

Why I Believe in the PreTrib Rapture!

by Dr. Robert L. Dean Jr.

Questions:

What is the Rapture?
When is the Rapture?

I. What is The Rapture

A. Definition: The resurrection of all dead Church Age believers and the removal of all living believers from the earth at the end of the Church Age immediately before the Tribulation begins.

B. Key Terms:

The term Rapture is not found in the Greek Text of the New Testament, but is derived from the Latin Vulgate translation of 1 Thess 4:17. The Latin *rapturo* translates the Greek word *harpazo*,

1 Thess. 4:17 *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up {rapturo} together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

harpazo - "caught up" - "to seize upon with force" - "to snatch up" (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

2Th. 2:1 "Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,"

episunagoge- "gathering together"" - "assembly" (2 Thessalonians 2:1)

1Cor. 15:51 "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"

1Cor. 15:52 "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." \

allasso - "to exchange" - "to transform" - "to change" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

John 14:3 "And if 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."

paralambano "to take" - "to receive to oneself" (John 14:3)

Phil. 3:11 "in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

exanastasis "exit resurrection" - "expulsion" (Phil 3:11)

Titus 2:13 "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus"

epiphaneia "a manifestation" - "an appearance" (Titus 2:13)

1Th. 1:10 "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

rhuomai "to draw to oneself" - "to rescue by a forcible act" - "to deliver" (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

1Pet. 1:13 "Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

apokalupsis "an uncovering" - "laying bare" - "a revealing, revelation" (1 Peter 1:13)

James 5:7 "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains."

James 5:8 "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

parousia "a being present, presence" - "a coming" - "an arrival" {(James 5:7-8)}

C. Six Key Verses:

1. John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."

John 14:2 "In 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."

John 14:3 "And if 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. Jesus ascended literally, bodily and visibly to heaven and will return the same way.

Acts 1:11 "and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

***His return is not going to be spiritual and unseen!!

b. The promise in John 14 is made to the disciples who represent Church Age believers. They were not made to mankind in general. Therefore this refers to His return for the Church, not the return to the earth.

c. When Jesus returns they are taken to His Father's house, not earth. This is obviously a new idea to the disciples; they thought He would restore the Kingdom.

**The earth is not the future hope or destiny of the church, heaven is.

2. Titus 2:13 "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;"

The event the believer is to anticipate is the appearance, Tribulation, appearance of the antichrist, signs, etc. Remember, in Matt 24 Jews are warned that when they see these signs the end is near and they are to flee to the mountains. But there are no intervening signs between now and the appearance of our Lord.

3. Phil. 3:11 "in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Resurrection is the word *anastasis*, but this is a compound *exanastasis* which is a hapax legomena in the NT and only used 2x outside of the NT. Paul uses it as a technical term for the Rapture; this is seen in the combination of the compound exanastasis with the repetition of ek plus the genitive of source for dead, nekros.

4. Phil. 3:20 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;"

Here we see that we are taken to the place of our citizenship; heaven not the earth. The Church has a heavenly destiny; Israel has an earthly destiny.

5. 1Cor. 15:51 "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"

1Cor. 15:52 "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

1Cor. 15:53 "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Note the use of the first person plural pronoun indicating that Paul included himself in this group. Therefore he is only talking about believers. This verse explains the mechanics of the Rapture.

6. 1Th. 4:13 "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope."

1Th. 4:14 "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus."

1Th. 4:15 "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep."

1Th. 4:16 "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

1Th. 4:17 "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."

1Th. 4:18 "Therefore comfort one another with these words."

a. Three Sounds

1) Verse 16: SHOUT FROM THE LORD, shout is the Greek *keleusma*, means the voicing of a command, the shout of a command, literally THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND WITH A COMMAND,

Rev. 4:1 "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

John 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice,"

John 5:29 "d shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

2) Voice of Michael the Archangel cf., Dan 12:1; Heb 1:14.

3) TRUMPET - Not necessarily any trumpet in Revelation. Trumpets were used to call God's people to assembly cf., Num 10:2; parallels the last trump of 15:52.

b. Clouds in the air, Clouds are often associated in the Scripture with the glory of God and His presence.

1) The Lord Jesus Himself; not an idea, not an angel, not an apparition.

2) Those Raptured are "in Christ\" not OT saints, not everybody. Only Church Age believers have been baptized into the body of Christ.

3) "all changed": the mechanics are described in 1 Cor. 15:51.

II. When does the Rapture occur?

A. FOUR VIEWS

Before the 7 year Tribulation: Pretribulation Rapture.

During the Tribulation: Mid-Trib; and Pre-Wrath Rapture.

At the end of the Tribulation: Post-Tribulation Rapture.

Partial Tribulation: Spiritual believers at the beginning; carnal believers live through it.

B. SEVEN Reasons for the PreTrib Rapture

1. A Distinction between Israel and the Church.

This is foundational. If God has not made a distinction in His plan between His plan for Israel and His plan for the Church then there is no pretrib rapture.

Rom. 11:25 "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in;"

Rom. 11:26 "and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob."

Rom. 11:27 "And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

2. The Purposes for the Tribulation do not relate to the Church.

There are FOUR purposes to the Tribulation:

a. To execute judgment on the wicked and on the rebellious nations who have both rejected Christ and Israel.

b. To demonstrate the inability of Satan to rule the planet.

c. To provide time for millions to be saved.

d. To prepare the nation Israel for the Messiah and His kingdom.

Jer. 30:7

The Jewish character of the Tribulation: Dt. 4:30; Dan. 12:1; Ezek 20:37; Zech 13:8-9; Matt 24:25-20.

The coming of salvation to Israel; Dan 9:24; Ezek 36:25-36; 37:1-14; 39:21-29; Jer. 31:31-34; Mal 4:4-6; Rom 11:25-28; Rev 7:4-14

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

3. The Church is NEVER the object of the wrath of God.

a. Define wrath. Wrath is a technical term for the execution of the judgment of God.

"wrath" is used first in Rev. 6, the "wrath of the Lamb"

"wrath" is worldwide in scope

"wrath" involves supernatural judgments and signs and wonders on the earth.

"wrath" results in the deaths of BILLIONS!

b. 1 Thess 5:9; 1Thess 1:10; Rev. 3:10.

1Th. 5:9 "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

1Th. 1:10 "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

Rev. 3:9 "Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie - behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you."

Rev. 3:10 "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth."

d. The Judgments of the Tribulation are unique in all of human history; Matt. 24:21; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:2.

Matt. 24:21 "for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall."

Jer. 30:7 "Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is

the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it."

Dan. 12:1 "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."

Joel 2:2 "A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations.

4. Imminency: the "at any moment" return of Jesus Christ.

OED: hanging overhead, constantly ready to befall or overtake one; close at hand in its incidence.

Impending, at any moment, NOT soon or immediate

a. Definition: It is certain it will occur, it is uncertain when it will occur, it is not contingent on any other events, and it is.

b. Nothing is necessary first; no prerequisite prophetic fulfillment. The Second Coming is NOT imminent because there are specific signs said to precede the Second Coming. Therefore, if signs precede, then we must look first for the signs, and second for the coming, so the Blessed Hope is not what we are to anticipate.

c. Key Passages: James 5:7-9; 1 Thess 1:10; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess 4:15; Titus 2:13; 1 Cor. 16:22; Rom. 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 4:5; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 1:13; 1Jn 2:28-3:3; Rev. 3:11; 22:7, 12, 17, 20.

James 5:7 "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains."

James 5:8 "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

James 5:9 "Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door."

1Th. 1:10 "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come."

1Cor. 1:7 "so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Phil. 3:20 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;"

Phil. 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

1Th. 4:15 "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep."

Here Paul is comforting those who have had loved ones die since he was there to teach them. They are concerned about their destiny. But in his comfort to them Paul emphasizes the nearness of Christ's return and does not suggest an intervening judgment of a raging Tribulation, for that would have been no comfort indeed.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;"

1Cor. 16:22 "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha."

Rom. 13:11 "And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed."

Rom. 13:12 "The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

Rom. 13:13 "Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy."

Rom. 13:14 "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

1Cor. 15:51 "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"

1Cor. 15:52 "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

1Cor. 15:53 "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Phil. 4:5 "Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near."

1John 2:28 "And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

1John 2:29 "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him."

1Jo 3:1 "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."

1John 3:2 "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is."

1John 3:3 "And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

5. The Distinction Between the Rapture and the Second Coming

Rapture.....Second Coming

Translation of all Believers.....No Translation

Translated Saints go to heaven...Translated saints return to earth

Earth is not judged.....Earth is judged and righteousnessestablished

Imminent, at any moment..... Follows definite predicted signs, includingthe tribulation

Not predicted in the Old Testament...Predicted often in the Old Testament

****The Second Coming and resurrection of the believer is clearly taught in the OT, but in the NT the Rapture is considered a mystery, 1 Cor. 15:51

Believers only.....Affects all mankind

Before the day of wrath.....Concludes the day of wrath

No reference to Satan.....Satan Bound

Christ comes for his own.....Christ comes with His own

Christ comes in the air.....Christ comes to the earth

Christ claims His Bride.....Christ comes with His bride

Only His own see Him.....Every eye shall see Him

Tribulation begins.....Messianic Kingdom Begins

6. The Necessary Interval Between the Rapture and the Second Coming.

3 Events take place between the Two Events

- a. The Judgment Seat of Christ, for the evaluation of church age believers.
- b. The marriage of the Lamb, Rev. 19:7-9, in heaven
- c. Salvation of the people who enter the millennium.

7. No evidence of the Church in the Tribulation.

- a. The Tribulation passages all refer to Israel, not the Church
- b. Word for Church, ekklesia, is not used
- c. Dan 9, describes the seventieth week as for Daniel's city and Daniel's people.
- d. No use of Church, bride of Christ or body of Christ in Rev. 4-19.