

The Rapture!

1Thess. 4: [17] then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Is there a Rapture? No... at least not the one you see in movies and the headlines! Let's talk about it!

Intro Song: "Lead me On" by Josh Blakesley off his album "Waiting"

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Intro Prayer:

- For those still suffering in the southern states - may God have mercy on all who have lost their lives and strengthen those who are coping and rebuilding. May God provide for their many needs
- For those who do not know Jesus... may God give us the courage to share him with all the world!
- For our separated brothers and sisters in Christ, may God unite us in His Church!
- For the forgiveness of our sins... Dear God,,, mercy! Remember your covenant O Lord and have mercy!
- Hail Mary....

1 Thessalonians 4:

[13] But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

[14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

[15] For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.

[16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first;

[17] then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.

[18] Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- With Harold Camping, from "Family Radio", spreading the idea that the rapture will take place on May 21, 2011... I thought we should talk about this...

- Too bad for Camping the day has come and gone and he missed the mark.
- Does 1 Thess. 4 indicate there will be a rapture of believers?
 - What is the Rapture?
 - Where did it come from?
 - Is it scriptural?
 - What does the Catholic church teach?
- The idea of the "Rapture" is connected with the passage in Revelation 20 that speaks of Christ's 1000 year reign.
 - Referred as the Millinium
 - **Rev. 20 :1-3 & 7-8**
 - "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were ended. After that he must be loosed for a little while. . . . And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to

deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth."

- As a result there are basically three schools of thought about WHEN Christ comes to reign & bring about the judgment:
 - **Postmillennialism**
 - The Gospel is preached to the world
 - Most of the world will accept it
 - Peace will come about - a "Golden Age"
 - Christ will come
 - Second Coming
 - Resurrection of Dead
 - Judgment
 - The 1000 years is figurative - means a long time
 - **Amillennialism**
 - Christ is presently ruling in Heaven & through His Church on earth
 - No golden age to come - Good & Evil right up till the end.
 - Satan is bound from full attack so the Gospel can be preached and spread.
 - The 1000 years is symbolic - means a long time
 - **Premillennialism**
 - Peace will come about - a "Golden Age"

- Occurs AFTER the second coming
 - Christ reigns physically on earth NOT in heaven.
 - Judgment happens after literal 1000 year reign
 - **The Tribulation**
 - All believe there will be a period of persecution of believers prior to the end and final coming

- **The Rapture** as understood by modern fundamentalists & evangelicals - mostly Premillanialists
 - An invention of the late 1800's - nowhere found prior to this in Christian history
 - Universal believe in a basic Amillennialist view
 - John Nelson Darby came up with Dispensationalism and started to teach that the believers would be "Raptured" PRIOR to the tribulation.
 - This novelty was then propagated by CI Scofield who put it in the footnotes of his "Scofield Bible".

- **So... is it scriptural?**

- Let's look also at St. Luke's Gospel

Luke 17:

[20] Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

[21] nor will they say, `Lo, here it is!' or `There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

[22] And he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you will not see it.

[23] And they will say to you, `Lo, there!' or `Lo, here!' Do not go, do not follow them.

[24] For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of man be in his day.

[25] But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

[26] As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man.

[27] They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

[28] Likewise as it was in the days of Lot -- they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built,

[29] but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and sulphur rained from heaven and destroyed them all

--

[30] so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed.

[31] On that day, let him who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away; and likewise let him who is in the field not turn back.

[32] Remember Lot's wife.

[33] Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.

[34] I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.

[35] There will be two women grinding together; one will be taken and the other left."

[37] And they said to him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

- Does this teach the "Rapture"?
 - No... but why?
 - Back up and take a look at the context
 - When does the Kingdom come? Vs. 21 - its in the midst of you!
 - The Church!

- What is the analogy given to explain the "one will be taken and the other left"?
 - Vs. 26 - Noah and those saved in the ark
 - Question.... with Noah... who was taken and who was left?
 - The WICKED people were taken
 - The Righteous were LEFT BEHIND!
 - Question... do you want to be taken or left?
- Let's go back to the verse in 1 Thess. 4

1 Thessalonians 4:

[13] But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

[14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

[15] For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.

[16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first;

[17] then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.

[18] Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- Question... where is this passage do you see the believers who are caught up, what they call Raptured, being taken into Heaven with Jesus?
 - Where does it SAY they were taken into heaven... that Jesus turned around and went BACK to heaven with these believers?
- Rather... it says [17] then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds *to meet the Lord in the air*; and so we shall always be with the Lord.
 - Question... when a dignitary comes to visit... do we go OUT to MEET them at the airport?
 - Did you know that this was a common practice in the ancient world?
 - When the King came to visit... you would go OUTSIDE the city to MEET Him there and then escort Him INTO the city.
 - Do you recall Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem....
 - BTM 78 & BTM 79

- Jesus was the NEW wise King coming to Jerusalem
 - They went OUT to MEET him there and then escorted him in!
- So,,, the believers are more likely "caught" up to MEET the King who is COMING down! No where will you find a verse that says Jesus raptured believers and took them BACK to heaven (second coming) only to come again in final judgment (third coming).

▪ **Other Problems with Rapture**

- There is NOT more than the ONE - Second coming!
 - The perm Premillanialists rapture novelty is chalked full of multiple comings....
 - Some believe the rapture comes...
 - before the tribulations
 - during the tribulations
 - after the tribulation
 - broken up into many raptures at different times
 - This is not at all how scripture describes this period in human & salvation history
 - John 6:

[52] The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

[53] So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you;

[54] he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

- Did you catch it... the LAST day are the dead RAISED up!
- Look back at 1 Thess. 4 again vs. 16 -
"And the dead in Christ will rise first; "
 - **THEN [17]** then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.
- So... how many "comings" are there? 2 & no more!
 - 1 at his advent
 - The second at the day of Judgment
- What about believers having to SUFFER in the tribulation
 - **Matthew 24:**

[21] For then there will be great tribulation, such as has

not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

[22] And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

- The Parable of the wheat & the weeds in **Matthew 13:**

[37] He answered, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of man;

[38] the field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom; the weeds are the sons of the evil one,

[39] and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels.

[40] Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age.

[41] The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,

[42] and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

[43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear

- Does it sound at all like Jesus had in mind a

rapture of believers BEFORE the tribulations to come?

- Or rather, would believers HAVE to endure the suffering to the end?
 - Endure the wicked people until the harvest... Judgment?
- What Catholic's believe
 - Christ IS reigning NOW
 - As King on his throne in heaven
 - With HIS Church here below
 - Visible - Hierarchical Church with Peter as Chief Steward
 - There will be a tribulation that we WILL endure until the end.
 - Christ will return in a SECOND coming
 - The dead will be raised
 - We will meet him on his way in
 - The general Judgment of ALL will take place
 - The sheep to glory
 - The goats to punishment
- In Conclusion... what does Scripture say about WHEN this will all happen?
 - **Matthew 24:**

[29] "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;
[30] then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, 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;
[31] 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.

...

[36] *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.*

[37] As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man.

[38] For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,

[39] and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man.

[40] Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left.

[41] Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left.

...

[44] Therefore you also must be ready; *for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

[45] "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?

[46] Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing.

[47] Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.

[48] But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,'

[49] and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken,

[50] *the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know,*

[51] and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.