

Lesson 1. The Rapture of the Church

Acts 1:7-11 • 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 • 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 • Revelation 22:20-21

1. Some ridicule the rapture

▼ The rapture has been insulted by scoffing sinners

2 Peter 3:3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

▼ The rapture has been ignored by secular saints

Matthew 24:12 "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."

▼ The rapture is indisputably important in the Scriptures

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

2. Scripture reaffirms the rapture

▼ Jesus will come and call for us

Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

1 Thessalonians 4:16 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.

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Matthew 24:42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

1 Corinthians 15:51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

▼ Jesus will collect us and carry us up and out of here

▲ Abandoned Christian bodies will rise

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 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.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

▲ Active Christian believers will rise

1 Thessalonians 4:17 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.

▼ Jesus will convert and conform us

1 Corinthians 15:51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

▼ Jesus will critique and commend us

2 Corinthians 5:9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

▼ Jesus will comfort and cure us

▲ Home

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 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. 3 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."

▲ Hallelujah

Revelation 19:6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) 9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

▲ Healing

Revelation 7:15 Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

▲ Harbor

1 Thessalonians 1:9 They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead— Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

3. Stay ready for the rapture

▼ Be saved and sanctified

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

▼ Be shining and sharing

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

Acts 1:7-11

7 Jesus said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

1 Corinthians 15:51-55

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

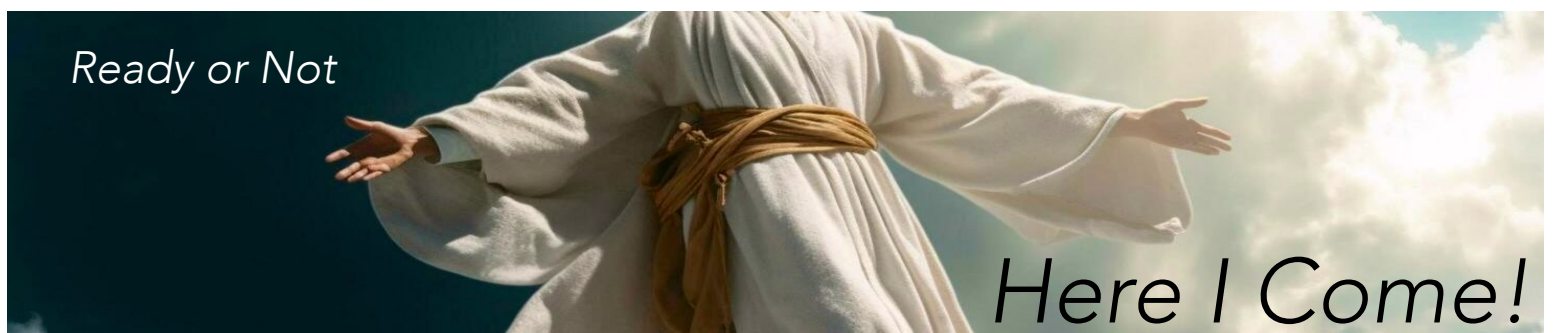
13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell 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. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Those who would say "the rapture is not mentioned in the Bible" are simply ignorant of the history of the use of the term and its presence in the Latin Vulgate, completed by Jerome in 405 A.D. The word **rapture** is derived from the verb **rapio** (**raptus, rapturus**), which is found in the Latin translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, specifically appearing as the word **rapiemur**, (future passive tense of **rapio**). The word means "we shall be snatched" or "we shall be carried off." We call this event **the rapture of the church** due to tradition, but we could just as easily and appropriately call it **the snatching up of the church**. The traditional name of the event is unimportant; what is important is the biblical reality of the event.

13 nolumus autem vos ignorare fratres de dormientibus ut non contristemini sicut et ceteri qui spem non habent 14 si enim credimus quod Iesus mortuus est et resurrexit ita et Deus eos qui dormierunt per Iesum adducet cum eo 15 hoc enim vobis dicimus in verbo Domini quia nos qui vivimus qui residui sumus in adventum Domini non praeveniemus eos qui dormierunt 16 quoniam ipse Dominus in iussu et in voce archangeli et in tuba Dei descendet de caelo et mortui qui in Christo sunt resurgent primi 17 deinde nos qui vivimus qui relinquimur simul **rapiemur** cum illis in nubibus obviam Domino in aera et sic semper cum Domino erimus 18 itaque consolamini invicem in verbis istis

Revelation 22:20-21

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.



Lesson 1. **The Rapture of the Church**

Lesson 2. **The Great Tribulation**

Lesson 3. **Christ's Kingdom Come to Earth**

Lesson 4. **The Great White Throne**

Lesson 5. **Heaven on Earth**