

THE RAPTURE

End Times Bible Study – Pt. 2

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I. THE THREE POSITIONS ON THE RAPTURE

*“**Watch out** that you are not **deceived**. For **many** will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. When you **hear** of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.’ Then he said to them: ‘**Nation** will **rise** against nation, and **kingdom** against kingdom. There will be great **earthquakes, famines** and **pestilences** in various places, and **fearful** events and great **signs** from heaven.” Luke 21:9-11¹*

*“For then there will be **great distress**, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive...”*

Matthew 24:21-22

Here in Luke 21 & Matthew 24, Jesus is talking about the _____ .

The **Tribulation** is a **seven-year** period that precedes the Second Coming of Christ (c/f Rev. 19:11-21) and will be a time of **God’s wrath** upon the **inhabitants** of the earth.

*“**Rapture**” = Latin word meaning, “**caught up**.”*

*“For the **Lord** himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the **dead in Christ** will **rise first**. After that, we who are **still alive** and are left will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to **meet** the **Lord** in the **air**. And so we will **be with** the Lord **forever**. Therefore encourage each other with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*

(See Figure 1 next page)

¹ All Scripture is quoted from the NIV84 unless otherwise noted.

The Rapture of the Church

Three Views

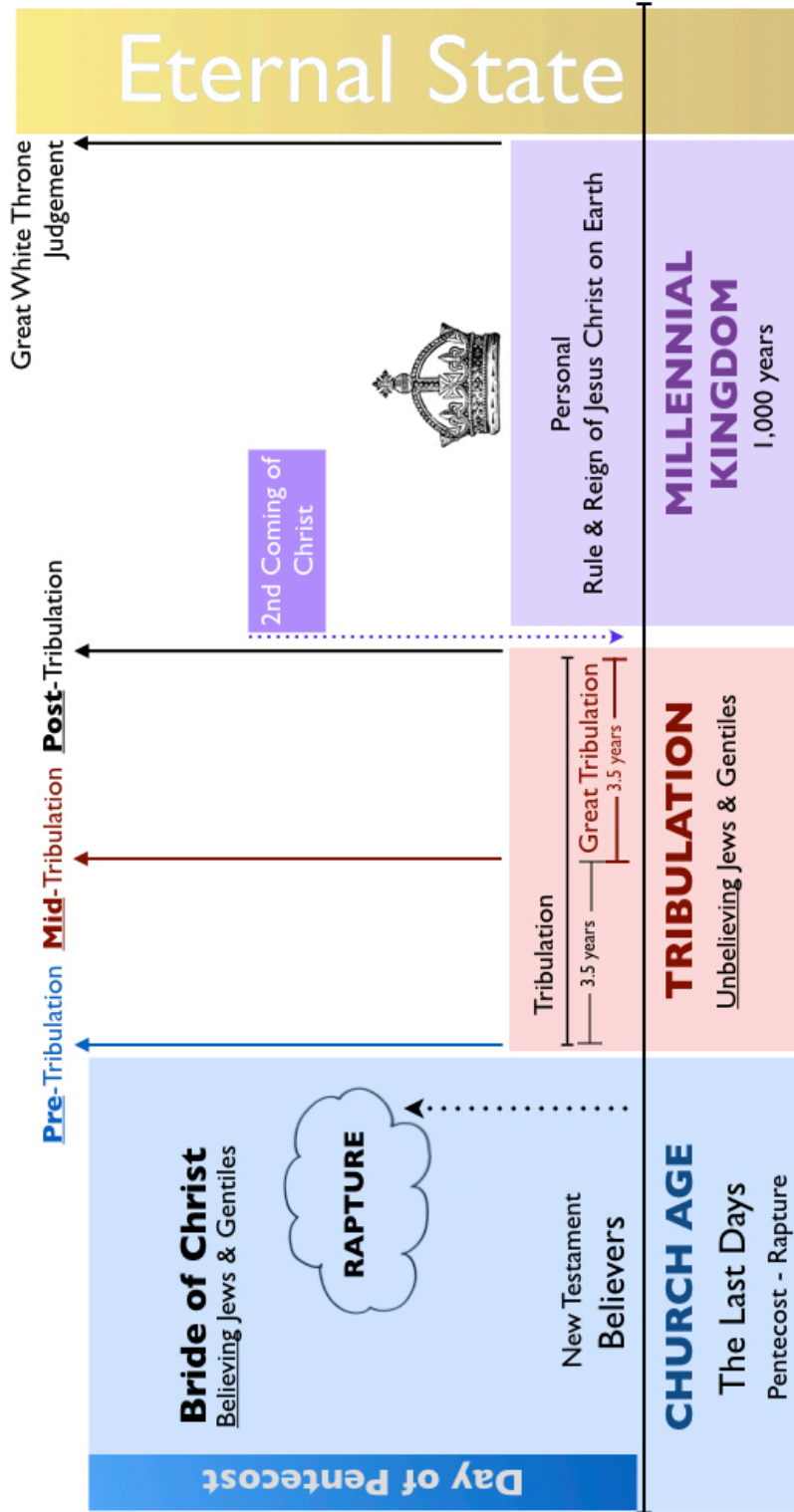


Figure 1

Where the rapture positions line up:

1. All **agree** that there will be a _____ 7-year Tribulation.
2. All **agree** that an _____ Rapture will take place.

Where there is **disagreement** is in the _____ !

Pre-Tribulation Position:

Mid-Tribulation Position:

Post-Tribulation Position:

II. MAINTAINING A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE RAPTURE

1. The Rapture should bring me _____ .

*"Therefore **encourage** each other with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*

2. The Rapture should bring me _____ .

*"...the **blessed hope**—the glorious **appearing** of our **great** God and Savior, Jesus Christ."*

Titus 2:13

3. The Rapture should _____ me for godly living.

*"Everyone who has this hope in him **purifies** himself, just as he is pure." 1 John 3:3*

*"...the writers of the New Testament always **discussed** the rapture in the context of **godly** living.*

*The **truth** of the rapture was to bring about **changes** in the way believers **thought** and **lived**.*

*The truth of the Lord's **return** was to help Christians **become** more **loving**, **diligent**, **generous**, and **righteous** and less **impacted** by sin and by Satan's world system.*

*In all our theological discussion and analysis of the rapture (as important as these things are), the end **result** ought to be a **movement** toward **greater godliness** in our personal lives."*

-Dr. Paul N. Benware: *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 236.

III. HOW DO I KNOW THAT THE RAPTURE IS GOING TO HAPPEN?

Answer: Because Jesus _____ He would return!

*“Do not let your **hearts** be **troubled**. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s **house** are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to **prepare** a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back** and **take** you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. **Thomas said** to him, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus **answered**, ‘I am the **way** and the **truth** and the **life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* John 14:1-6

*“Do not let your **hearts** be **troubled**.”*

Why were the disciples hearts troubled? (John 13:21)

1. The disciples were **troubled** because Jesus told them one of them would **betray** Him.

*“I tell you the **truth**, one of you is going to **betray** me.”* John 13:21

2. The disciples were **troubled** because Jesus told them that **Peter** was going to **disown** Him three times.

*“I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will **disown** me **three** times.”* John 13:38

3. But **mostly** they were **troubled** because Jesus told them He was **leaving** them (v. 33) and that they could **not follow**. (v. 36)

*“My children, I will be with you only a **little longer**.”* John 13:33

*“Where I am **going**, you **cannot follow** now. . .”* John 13:36

The Disciples (as well as the rest of the Jews) were **confused** about the **details** surrounding the **coming** Messiah because their **seemed** to be **conflicting** accounts.

The Suffering Messiah:

Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 & Zechariah 12

The Victorious Messiah:

Isaiah 63, Psalm 110 & Zechariah 14

*“Concerning this salvation, the **prophets**, who spoke of the grace that **was to come** to you, **searched intently** and with the greatest care, **trying** to find out the **time** and **circumstances** to which the Spirit of Christ in them was **pointing** when he **predicted** the **sufferings** of **Christ** and the **glories** that would follow.”* 1 Peter 1:10-11

IV. WHEN THE RAPTURE HAPPENS WHAT IS GOING TO TAKE PLACE?

"Brothers, we do not want you to be **ignorant** about those who fall **asleep**, or to **grieve** like the rest of men, who have **no hope**.

¹⁴ We **believe** that Jesus **died** and **rose** again and so we believe that God **will bring** with Jesus those who have fallen **asleep** in him.

¹⁵ According to the Lord's **own** word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly **not precede** those who have fallen **asleep**. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead **in Christ** will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still **alive** and are **left** will be **caught up** together with them in the **clouds** to meet the Lord in the **air**. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore **encourage** each other with these words."

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

UNPACKING 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

"Brothers, we do not want you to be **ignorant** about those who fall **asleep**, or to **grieve** like the rest of men, who have **no hope**." (13)

¹⁴ We **believe** that Jesus **died** and **rose** again and so we believe that God **will bring** with Jesus those who have fallen **asleep** in him.

The word here for "**asleep**" is the same Greek word that is used to describe spending the night at an Inn...

¹⁵ According to the Lord's **own** word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly **not precede** those who have fallen **asleep**. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead **in Christ** will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still **alive** and are **left** will be **caught up** together with them in the **clouds** to meet the Lord in the **air**. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore **encourage** each other with these words."

The importance of the phrase “in Christ.”

To be “*in Christ*” refers to every person who has trusted in Jesus as their Lord and Savior from the Day of Pentecost forward—every born-again Christian, at the moment of salvation every Christian is baptized by the Holy Spirit and placed “*in Christ*.”

*“For we were all **baptized** by one **Spirit** into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were **all** given the **one Spirit** to drink.”* 1 Corinthians 12:13

“And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” Rom. 8:9

As a **follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in me.**

*“And if the **Spirit** of him who **raised** Jesus from the dead is **living in you**, he who **raised** Christ from the dead will also give **life** to your mortal bodies through his **Spirit, who lives in you**.”*
Romans 8:11

*“Do you not know that your **body** is a **temple** of the **Holy Spirit**, who is **in you**, whom you have **received** from **God**?”* 1 Corinthians 6:19

The **BENEFITS of being “in Christ.”**

I am the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13).

I am the light of the world (Matt 5:14).

I am a child of God (Jn 1:12).

I am part of the true vine, a channel of Christ’s life (Jn 15:1,5).

I am Christ’s friend (Jn 15:15).

I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit (Jn 15:16).

I am a slave of righteousness (Rom 6:18).

I am enslaved to God (Rom 6:22).

I am a son of God; God is spiritually my Father (Rom 8: 14,15; Gal 3:26; 4:6).

I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him (Rom 8:17).

I am a temple— a dwelling place— of God. His Spirit and His life dwell in me (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19).

I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (1 Cor 6:17).

I am a member of Christ’s Body (1 Cor 12:27; Eph 5:30).

I am a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).

I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18,19).

I am a son of God and one in Christ (Gal 3:26,28).

I am an heir of God since I am a son of God (Gal 4:6,7).

I am a saint (1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2).

I am God’s workmanship—born anew in Christ to do His work (Eph 2:10).

I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God’s family (Eph 2:19).

I am a prisoner of Christ (Eph 3:1; 4:1).

I am righteous and holy (Eph 4:24).

I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now (Eph 2:6; Phil 3:20).

I am hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3).

I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Col 3:4).

I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Col 3:12; 1 Thes 1:4).

I am a son of light and not of darkness (1 Thes 5:5).

I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling (Heb 3:1).

I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life (Heb 3:14).

I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5).

I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Pet 2:9,10).

I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live (1 Pet 2:11).

I am an enemy of the devil (1 Pet 5:8).

I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns (1 Jn 3:1,2).

I am born of God, and the evil one—the devil—cannot touch me (1 Jn 5:18).

I am not the great "I am" (Ex 3: 14; Jn 8: 24,28,58), but by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Cor 15:10).

"Understanding your identity in Christ is **essential** for living the Christian life. People cannot consistently behave in ways that are **inconsistent** with the way they **perceive** themselves . . . If you see yourself as a child of God who is spiritually alive in Christ, you will begin to live accordingly. Next to a knowledge of God, a knowledge of who you are is by far the most important truth you can possess."

-Neil T. Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness*, 47.

RECAP

1. Every Christian who has died "*in Christ*" since Pentecost will be raised first.
2. Every Raptured Christian will be with the Lord forever.
3. Every Raptured Christian will be united with their loved ones who died "*in Christ*."
4. The Salvation of every Raptured Christian will finally be complete meaning that we will be fully infused with Christ-like character.

V. GUIDELINE FOR LIVING

Guideline #1: Remain _____ in God's Word!

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'" Jeremiah 29:11