

THE BOOK OF REVELATION - RAPTURE

Rapture is a word that we pick up from Latin translations and authors. It is basically the phrase “Catch Away”. The event is what we are concerned with in this study not necessarily what it is called. In the Old Testament and ancient extra biblical text it is referred to as “The Hope” or “The Mercy” and other phrases.

In the book of Enoch, Enoch referred to two groups of believers in the last days. One group is called the Righteous ones. Those are the Gentile believers gathered by Messiah. (Christians) and the other are the Elect Ones (Believing remnant of Israel).

The **early church fathers**, the disciples of the Apostles, taught that the “Catching away” would be for the Christians and would happen before the 7 years of Tribulation.

- Victorinus (Disciple around 240 AD wrote, that the raptured church is pulled from the midst of the earth after the restraining power is removed and the tribulation begins. (*Commentary on the Apocalypse 15.1*).
- “The sky be split apart like a scroll is the church being taken away”. (*Victorinus Commentary on Revelation 6:14*)
- Irenaeus 170 AD (A disciple of Polycarp a disciple of John) – When in the end the church will suddenly be caught up from this, it is said, “ There will be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, nor will be.” (*Against Heresies 5:29*)
- Tertullian 207 AD (a disciple before Cyprian) – He (Paul) says those who remain unto the coming of Christ, along with the dead in Christ, will rise being “**caught Up** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” He also mentions Isiaiah...”who are these that fly like clouds unto me as doves with their young ones?”

These are just a few examples of early church fathers’ comments on the Rapture. By the 4th century Gnosticism began to modify this and other doctrines. When you read that the Rapture or Pre-Tribulation Rapture only began in the 1800’s that is not true. It was the original teaching of the Apostles and then their disciples. Other ancient documents record the Pretribulation Rapture as well.

Other early writings also mention it:

- Shepherd of Hermes – 150 AD Mentions a dream where the church as the bride of Christ all clothed in white...escapes the Great Tribulation because of the promise of the Lord. Although not scripture...this shows a common belief in the pre0-trib rapture long before the 1800’s
- Cyprian 250 AD (discipleship descended from Peter, Paul and John) – He was the bishop of Carthage 220 years after Christ. “Do you not give thanks...that by an early departure you are **taken away**, and delivered from the shipwrecks and disasters that are imminent? Let us greet the day which assigns each of us to his own home, which **snatches us hence**, and sets us free from the snares of the world, and **restores** us to paradise and the kingdom” (*Treatise of Cyprian – 21 to 26*)
- Ephriam 273 AD – “...all saints and elect of the Lord are gathered together before the Tribulation which is about to come and taken to the Lord...”
- The Book of Enoch (96) – “In the day of the tribulation of the sinners, your children will mount and rise as eagles, and higher than the hawk’s nest you will ascend...The sinners will enter the crevices of the earth, and the clefts of the rocks.

Terminology

We know from Daniel's prophecies that there will be a 7-year period of Tribulation. That time-period is very important and helps wrap up the very end of the last days scenario. That time period goes by several names such as :

- Day of the Lord
- Day of Christ
- Day of Wrath
- Time of Trouble
- Time of the End
- End of the Age (Gentile Age)
- Day of Indignation

Other terms refer to the last 3.5 years

- Days of Vengeance
- Great Tribulation
- Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

These terms always refer to the tribulation period but sometimes refer to a specific part of that time period.

There are two basic events happening during the tribulation period.

1) Antichrist is pouring out wrath on the holy ones left on earth. This purging strengthens the holy ones alive at the time and they become OVERCOMERS.

2) Christ pours out His wrath to avenge all that have EVER been wronged.

Thief in the Night verses the shout

The church does not know the day nor hour of it's catching away but is told the signs of the times and therefore is not surprised! The unbelievers however are not aware of any of these things so they will be caught off guard.

One big misconception regarding the Rapture in New Testament scriptures is the "Thief in the night" comment being used in regard to the church...it is not.

1 Thessalonians 5 – Paul say the "Day of the Lord" (Tribulation period) comes as a thief in the night...but the church is **not** who he is referring to. In fact, the verse ends like this....v4 ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.

They know they will be gone and therefor not be overtaken. Those unbelievers alive at the time of the end will be overtaken.

Luk 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Luk 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

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Luk 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Another Misconception is with the use of Last Trump and the 7th Trump. The word use here for **last** doesn't mean the last ever. It is used as-in the last for it's time and purpose but others may come later. Paul when writing in 1 Corinthians, used the festival language.

- 1 Cor 5: 6-7 Jesus is the Passover lamb
- 1 Cor 5: 8 We keep the feast of unleavened bread
- Chapters 11-14 Jesus is connected with the Feast of Weeks
- 1 Cor 15 Jesus is our First Fruits
- 1 Cor 15:51 Paul shows the Catching Away (Rapture) at the **Last Trump**. A reference to the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh haShanna) The Last Trump is also associated with the CALL to the troupes to prepare to move out!
- It is NOT the last of the 7 trumpets of Revelation. That is the end of plagues God pours out on the ungodly.

Jewish festivals play a big role in the ancients understanding of times. In fact, a closer look at Rosh ha Shanna which is followed by Yamin Noraim and then closed with Yom Kippur is the exact layout of the end times.

- Rosh ha Shanna (New Years) is also called the Day of Concealment and also the **Day of the Awakening Blast**
- The Yamin Noraim is the days of Awe or the **Terrible days** (there are 7 days in the Yamin Noraim)
- Ends with Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (**Great Trump**) This ritual teaches the Destruction of Antichrist and the Second Coming of the Lord

The First Trump (Pentecost was the beginning of the church era and the Last Trump the catching away of the church

So the Festivals lay out like this:

LT	7 terrible days							GT	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rapture			Tribulation				2 nd Coming		