

## To Rapture or not To Rapture

### Bible Study Notes

*"The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly.  
The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out.  
That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress,  
A day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess,  
A day of clouds and thick darkness..."*

**Zeph. 1:14-15**

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As Christians we are to live our lives as faithful followers of Christ; we are to live as He did when He walked this earth and by the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, develop a Christ-like character, making us suitable for the kingdom of Heaven. **1<sup>st</sup> John 1:6**. Our blessed hope as **Bible believing Christians** is to one day see the Lord coming in the clouds and be taken up to be with Him and to reign as priest with Him forever and ever. Amen.

**Rev. 22:3,5**

Knowing and believing this, we are to look out for the many signs which Jesus has given us in His Holy Word from **Genesis to Revelation** and to be found ready for that Great & Glorious Day; and not only to be found ready but also to help get others ready, by sharing the 'good news' with them as God 'takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked', **Eze. 33:11**.

Having said this, there are a lot of misconceptions in the Christian Church today regarding the Coming of our Lord & Saviour, Jesus Christ, on that Blessed Day. The majority believe that the Church will be taken away from this world before the tribulation comes, mentioned in **Matt.24, Luke 21, Mark 13, Dan.12, Rev. 13** and other verses, whereas a small minority believes that the Church will go through the period known as the 'great tribulation' or 'the time of Jacob's trouble' and then after this tribulation, Jesus shall appear for His true and faithful believers and will destroy the wicked by fire and brimstone, **Psalms 11:6**.

The purpose of this study is to use the Bible as our creed & our foundation and to see what the Bible and the Bible alone has to say on this issue. Jesus has one Church as the body with Him as the Head, **Eph.4:15**, therefore, there cannot be differing opinions on this topic, one has to be right, and one has to be wrong.

*"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."* **1<sup>st</sup> Corinth. 14:33**

All of God's people must be of the same belief and mind, for there is "one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith...one God and Father of all...." **Eph. 4:4-6**, therefore there must be one truth as Jesus is "the way, **the truth and the life.**" **John 14:6**

## What is the Rapture and is it in the Bible?

The word *'rapture'* in the modern Christian Church refers to the taking up of God's people upon the earth just before or shortly after the 'mark of the beast' crisis, **Rev. 13:11-18**, comes upon the earth. Many present-day Christians hold to this teaching so much so that it has even made its way into mainstream media, such as Hollywood, best-selling books, and so forth. However, if we take a careful study of the scriptures and compare the scriptures with the scriptures, we will notice that the rapture does in fact take place, however not in the sense of how it is taught today in modern theology.

Yes, God's people, that faithful remnant, will be taken up to be with Him, after we receive our new and glorious bodies, in the twinkling of an eye as the Apostle Paul tells us, however, there are certain events which must take place before this 'taking up' of God's people.

*"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* **1<sup>st</sup> Corinth. 15:51-52**

We as Christians cannot base our entire belief of a certain topic mentioned in the Bible on one scripture, we must compare scripture with scripture and study the Word for ourselves and then we will get a better understanding of what the Lord is saying in His Word. *'It is impossible for God to lie'*, **Heb.6:18**.

*"These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."* **1<sup>st</sup> Corinth. 2:13**

## Events Preceding the Coming of Jesus

The Bible is clear on the events preceding the Coming of Christ and also what actually takes place on that Day. Evidence is found in both the Old and the New Testaments and we will endeavour to go through a few of these scriptures to get a better understanding.

*"By the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall every word be established."* **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinth. 13:1**

Jesus has warned us that in these last days, deception will be widespread, therefore, we must know the truth and not believe Church tradition; tradition will get us nowhere, only the *'truth shall set us free.'*

*"Take care that you are not deceived..."* **Matt.24:4**

In warning His disciples of events which were to take place before His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, **Matt.24, Luke 21, Mark 13**, Jesus speaks about many wars and rumours of wars, He also speaks about widespread natural disasters throughout the earth. But after all of this, He goes on to tell them that they will be handed over to be persecuted by the governments, betrayed by loved ones & friends and even hated by all people, that is, those who refuse the love of Christ.

Jesus makes it clear that the time will come in the last days where those who profess the name of Christ shall endure persecution and hardships, so much so that if those days were not cut short in righteousness, none of his chosen would have survived. If there was to be any *'secret rapture'* of God's people being taken up to Heaven

before the time of tribulation, why would Jesus say that we would go the tribulation in the first place, remember, it is impossible for Him to lie as lying is sin and he is without sin, **Heb. 4:15**.

*"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake... But he who endures to the end shall be saved."* **Matt.24:9,13**

*"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."* **Matt.24:21-22**

*"For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations... Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."* **Luke 21:23,24,32,33**

*"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* **2<sup>nd</sup> Tim.3:12**

*"But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit."* **Mark 13:11**

*"You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake."* **Luke 21:16-17**

*"He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed"* **Rev.13:15**

*"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."* **Rev.17:14**

As we can clearly see, and these are just a few scripture examples, God's people will have to endure persecution & affliction during that time of trouble and tribulation.

The prophet Zechariah tells us that God will allow His people to go through the great tribulation that we may be tested and refined. God is going to purify His people by 'fire' that they may have a character that is suited to enter through the gates of Heaven and dwell in His presence. Not a single ounce of sin can survive in the presence of God and thus His people must go through the refiner's fire that we may be found spotless and blameless before that glorious Day comes.

*"And it shall come to pass in **all the land**," says the LORD, "that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" **Zech. 13:8-9***

## Other Events which take place during the Time of Trouble

As we have seen from comparing the Scriptures, God's people will go through the time of great tribulation. He will test us and refine us and all of the 'nominal, convenient, Christians' will be rooted out as they will not be able to stand during this time. They spent their entire Christian lives believing that they will be taken away, being deceived by the devil and putting tradition before the Word of God and thus when that time comes, are not going to be able to stand as they will not have the faith needed to go through affliction even unto death. We must get back to the Word of God as our sole doctrine and see what God has to say on these things.

Along with this tribulation, the wicked, all those who would have received the 'mark of the beast' spoken of in **Rev.13:11-18**, will begin to receive the wrath of God, that is, the seven last plagues.

If we take an example from the story of the Exodus when the Lord delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, we will see that out of the ten plagues that fell upon the entire land, the last seven did not touch the people of Israel, they only fell upon the wicked Egyptians. You can read the account in **Exodus chapters 7,8,9,10,11&12**.

In the same way, the seven last plagues shall not fall upon God's faithful remnant of believers during that time. These saints would have remained faithful to God even unto the point of losing their lives and as a result, when the Lord pours out His wrath upon the wicked, God will command His angels "to guard us in all our ways."

*"Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation." **Rev. 9-10***

*"Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete." **Rev.15:1***

**You can read about the 7 last plagues of the Egyptians and compare them with the 7 last plagues which befall the wicked in these last days. **Exodus chapters 7,8,9,10,11&12 & Rev. 16****

*"That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us." **Ecc1.1:9-10***

*"You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked. No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." **Psalms 91:5-8,10-11***

Remember that Noah was allowed to go through the flood when it came and destroyed all of the wicked in His day, however God protected him and his family. God also delivered the Israelites when they were in Egypt during

the time of the 7 last plagues of their time. God allowed Daniel to go through the lion's den, but God delivered and protected him. God allowed the three Hebrew boys to go through the fiery furnace, but He protected and delivered them out of it.

In the same way God will allow His people to go through this time of trouble and tribulation, it would be contrary to His character and the examples He has left us in His word for Him to just 'rapture' His Church away when tribulation comes; that is a teaching that has come into the Church by our adversary the devil, to cause confusion and division; it is totally unbiblical by all means.

*"...a house divided against a house falleth."* **Luke 11:17**

By God allowing this persecution and tribulation to come upon His people, the 'nominal Christians' and those 'who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof' **2<sup>nd</sup> Tim.3:5** will be sifted out and the true remnant will remain. Then and only then will we, the remnant, be fitted for the kingdom of God and suitable to be taken from this earth to be with the Lord forever more.

## **What happens after the time of Great Tribulation?**

Many scriptures tell us what take place on the Great Day of the Lord. We will now address a few below.

### **The Second Coming will be universally visible:**

*"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen."* **Rev.1:7**

*"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."* **Matt.24:27**

*"Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."* **Jude 1:14-15**

*"Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. A fire goes before Him and burns up His enemies round about. His lightnings light the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness and all the peoples see His glory."* **Psalms 97:2-6**

**See also: Matt 25:31, Matt 16:27, Mark 8:38, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 1:7 Rev 19:11-16 Rev.6:14-17**

### **The Second Coming will be universally heard:**

*"Our God shall come and shall not keep silent; A fire shall devour before Him and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth, that He may judge His people"* **Psalms 50:3-4**

*"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God"* **1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:16**



*"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."* **Matt.24:31**

**Jesus shall not touch the ground and the righteous are taken:**

*"And the dead in Christ will 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."* **1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:16-17**

**See also:** **1<sup>st</sup> Corinth 15:52-53, Rev 20:6**

**The wicked are destroyed:**

The Bible is clear on what occurs to those who rejected Christ, from Cain, to all those who rejected Noah's righteous preaching down to the wicked living in the last generation at Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

Those who were already dead but did not die in Christ shall not rise again until after the 1000 years (*this will be discussed in another study*), **Rev 20:5**. They shall not have a part of the first resurrection.

The wicked who were alive at the time of Christ's Coming shall be destroyed by His glory, they shall be thrown into the 'wine press of God's wrath', **Rev. 14:18-19**. They rejected the message of Christ and grieved the Holy Spirit; therefore, Christ will deny them before His Father. *"The Great Day of God's wrath has come and who shall be able to stand?"* **Rev. 6:17**.

*"Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations and His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. Also, their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses and the mountains shall be melted with their blood."*

**Isa. 34:1-3**

*"For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many."* **Isa.66:15-16**

*"Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion and a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him! Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?"* **Amos 5:18-20**

*"The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries."* **Psalms 110:5-6**

*"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"* says the LORD of hosts, *"That will leave them neither root nor branch."* **Malachi 4:1**

*"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:10**

See also: **Rev. 6:15-16, Jude 1:14-15, Zeph. 1:1-15, Jer. 25:29-36, Joel 2:1-11, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:8, Jer. 4:23-28**

### **Conclusion:**

The Bible is clear on the events pertaining to the Coming of the Lord as well as the events preceding it. Let us not be confused or led astray by the widespread deception that is in the world in these last days. Satan is seeking to lead many astray and confuse many so that they will not be found ready when the tribulation and persecution comes. Let us stand firm upon the Word of God regardless of what the mockers and scoffers will say. Let us use this time wisely as we see the Day of the Lord fast approaching. Let us standfast in Christ and build a character that will be able to stand as we will soon go through the refiner's fire. God is preparing a people who will be fit to inherit the Kingdom of God, He is calling us back to the basics, to get into His Word and to study it for ourselves as there is much deception in the world today. Jesus has said that His word shall not pass away therefore let us take heed to the warnings given in His Word that we may be ready to stand when that time comes.  
*"Take heed, lest you are deceived."*

***Thus says the LORD:  
"Stand in the ways and see,  
And ask for the old paths, where the good way is,  
And walk in it.  
Then you will find rest for your souls.***  
**Jer.6:16**