



The Discipleship Project of Horizon Central

Level #1 Series #4 Study #6

Topic: The Rapture of the Church

1. Let's begin with a definition:
The Rapture (grabbing, snatching, catching up or away) is the event that ends the church age. Christ will come for His church and snatch them out of the world. Although the Rapture in no way exempts the church from persecution or trials (both are actually guaranteed), it does pave the way for the beginning of the seven-year period known as the Tribulation. The Tribulation is a time when God's wrath is poured out upon a Christ-rejecting world. It cannot begin until the Lamb opens the first seal, as in **Revelation 6:1**. This will be marked on earth by Israel entering into a seven-year covenant with the antichrist. See **Daniel 9:27**.
2. The Rapture, though certainly a biblical idea, is something that is ignored by many Christians while being overemphasized by others. What's more, discussions of the Rapture sometimes lead to disagreement, so it's easy to get confused. Is there anything you've heard about the Rapture that you thought was misleading or unclear? If so, what?
3. We'll now examine a few passages that can help us understand the Rapture of the church.

a. Matthew 24:36 – 25:13	d. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
b. John 14:1-3	e. 1 John 3:1-3
c. 1 Corinthians 15:50-54	f. Revelation 3:10
4. The Rapture clears the way for the "prince that is to come", also called the "man of sin" (**2 Thess. 3:3**) or "Antichrist" (**1 John 2:18**) and a seven-year period of Tribulation during which God deals primarily with Israel. See **Daniel 9:24-27**.
5. Belief in the Rapture prior to the seven-year Tribulation balances Rapture texts with those that relate to Christ's Second Coming to Earth. Here are a few of at least a dozen issues it clarifies:

<i>THE RAPTURE</i>	<i>CHRIST'S SECOND COMING TO REIGN ON EARTH</i>
<i>We know neither the day nor the hour. This event can happen at any moment. No unfulfilled prophecy stands between us today and the Rapture of the Church. (Mat 24:36-25:30; esp. 24:36,42,44; 25:13; James 5:7-9)</i>	<i>The time is clearly marked as after the seven years of Antichrist's rule. The number of days is even emphasized. Much prophecy regarding the period of Tribulation must be fulfilled before this can happen. (Dan 9:27, 12:11-12, Rev 12:6, Rev 6-19)</i>
Christ comes <i>for</i> His saints. (John 14:1-3, 1 Thess 4:16-17)	Christ comes <i>with</i> His saints. (Jude 14-15, Rev 19:11-14)
Christ takes us to His Father's house. (John 14:1-3)	Christ and the saints stay on earth to rule during the Millennium. (Rev 20:4-6)

6. Here are the five components of the Rapture as noted by Ryrie (*Basic Theology*, p.538). They are all found in **1 Thess. 4:16-18**:

1) The Return of Christ (v.16)	2) A Resurrection (v.16)	3) A Rapture (v.17)	4) A reunion (v.17)	5) A reassurance (v.18)
--------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------	---------------------	-------------------------
7. Now that we've read and talked about the Rapture at length, do you have any further questions on the subject? If we can't answer them right now, at least we can note them to talk about later.
8. Finally, we the church should all eagerly await the imminent coming of Christ for us:
John 14:1-3 Phil. 3:20-21 1 Thess. 4:17-18 James 5:7-9 1 John 3:1-3