

# **CAN THE RAPTURE BE SUPPORTED BY THE BIBLE?**

**We're saved because Jesus came to this world and lived a perfect, sinless life and died to take away our sins.**

**The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, that Mary would bear a Son, and *"you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."* Matthew 1:21**

**The angel declared to the shepherds, *"...today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* Luke 2:11**

**The Apostle John says, *"And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins;..."* 1 John 3:5a**

**JESUS CAME TO THE WORLD THE  
FIRST TIME AS A SAVIOR!**

**JESUS PROMISED TO RETURN A  
SECOND TIME**

**In JOHN 14:1-3 He said, *"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."***

**The Bible refers to this event as the *"...the blessed hope..."* Titus 2:13a NASU**

**THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE CHURCH IS OUR BLESSED HOPE!**

- *Now, there's a lot of confusion over the manner the Lord will return.*
- This is primarily due to a misunderstanding of the nature of the Lord's return.

The confusion is understandable, think about it:

There are TWO KINDS OF PASSAGES referring to the return of the Lord.

**1). Those that refer to the event as:**

- Sudden
- Surprising
- Unexpected
- Instantaneous & selective
- Like the lightening from the east to the west.

**2). And those that refer the return of the Lord as:**

- Visible to all
- Glorious with angels
- Slow & majestic

These passages appear to be in contradiction.

*“How can The Lord come in glory, slowly and majestically and yet come instantaneously, selecting some and leaving others behind?”*

*The confusion is due to a failure to discern that:  
The Second Coming of Christ is an event that **OCCURS IN TWO PHASES:***

We aren't surprised by this concept because the Old Testament Scriptures present the Messiah's coming in TWO PHASES

1). His SUFFERING.

2). His GLORY.

- Not discerning these 2 phases of Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> coming created confusion & resulted in His being rejected many Jews.
- They didn't know how to integrate the passages of the Messiah's sufferings with many more passages that described His glorious kingdom.

*Many Christians are confused about the Second Coming of Jesus for similar reasons:*

**They fail to see that THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IS IN TWO PHASES, as well!**

The FIRST Phase is:

**1). the RAPTURE of the Church.**

- The purpose of this first phase of Jesus' return is to take His church to be with Him and fulfill the promise of John 14 and other passages.

The SECOND Phase is:

**2). The GLORIOUS APPEARING of Jesus Christ.**

- The purpose of this second phase is to judge the world & the anti-Christ and to set up His glorious Kingdom on the earth.

SO THE QUESTION IS:

**“CAN THE RAPTURE BE SUPPORTED BY THE BIBLE?”**

***Absolutely!!***

**THERE ARE FOUR MAJOR PASSAGES THAT SPEAK DIRECTLY ABOUT THIS EVENT.**

- 1). 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18
- 2). 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-53:
- 3). MATTHEW 24:36-42
- 4). REVELATION 3:7-12

*Let's look at the 1<sup>st</sup> major passage in:*

**1). 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18**

*“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will 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.” NASU*

Believers will be **‘caught up’** to meet the Lord in the air.

The English words: **“Caught up”** come from the Greek word *harpazo* which means:

- **“to sieze,”**
- **“to pluck,”**
- **“to pull,”**
- **“to catch away,”**
- **“to catch up,”**
- **“to take by force.”**
- **“to take for one’s self eagerly”**
- **“to rescue from the danger of destruction.”**

(Strong’s, Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers, from Wuest’s Word Studies).

**“It was used also of divine power transferring a person marvelously and swiftly from one place to another.”**

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**We refer to this event as: “THE RAPTURE.”**

- The word "rapture" doesn't appear in the English versions of the Bible.
- It comes from the Latin translation of the Bible which translates the Greek word *harpazo* “caught up, seized,” to its Latin counterpart, “*rapere*.”
- It’s been transliterated in English as “rapture,” which expresses the Biblical concept of the church being quickly “caught up” to be with the Lord.

## THE CONCEPT OF 'RAPTURE' IS BIBLICAL, and IT'S NOTHING NEW!

- The Bible clearly teaches that there have been individuals who've already been "Raptured" or "Caught up" by the Lord.

### SIX PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE HAVE EXPERIENCED A RAPTURE!

*The first man to experience being "caught up" was:*

#### 1). ENOCH.

- When ENOCH was 365 years old he was taken from this world without seeing death.
  - In Genesis 5:24 we read: *"Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took Him."*
- Commenting on this Hebrews 11:5 says:

*"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God."*

*The second man to experience being "caught up" was:*

#### 2). ELIJAH.

- The Bible records his experience in 2 Kings 2:11:

*"Then it came about as they [Elijah and Elisha] were going along and talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And*

LXX – *Metatithemi*  
"To translate out of,"  
to remove out of."

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*Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven."*

**LXX - aneleithai**  
From: *analambano*  
"I take, I receive."

The third man to be raptured was:

**3). THE PROPHET EZEKIEL .**

300 years after Elijah's rapture, EZEKIEL RECORDS HIS OWN:

Ezekiel 43:5 - "*And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.*" NASU

**LXX - aneleithai**  
From: *analambano*  
"I take, I receive."

Another man who was supernaturally transported by God was:

**4). PHILLIP THE DEACON.**

■ This is recorded in Acts 8:39-40:

*"And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord ...suddenly took..."* NIV  
*"...caught Phillip away..."* KJV  
*"...suddenly took Phillip away."* GWT

**Greek word:**  
*'harpazo'*

*"and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus;..."*

Another Person who was 'raptured,' or 'caught up' into heaven was:

**5). The APOSTLE PAUL.**

■ His experience is recorded in 2 Corinthians 12 NLT:

In verse 2 Paul says: "*I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my*

Greek word:  
'harpazo'

*body, I don't know—only God knows. 3 Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know 4 that I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell."*

*And you know what?*

**6). JESUS was raptured after His resurrection:**

- 1). **ENOCH** was TAKEN UP.
- 2). **ELIJAH** was CAUGHT UP.
- 3). **EZEKIEL** was CARRIED BY THE SPIRIT
- 4). **PAUL** was CAUGHT UP to the third heaven.
- 5). **PHILLIP** was transported
- 6). **JESUS** was "caught up" or "raptured" into heaven at his ascension.2).

*"And after He had said these things, He was lifted up [epairo] while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Acts 1:9 NASU*

- ◆ REVELATION 12:5 says that a woman, who represents the nation of Israel, *"...gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up [harpazo] to God and to His throne."* NASU

**The TRUTH of BELIEVERS BEING "RAPTURED" OR "CAUGHT AWAY" is nothing new in Scripture.**

- Someday we will be *"caught up together... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,...."*

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> major passage about the Rapture is found in:*  
**2). 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-53:**

*"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the*

"We will be changed"

Greek: *allasso* -  
"to make different, to  
undergo  
transformation."

*imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."* NASU

■ This change will happen *instantaneously*:  
*"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,..."*

- The Greek word translated "moment" is *en atomo* and refers to "an indivisible fragment of time." (Constable's Notes).
- It's a time period so small it can't be divided! (*The Rapture will occur so fast that no one will see it happen.* George Sweeting, Moody/May 1985, p. 2, *The Catching Away of the Church*).

*JESUS teaches about the rapture in a 3<sup>rd</sup> important passage:*  
**3). MATTHEW 24:36-42:**

**NLT: "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. 37 When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. 38 In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. 39 People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. 40 Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be**

“taken” =  
*Paralambano*  
“to take”  
“to receive”  
“to take with”

*taken, the other left. 42 So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your Lord is coming.” NLT*

- Jesus teaches that His return could happen at any moment, so we refer to the Rapture as being **IMMINENT!**
- There are 1,845 references in the Bible to the Lord's Return and no fewer than 90 New Testament verses signifying that Christ's Coming again could occur at any time.

*The fourth passage that gives us details about the Rapture in found in:*

## **4). REVELATION 3: 7-12**

Here, Jesus gives a very special promise to the Church of Philadelphia!

Look at REVELATION 3:7-12:

*“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: 8 I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie — I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.*”

**Now, look carefully at verse 10:**

***10 Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.***

***11 I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown'."***

**Some say, "There's no verse in the book of Revelation that says the Church won't go through the Tribulation."**

- This last-day, faithful church is promised that ***SHE WILL NOT GO INTO THE GREAT TRIBULATION!***

**In addition to this clear statement, there's massive evidence in the book of Revelation indicating that the Church escapes the Tribulation!**

**For Example:**

- The Greek word "church" or "churches" is used about 90 times in the New Testament, excluding the book of Revelation.
- In the book of Revelation it's used 19 times in chapters 1 to 3 and not again until chapter 22:16

**THIS IS VERY SIGNIFICANT, --think about it:**

- **CHAPTERS 1-3** speak directly to and of the Church.
- **CHAPTERS 19-22** speak of the Church coming back with Christ and of her activities in the new earth.
- **But the 15 chapters in-between, chapters 4-18**, which introduce us to, and deal entirely with, the Great Tribulation, don't mention the Church once!
- It's very significant that the word "church" is entirely absent from the chapters discussing the Great Tribulation! This is a very significant omission!

**Let's look at the key ideas of verse 10:**

### **WHAT IS "THE HOUR OF TESTING?"**

- Well, what's a test? *A test is something that forces a person to make a decision and to act on that decision.*

*'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.'*

- This passage is telling us that the Church, the last days faithful Church, will be kept from the hour of testing that is to come upon the whole world!

## WHO'S THIS TEST FOR?

Revelation 3:10b says it's for *"...those who dwell upon the earth."*

- It's significant that the word for "dwell" is not the ordinary word, "oikeo", but a different word, "katoikeo", which means:
  - *"those who have settled down upon the earth"*,
  - *"those who identify with the earth"*
  - *"earth dwellers"*.
- The test is directed towards those who are not saved on the earth, and are thereby not a part of the Church.

### REVELATION GIVES US THE IDENTITY OF THESE "EARTH DWELLERS":

- They're those who've slain the martyrs (6:10).
- They are those who are happy when the Two Witnesses are killed (11:10)
- They're those who worship the beast (13:18).
- They're those who are deceived by the false prophet (13:14).
- They're those who are warned by the angel to turn to God because the hour of His judgment has come (14:6-7).
- They're those who worship the beast and their names are not written in the book of life (17:8).

The faithful end-time Church is promised to be "**KEPT FROM**" the hour of trial or the Great Tribulation that is coming upon the earth.

- The words translated "**kept from**" are the Greek words: "**TEREO EK**" which mean: *"Kept out"*, or *"Kept out of."*
- If Jesus had meant the Church would be protected "within or through" the trial, He would've used different words.

### HE WOULD HAVE USED THE WORDS:

- ❖ *Tereo En* which means "**Kept in**" (as in Acts 12:5; 25:4; I Peter 1:4; Jude 21)
- ❖ *Tereo Eis* which means "**kept into**",

❖ *Tereo Dia*, which means “Kept through”

But the words the Lord chose to use are CLEAR & SPECIFIC! “Tereo ek.”

4 Major NT Passages that Promise we'll not go into the Great Trib.

- ◆ I Thess. 1:9-10
- ◆ I Thess. 5:1-9
- ◆ 2 Thess. 2:1-8
- ◆ Rev. 3:10

In the NT “EK” is rendered “Out” hundreds of times!

- “**Out** of Egypt I have called My Son” Matthew 2:15
- “First cast **out** the beam **out** of your own eye” Matthew 7:5
- “For **out** of the heart proceed evil thoughts” Matt. 15:19
- “And [many bodies of the saints] came **out** of the graves after His resurrection” Matt. 27:53
- “I will spit you **out** of My mouth” – Rev. 3:16

**“TEREO EK” means “Kept out of”!**

*This means the Church will not be IN, INTO or THROUGH the Great Tribulation at all!*

- BUT, IF THIS PASSAGE IN REVELATION 3:10 only means that the Church will be kept safe throughout the tribulation as some have taught, then you have a major problem on your hands!
  - The problem is the record states that Believers during that time are obviously NOT kept safely through the Great Tribulation.

- **Massive numbers of them are being martyred!** Revelation 6:9-11; 11:7; 12:30,17; 13:7,10,15; 14:13; 17:6; 18:24).

The passage says the church will be kept **“FROM”** the hour, not *“Kept safely through it!”*

- It says that the Church will be kept **“FROM”** **the very HOUR of trial**. The Church will be kept from the actual TIME of the Great Tribulation!

**The book of Revelation defines the Great Tribulation as THE WRATH OF GOD poured out on mankind.**

**REVELATION 15:1 – “*And I saw another seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.”***

**THE CHURCH IS GUARANTEED IMMUNITY FROM THE WRATH OF GOD...**

- There's no judgment left for those of us who have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior! Jesus said:

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”*

**THOUGH WE KNOW WE WILL NOT EXPERIENCE THE GREAT TRIBULATION, --the time of the outpouring of God's wrath upon this wicked world, WE MAY EXPERIENCE THE WORLD'S WRATH!**

***Belief in a Pre-tribulation Rapture doesn't mean we believe in a pre-persecution rapture!***

**NOWHERE ARE WE GUARANTEED IMMUNITY FROM THE WRATH OF THE WORLD.**

**IN ACTS 14:22b the Apostle Paul says:**

***"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."***

**WE MAY SUFFER THE WRATH OF THE WORLD.**

**In JOHN 16:33 Jesus said: *"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."***

**But the wrath of the world is different than the wrath of GOD!**

**JOHN 15:18-20**

***"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;..."***

- **THE CHURCH HAS ALWAYS HAD TO FACE PERSECUTION.** In fact, it is actually rare for it not to! The Church was birthed in persecution:
- **IN THIS WORLD WE'RE GOING TO EXPERIENCE TROUBLE!** 2 TIMOTHY 3:12 says: ***"All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"***.

***Jesus Christ is going to return  
for His church and remove them  
instantly from the earth!***