

The Rapture

1 Corinthians 15:12-22; 50-52 & 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Pray:

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” **1 Corinthians 15:1-5**

READ, 1 Corinthians 15:12-22

¹⁴ The truth of the Christian message is tied to the historical reality of Christ's death and exaltation. ²⁰ His resurrection causes us to be raised spiritually, and at the same time guarantees that we will be raised bodily. The New Testament repeatedly announces that Jesus Christ will one day return. His second “coming” or “presence” (Gk. Parousia) will be a royal visit.

READ, 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

Our bodies and weakness of earthly human existence will perish. **Hebrews 9:27** says “All man is appointed to die”. But without imperishable bodies, we cannot inherit the kingdom of God. ⁵¹ Some Christians will be alive at the time of Christ's return. These Christians will not be raised from the dead, they too will be transformed and received imperishable and immortal bodies.

Ex: We will not have anytime to hesitate or even know what is happening during this transformation. You blink and its over. You won't be able to look at the person next to you and ask what's going on.

READ, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1. The death of believers and the resurrection of the saints helps us Christians to have hope
2. Our grief becomes softened and comforted. (v 13)
3. Our hearts turn to joy because of this assurance given in Christ's resurrection.
4. Whether we have died or still alive, both groups have equal footing entering the fullness of the kingdom together. (v 15)
5. The resurrection of the “Dead in Christ shall rise” is all the righteous dead at the time of Christ's return.
6. The resurrection of unrighteous is during the universal judgment of individuals at the time of Christ's return.

“having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.” **Acts 24:15**

"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." **Acts 17:31**

*"But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. **6** He will render to each one according to his works: **7** to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; **8** but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. **9** There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, **10** but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. **11** For God shows no partiality. **12** For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. **13** For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. **14** For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. **15** They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them **16** on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus"* **Romans 2:5-16**

7. All the righteous will be with the Lord forever and united at the coming of Christ.

This description of the catching-up or "rapture" of the church is not presented as to satisfy all our cravings for detailed knowledge of end-time chronology." R.C. Sproul

"Tragically, some people get so caught up in the study of eschatology that they neglect the basic principles of spiritual growth and evangelism that the Second Coming is designed to motivate." John MacArthur

• Christ's return will be PERSONAL and PHYSICAL.

The "cry", "voice" and "trumpet" give the distinct impression that the rapture will be public and not secret.

"Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." **Matthew 24:44**

"and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." **Acts 1:11**

"When Christ who is your[a] life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." **Colossians 3:4**

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." **2 Timothy 4:8**

"so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." **Hebrews 9:28**

- Christ's return will be VISIBLE and TRIUMPHANT.

And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." **Mark 8:28**

"when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed." **2 Thessalonians 1:10**

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail[α] on account of him. Even so. Amen." **Revelation 1:7**

The Day will also mark the destruction of sin and the law. It says in **1 Corinthians 15:53-58**,
"For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

At the Second Coming,

- Jesus will bring an end to history. He will raise the dead and judge the world.

"Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." **John 5:28-29**

- Jesus will impart God's children their final glory.

"and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

Romans 8:17-18

"When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

Colossians 3:4

Paul says that Christ will then deliver the kingdom and become subject to the Father

"Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all." **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**

Paul does not mean that Christ is reduced in honor, but that He will have completed the plan God assigned to Him for redeeming the elect. In heaven, the elect will honor the Lamb who opened the book of God's salvation.

Revelation 5

"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, 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, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Christ's coming will be descent from the sky, heralded by a trumpet, a shout, and the voice of the archangel. Those who have died in Christ will be raised, and Christians living on earth will be caught up to meet Christ. This event will mark the end of life in this world as we have known it, and the beginning of life in unbroken communion with God.

Ex: The idea that Christians will be taken out of this world

The New Testament specifies much that will take place between Christ's two comings. However, apart from the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, these predictions are of ongoing processes rather than single events, and do not yield even an approximate date for Jesus' reappearance.

- The GENTILE world will be summoned to faith.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." **Matthew 24:14**

- The JEWS will be brought into the kingdom. (a passage that may or may not anticipate a national conversion)

"Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; 27 "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." 28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." **Romans 11:25-29**

- There will be false PROPHETS and false CHRISTS.

“For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.”
Matthew 24:5 & 24

“Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.” **1 John 2:18**

“Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.” **1 John 2:22**

“and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.” **1 John 4:3**

- There will be APOSTASY from the faith and tribulation for the faithful

“Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction” **2 Thessalonians 2:3**

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,” **1 Timothy 4:1**

*“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. **2** For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, **4** treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”* **2 Timothy 3:1-5**

*“Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” **14** I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* **Revelation 7:13-14**

- A “MAN of LAWLESSNESS” must appear.

*“Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness[a] is revealed, the son of destruction,[b] **4** who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. **5** Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **6** And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. **7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. **8** And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. **9** The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, **10** and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, **12** in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

2 Thessalonians 2:3-12

- Jesus' return remains completely UNKNOWN.

""But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." **Matthew 24:36**

Christ teaches that it will be a tragic disaster for anyone who is not ready when He returns
"For 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 were unaware 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 will be taken and one left. **41** Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. **42** Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. **43** But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. **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 will find so doing when he comes. **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 drunkards, **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 cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." **Matthew 24:37-51**

The thought of His return should be constantly in our minds, encouraging us in our present Christian service (1 Corinthians 15:58) and teaching us to live ready to meet Christ at any time (Matthew 25:1-13).

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." **1 Corinthians 15:58**

""Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. **2** In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. **4** And you know the way to where I am going." **5** Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" **6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." **John 14:1-6**