

“The Last Supper (part 4): The Rapture”

John 13:36-14:4

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1. The challenge of Jesus’ imminent departure

³⁷Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.” ³⁸If Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.”

2. The comfort in Jesus’ promised return

¹Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.²In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

- A. The OT saints knew of only one “coming” of the Messiah. *The prophets who prophesied...made careful search and inquiry seeking to know what...time the Spirit...was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.” (1 Peter 1:10-11)*

“The Spirit of the LORD God is upon Me...to bring good news...He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted... and to proclaim the Day of Vengeance of our God” (Isaiah 61:1-2)

- B. The NT revealed more than one “coming” of the Messiah.
- C. “Rapture” means “to snatch away,” “caught up” and comes from 1 Thessalonians 4:17 [*harpadzo=ἀρπάζω*].
- D. The Rapture is a “mystery”; the word “mystery” is used 27 times in the NT and refers to truths hidden in the OT but revealed in the NT by Jesus and the Apostles and are all related to Christ’s salvific work and the Church.

- E. The Rapture is described three times in the NT—John 14:2-3, 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15:
“The Lord Himself will descend from heaven...and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be raptured together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

*“Behold I tell you a **mystery**; we shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)*

- F. The Rapture is supposed to be a doctrine that Christians use to encourage and comfort one another.

Other Biblical Raptures

1. Enoch was snatched alive up to heaven by God.
“Enoch...was not for God took him” (Genesis 5:24)
*“Enoch was **taken up** (**‘translated’ KJV**) so that he should not see death” (Hebrews 11:5)*
2. Elijah was snatched up alive into heaven.
*Elijah **went up** by a whirlwind into heaven (2 Kings 2:11)*
3. Jesus was caught up into heaven at His ascension
*“He was **lifted up** while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight “(Acts 1:9)*
4. Philip was raptured from Gaza to Azotus
*“the Spirit of the Lord **snatched** (**harpadzo**) Philip away” (Acts 8:39)*
5. The two witnesses will be raptured during the Tribulation
*“My two witnesses...**went up** into heaven in the cloud (Revelation 11:3, 12)*

1 Thessalonians 4:17 in the Latin Vulgate

Deinde nos qui vivimus qui relinquimur simul
[Then] [we] [who] [are alive] [who] [are left] [together]
* **rapiemur (from rapio)** cum illis in nubibus obviam
[**shall be snatched**] [with] [them] [in] [clouds] [to meet]
Domino in aera et sic semper cum Domino erimus
[Lord] [in] [the air] [and] [so] [always] [with] [Lord] [we shall be]

“Rapture,” from Middle French, *rapture*...derived from Latin, *raptus* — In the Vulgate at 1 Thessalonians 4:17 as *rapiemur* from *rapio*, meaning “to snatch away; to take up suddenly”

Reasons some Christians don’t believe in the Rapture

1. Ignorance.
2. Commitment to a theological system and not exegesis
3. Wrong preconceived notions
4. Misrepresent the doctrine; a caricature or straw man
5. Guilt by association
6. Fear
7. Apathy
8. A minimalist attitude (only salvation matters)

Common myths about the Rapture

1. It’s not in the Bible
2. It’s not in the OT; therefore, it can’t be true
3. Jesus never referred to it
4. Being raptured is not a biblical concept
5. It’s a recent belief; it’s not in the early Church
6. Eschatological charts and pictures are worthless
7. It’s the same as the Second Coming
8. It’s not important
9. It’s the most important thing
10. Tim LaHaye and Hal Lindsay made it up
11. It’s a Dispensational heresy
12. It’s in Revelation (4, 11, 19)
13. It will only happen to spiritual Christian
14. It’s in Matthew 24
15. We can predict the date
16. A verse or passage is supposed to give exhaustive details about any one particular passage

The Rapture Contrasted with the Second Coming

<i>Rapture</i>	<i>Second Coming</i>
1. Jesus comes down to the clouds	Jesus comes to earth
2. Jesus comes for believers	Jesus comes with believers
3. Jesus comes for believers	Jesus comes for enemies
4. Jesus comes to bless	Jesus comes to judge and make war
5. Jesus brings believers to heaven	Jesus stays on earth
6. No angels mentioned	Jesus comes with the angels
7. Jesus’ appearance not described	Jesus comes as a warrior
8. Not mentioned in the OT— a mystery revealed in the NT	Taught in the OT
9. Described in John 14, 1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15	Described in Matthew 24, Revelation 19, Daniel 7
10. Timing? Not sure suddenly...	After the Tribulation
11. Living believers will be transformed, dead believers resurrected	No one resurrected