

## The Return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church (Otherwise known as the Rapture)

Rapture – snatched up and carried away with a sudden swoop (see 1 Thess. 4:17: caught up.)

### The Bible's view of the rapture and its implications for existing worldviews

- Corrects the false hope that the world is getting better
- Prevents depression that all will fail
- Provides clarity for the role of the church and Israel in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ

### The description of the rapture:

The promise of the rapture: John 14: 1-3:

- A personal promise as the Lord was about to leave his disciples
- His purpose in leaving was to provide them with something better
- Picture of the bridegroom coming for the bride
- Our first stop after the Bema – a prepared place in heaven
- The Lord's personal involvement in transporting us there.

The prospect of his coming: 1 Cor. 15:50-52; 1 Thess. 4:14-18

- His coming is for all the church (dead and alive)
- The events will occur the smallest time interval possible
- The change in our bodies will prepare us for heaven (incorruptible, immortal)
- Comes with a shout, the voice of the archangel and a trump
- The clouds will serve as a staging point for those from graves and the earth

The preservation of his coming: 1 Thess. 1:10

- His coming would preserve us from the wrath coming upon the world during the Tribulation
- Realization of the hope that provides patience.

### The timing of the rapture

- The apostles taught that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ was imminent (could happen at any time)
- Only a pretribulation rapture supports the principle of the imminence of Christ's return
- Nothing needs to be fulfilled for rapture but things need to be fulfilled for the Day of the Lord.

-	Coming of Christ	Day of the Lord
Location (coming to)	In the air	To the earth (Mt of Olives, Jerusalem)
Timing	Imminent - anytime	After revelation of Antichrist and the great tribulation
Active members	All the redeemed and members of the church	Everyone living on the earth
Judgement order	Saved removed and others move into an age of judgement on the earth	Unsaved removed and others move into an age of blessing.

### Lessons about the Lord's coming from OT examples

The Seventieth Week in Daniel 9:

The Feast of Trumpets (See Lev. 23:24):

- Trumpets and their purpose (Num. 10:2)

- The last trump  
Enoch (Gen. 5):

Lot (Gen. 19)

Rahab (Judges 6):

### **The importance of the rapture for you and me**

We should have an expectant attitude (look forward to, watch out for, and wait for) towards the coming the Lord. In addition, while we wait we should:

1 Cor. 1: 7: Use our gift (as assemblies and as individuals) for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 4:5: Be supportive of each other in our service ad lives and recognize that the Lord alone has the wisdom to judge and will praise every believer.

Philippians 3:20: As citizens of heaven we are to be loyal to our Lord and represent heaven in this foreign land. Our hope is the return of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus who will take us there to be with Himself. However, our future will lie in representing heaven in different context.

Philippians 4:5: The expected coming of the Lord Jesus should ensure our moderation of lifestyle and ensure that our energy, time and resources are available for service for the Lord.

1 Thess. 1:10: We are called to be patient in waiting for the Lord to come from heaven. We are not to fear temporary persecution and hardship because he will deliver us from the wrath that will come upon this world.

2 Thess. 3: 10-12: Waiting for the Lord's return should provide us with a balance between patience and service and responsibility for our lives.

Titus 2: 12-14: We should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts as we look for the coming of the Lord.

James 5: 7-9: Patiently wait for the coming of the Lord when we deal with corrupt people, in waiting for fruits for our labours an in our dealings with each other.

1 John 2: 28: Be dependent on the Spirit to teach us and to be obedient and committed to the things we learn.

1 Cor. 16: 22: Love for the Lord Jesus Christ is essential for our lives for the Lord.

### **History of the Understanding of the Coming of the Lord**

#### **Trends in the world today that could indicate the time is drawing closer**

#### **Our potential responses to the possible return of the Lord Jesus in 2015**

1 Today the coming of the Lord Jesus for his own is not only imminent but it is very soon.

2. If the coming of the Lord grips our hearts our concern for money, success and things of this world will lessen.

3. Our time on earth for service and witness for the Lord is growing short. We should be responsive to the Lord's direction to service for our lives without delay.