

The Rapture

If you have read the previous issue on *The Resurrection*, then you have already had a bit of info on this topic as well, since they have many crossover details.

In fact, as mentioned in that issue, they are really the same thing, but happen to two different kinds of people: the living; and the dead.

You see, if you die before Jesus comes back (by a moment or more) then you will be **Resurrected** upon His Return. In other words, there will be a moment when He calls all of His deceased followers to where He is at that moment, which just happens to be in the atmosphere over Earth, while doling out His wrath with His angel armies.

Read Paul on this:

And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, NLT)

Then, and only then, while He is up in the sky over planet Earth, with His previously dead saints, will He call His faithful followers who are still clinging to physical life on the ground up to Himself, to join His royal procession across the sky.

That is what "**Rapture**" is (in this sense); being "caught up" into the air with Jesus and the just-resurrected saints (from Adam to whoever just died last).

Both of these events, together, constitute the glorification of the saints.

As mentioned in *The Resurrection*, **Glorification** is the act of Jesus making us like Himself; sinless, perfect, incorruptible, invincible, and all of that. It is what Paul calls the hope of our salvation. It doesn't matter which method is used for you—*Resurrection* or *Rapture*—either way, the result is *Glorification*.

Timing

I know that some people in the church make it their mission to get everyone on board with their pet thing. This is one of those things. It's really a bit annoying, to tell the truth. Especially when uninformed and pushy people get involved.

Anyway, the timing of the rapture seems to be a big hot-button topic in evangelical circles today, at least in America. If you haven't been subjected to some of the crazy ideas out there, then you might just be in the minority.

Here are the **5 main ideas** floating around out there as to **when** people think that the rapture will take place:

- Pretrib
- Midtrib
- Prewrath
- Posttrib
- Never

Incase you are unsure of these terms; "Pretrib" means that they think the rapture will occur before (pre) the Tribulation.

"Midtrib" means it happens when the Great Tribulation begins, midway through the 7-year trib.

"Prewrath" is sometime during the Great Tribulation, but before God's wrath.

"Never" means never; it won't happen at all. Never. It's a big lie; a conspiracy! "**Blah!**"

Posttrib is the biblical answer (if you ask me—and since I'm writing this, you did ask, or I did for you).

Read this passage of scripture and see if the rapture is anytime other than **after** the Tribulation (*according to Jesus*):

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." ~ Jesus

(Matthew 24:29-31, ESV)

This passage tells us that the **resurrection** (*gathering the elect from one end of heaven to the other*) and the **rapture** (*gathering His elect from the four winds, which is only ever on earth*) occur at the same time during the same event (His Return). And every other verse that describes these events agrees with this statement.

Pretrib Problems

For those who still want to get rescued just before the tribulation begins (and who doesn't, really?), I have some words of caution.

What the pretrib story is really trying to do is reverse the order of the glorification process discussed above. They want the rapture to happen prior to the resurrection and prior to the Lord's return. This is just

biblically errant. I can't sugarcoat it for you. The pretrib message is utterly false and unbiblical. I'll explain why.

In one of John's visions described in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, He sees untold millions of martyrs who have been murdered in the Tribulation for their faith in Jesus at the hands of antichrist. *We might be among that number.* (See Rev. 7:9-17)

To skirt the obvious contradiction of having live saints raptured before the dead saints are resurrected (according to 1 Thess. 4:15), proponents of this fallacy tell us all kinds of silliness in hopes of talking the problem away. Such ideas as "tribulation saints" (a special category of saint, I guess), "replacement theology" (that has the Church replace Israel), "dispensationalism" (which is chock-full of crazy ideas) and more have been thrown out into the arena of religious thought and some folks actually fall for it.

This is too bad, since the teaching on the timing of these things is so crystal clear.

Here is the absolutely clearest teaching that the Bible or any other source has regarding the rapture's timing:

We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.

(1 Thes. 4:15-17)

Incise you missed it, here it is again:
"First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves." That's the **RESURRECTION.**

"Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." That's the **RAPTURE.**

Where's the 7+year gap? It isn't only not there, it says **"together with them..."**. And the order is very clearly *dead first, then the living.* Saints die in the Tribulation (Rev. 7).

But this is only one of the many insurmountable hurdles that this failed idea must clear. And clearly, it can't. Please drop pretribulational teaching from the pulpit. It isn't right. Unfortunately, I don't have room here to answer all of the problems with pretrib thinking (scan QR→).

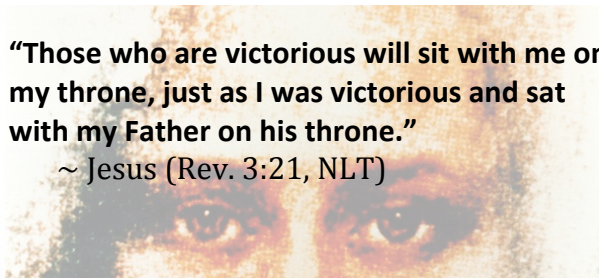
Be Hopeful

The rapture is really a beautiful event wherein the Savior comes to rescue His beloved from the clutches of evil. You may say it's too late, but I say it is when God determines and not a moment before (you could argue that He is tarrying for the sake of the lost, and I'd not argue back).

Expecting Jesus to rescue prematurely might have a harmful effect on the faith of the weaker brethren. Instead of spreading false hope of early rescue, we should just quote the Bible.

"Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne."

~ Jesus (Rev. 3:21, NLT)



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