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THE BIBLE VIEW

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Volume: 785 November 23, 2020

Theme: The Rapture

The Rapture

Bill Brinkworth

“...15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord ...” I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Hundreds of biblical prophecies have been fulfilled. In I Thessalonians 4 there is one mentioned that will be the next to be fulfilled. In the last two thousand years, billions have been waiting for that one (I Thes. 4:13-18) to be accomplished. It is the great catching up of the dead in Christ and the Christians that are living (I Thes. 4:16- 17) at that time.

The Greek word used for “caught up” (I Thes. 4:17) is “harpazō,” and it means “to catch away, to seize, pluck, pull, and take by force.” It is very similar to the English word “rapture,” which means “transport, seizing away.” Although the term “rapture” is not used in the preserved King James text, this futuristic happening is often referred to by that name.

When the Lord shouts, the archangel’s voice is sounded and God’s trumpet is blown, the Rapture will occur (I Thes. 4:16). The first to ascend will be the dead in Christ. Those that have trusted Christ as Saviour and died will be called up. Their souls are already joined with Him (II Cor. 5:8, Eccl. 12:7) as a soul never dies, but the body sleeps (I Thes. 4:14) and awaits its wake-up call during the heavenly summoning of the Rapture.

All Christians living at the time, “Then we which are alive ...” (I Thes. 4:17), will follow the dead in Christ to meet the Lord in the air — without dying and without going through the terrible Tribulation. No one knows when this catching away will occur (Mat. 24:36). It could be today. It could be tomorrow or twenty years from now, but it will happen; God promised!

If the heavenly trumpet were blown to call the saved from this world, are you positive you will be called away to Heaven? What a terrible time it will be when a lot of well-intentioned, good-deeders and many religious-but-lost find out that they never were summoned by the heavenly call. It will be too late for those that have already heard God's message and have rejected it. What a frightful time it will be when the prophesied wrath of God is finally poured out on this Earth.

If you are not sure you will be going up during the catching away, make sure of your transport "ticket" today. Admit your sinnership, and trust Christ's death on the Cross as the only payment for your sins. If you do, then you will be one of many that will hear the heavenly trumpet sound calling Christians home.

"We are going either by the clods or by the clouds. Are you ready?"

— Pastor Tommy Seay

Before the Tribulation

Bill Brinkworth

Revelation 4 signals an event that is a most anticipated promise given to believers. Every Christian from the time of the first church anxiously awaited the event described in this verse. Revelation 4:1 announces the occurrence of the long-awaited Rapture!

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." Revelation 4:1-2

The Rapture is when God says, "Enough" of rampant sin and takes his church (those that are "saved"), living and dead, from the Earth (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). After the church is removed, then all the terrible prophecies concerning God's wrathful judgments (The Tribulation) upon the Earth's residents will begin. For the living child of God from this point on in the book of Revelation, all that happens on Earth will not involve him, as he will be gone to Heaven! Amen and Amen!

Although Revelation is a record of what John saw and heard revealed to Him by Jesus, it is meant to give us an understanding of what will happen on that day. It is believed that Rev. 4:1 is when the Rapture happens because:

- It says, "After this ...". After what? After the periods of the seven church ages are completed (Rev. 2-3). The last church age, as compared to the church of Laodicea, pictures perfectly how the majority of churches have become today. It is after God sees the last person has gotten saved that He ends the church ages and starts a new era, an era of His judgments — the Tribulation!
- "... a door was opened in heaven ...". A door is a means to pass from one place to another. This "door" moves the dead and living in Christ from this Earth to the next "room," the "room" where God is! In Revelation 3:20, the door was where Jesus was last standing. He gave all an opportunity to trust Him as Saviour one more time during the indifferent, Laodicean church-age. No more answered His pleas, so He opened the door of Heaven and called His own home.

- The trumpet of God was sounded just like it was foretold it would be at the time of the Rapture (I Thes. 4:16).
- A voice was heard calling John to Heaven, as it was prophesied (I Thes. 4:16) the church would be summoned up: "... Come up hither...."
- It was prophesied that the Lord would come again when the Earth became like the days of Noah (Mat. 24:37-38. Luke 17:26). Those days are certainly here.

After the Lord judged the world of Noah's time, He sent a reminder of His judgment, the rainbow. In Rev. 4:3, there was a rainbow around God's throne. The judgment of Noah's day preserved only God's own who were inside the ark. The upcoming Rapture will also have His own safely kept (in Heaven) while God's judgments during the Tribulation takes place on Earth.

- Matthew 24:36 says that no one can know the day or hour of the Lord's Second coming. If the church were to go through the Tribulation Period, as some teach, some would know the day. It would be seven years from the signing of the seven-year covenant (Dan. 9:24-27) and 1,260 days from when the Antichrist defiles the Temple (Rev. 12:6).
- I Thes. 4:18 says we are to get comfort in thinking of the Rapture. If the Rapture were to occur during the Tribulation, certainly no one would be comforted!
- The church, those that are saved, will be in Heaven for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7) before Jesus' Second coming which is, many believe, at the end of the Tribulation (Rev.19:11-14).
- Twenty four elders (Rev. 4:4), including representatives of the church ages, will be in Heaven before the seventh seal is opened (Rev. 8:1).
- It is never mentioned in God's Word that the church will go through the Tribulation. The church is no longer mentioned in what occurs on the Earth after Rev. 4:1 because the church is no longer here! The Tribulation is mostly about Israel, not the church!

Since we are currently in the last church age, the Rapture mentioned in Revelation 4:1 is the next event in God's plan. It could be today or tomorrow. The big question is, are you absolutely sure you will be included in the Rapture? If not, now may be your last opportunity to trust Christ as Saviour and be saved!

"When Jesus comes for His own in the air, will you meet Him?"

Examples of "Raptures"

Some do not believe the Rapture could happen. Reading the Scriptures, one will learn that there are examples of raptures that have already occurred and another that will occur in the future:

Enoch:

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:24

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. 11:5

Elijah:

“And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” II Kings 2:11

Jesus:

“And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he [Jesus] went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;” Acts 1:10

The two witnesses:

“... And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.” Rev. 11:3-12

The Four Doors in The Revelation

The Book of Revelation, the Smart Guide to the Bible by Daymond R. Duck and Larry Richards

- The door of opportunity: Evangelism and missionary activity.
“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” Rev. 3:8
- The door of one’s heart: Salvation.
“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Rev. 3:20 (Notice that it is before the Rapture occurs in Rev. 4:1.)
- The door of Heaven: The Rapture
“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” Rev. 4:1
- The door of Heaven: The Second Coming
“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” Rev. 19:11