹ because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: ²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” [Revelation 6:16-17](#) “¹⁶ And said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: ¹⁷ For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” [Romans 5:8-9](#) “⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” [John 3:36](#) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” [1 Thessalonians 5:9](#) “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The chart below shows the main differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming;

	Rapture		Second Coming
no warning	Matthew 24:36 (NKJV) “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.”	warning	Matthew 24:14 (NKJV) “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”
Christ comes only as far as the clouds.	1 Thessalonians 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.”	Christ's foot touches the earth and splits the Mount of Olives in two.	Zechariah 14:4 “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”
The rapture is ushered in at the last trumpet.	1 Corinthians 15:51-52 “ ⁵¹ Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”	The second coming is ushered in with the great trumpet of God.	Matthew 24:31 (NKJV) “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

When Jesus comes to collect his bride, it will be as a thief in the night.

[1 Thessalonians 5:1-2](#)
“¹ But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. ² For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

[Revelation 16:15](#)
(NKJV) “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

The rapture happens in the twinkling of an eye (faster than the speed of light reflecting in the eye)

[1 Corinthians 15:52a](#)
“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.”

When Jesus returns to earth the second time, He will return the same way He ascended. Visibly and physically.

The second coming will take time as it will need to travel across the globe

[Acts 1:9-11ase](#) “⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹ Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

[Matthew 24:27](#) (NKJV)
“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

[Revelation 1:7](#) “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”