

WHAT ABOUT THE RAPTURE?

The term "rapture" comes from the Latin word "rapere", which means "to carry away, snatch away". Although the term is not found in the Bible, it expresses the essence of the doctrine. It teaches that Jesus is going to come and silently snatch away the righteous.

There are variations among those who hold the theory of "The Rapture". All do not agree. However, in spite of these disagreements those who subscribe to the basic doctrine do not let denominational lines make much difference. Many have just blindly accepted the theory without serious investigation of the scriptures to see if the doctrine is true.

If this theory is true, driverless cars will collide in the streets; airplanes will crash when pilots are snatched away. Husbands and fathers will fail to return home from work. Righteous wives going about their domestic duties will suddenly disappear and all the righteous saints who have died before this great event will be resurrected and carried away.

Then will be "the Great Tribulation" which will last for seven years. During this time the wrath of the Lord will be poured out upon the unrighteous because they rejected Him. Also the Antichrist will be revealed.

At the end of "The Tribulation" Christ will return to the earth with 10,000 of His saints to fight "The Battle of Armageddon". The Lord and His army will be victorious and they will execute judgment on the ungodly, and Antichrist will be destroyed.

After the great victory, according to the Rapture theory, Christ will set up His kingdom, with headquarters in Jerusalem, and reign on David's throne with His saints for a thousand years.

At the end of the thousand years reign of Christ there will be a second resurrection and all who remain in their graves from Adam on will rise and the judgment will take place, and all will receive their just deserts. The wicked will be raised and punished, and the saints will return to heaven with Jesus where they will live forever.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

1. Neither the term "The Rapture" nor the doctrine is found in the Bible.
2. The return of Christ will not be secret. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God..." (1 Thes. 4:16). "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).
3. The Tribulation of the Rapture theory is based on a misinterpretation of Matthew chapter 24. This tribulation spoken of by Jesus was associated with the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and was given in answer to the first question asked Him by the disciples (Matt. 24:1-3). The tribulation indeed did take place before that generation passed away (Matt. 24:34).
4. According to the word of God there is going to be but one literal resurrection. It will include the righteous and the unrighteous. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28,29). "...There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15).
5. According to the Bible the kingdom of Christ is not to be established in the future, as the rapture advocates would have us believe, but has been in existence for nearly 2000 years. Furthermore, it is a spiritual, not an earthly kingdom. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Christ gave to the apostle Peter the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:18,19). On the day of Pentecost, AD 33, Peter opened the kingdom to the Jews (Acts 2), and about eight years later to the Gentiles (Acts 10). Later John stated he was in the kingdom (Rev. 1:9). The Colossians had been translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13). And the apostle Paul taught that the Christians had received a kingdom (Heb. 12:28). All of these things were written in the first century, and the kingdom was referred to as being in existence then. And Mark 9:1 definitely puts the beginning of the kingdom in that generation who heard Christ promise its coming. "And he said unto them,

Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power”.

The book of Revelation, as recognized by all Bible scholars, is a highly symbolic book, and to literalize a 1000 years reign of Christ on earth is a gross misinterpretation of the highly figurative context of Rev. 20:1-7. It is not an earthly reign, but one that is spiritual with victorious saints (Rev. 20:4). In Revelation 6:9-11 the souls of the martyred saints were under the alter, but in Rev. 20 they are pictured on thrones reigning with the Lord. This is a prophetic indication that Christianity will be triumphant over its enemies. The 1000 years apparently symbolizes the completeness of that victory.

Right now Jesus Christ is the “blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15). He is reigning over His people right now, and He will continue to reign until all enemies are put under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25). “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).