

The Mystery of the Rapture

The Rapture is not shown in the Book of Revelation except a faint hint of it in Revelation 4:1. However, it is the centerfold doctrine regarding the immanent return of our Lord Jesus Christ for His Church. Before any study of the Book of Revelation, a review of the teaching on the Rapture should be done.

Before we look at the revelation of the mystery of the Rapture, we should look at what critics say and address that first. Critics of the Rapture say it's a modern theory. Some of the most popular criticisms are:

1. The Rapture theory is but a small part of eschatological belief. In the study of eschatology (the study of end times) there are the following groups of thought: **(SLIDE 1)**

Preterism

Futurism

Historicism – the eschatology of the Protestant Reformation that holds that the Pope is the anti-christ. They made some convincing observations

Futurism is divided into: **(SLIDE 2)**

- a. **Premillennialism**– Jesus is going to return to set up the 1000 year millennial reign.
- b. **Postmillennialism** – the church will take over the world and submit it to Jesus' authority when He returns
- c. **Amillennialism** – believes like Preterism that the prophecies of end times were fulfilled in 70AD.

(SLIDE 3) Premill is divided into pre-trib (the Church will be raptured before the Tribulation,

Pre-wrath (the Church will be raptured before the wrath of God poured out in the 7 Vial or Bowl judgments.

Post-Trib- The Church will not be raptured out until the end of the Tribulation. This would occur in Revelation 19, the Second Advent where Jesus returns in judgment. However the Bride of Christ and the wedding feast of the

Lamb are portrayed in Rev 19:7 before Jesus returns to earth.

Although the Pre-Trib Rapture represents only one strain of belief in the Eschatological beliefs of the Christian Church, it is the predominant view of Evangelical Churches today.

2. The “Rapture Theory” was popularized by a prophetic vision of a seventeen-year-old Scottish girl, Margaret Macdonald in 1830.

True. However her prophecy did not teach us the rapture but pointed us back to those verses in the Word of God that does. Baptist minister John Gill used the term “Rapture” in 1748.

3. One of the first advocates, William Miller, a Baptist minister, taught the immanency of Jesus’ second coming. He prophesied that Jesus would return on October 22, 1844. After his “great disappointment”, a student of his took his teachings on the Second Advent, added to them her own prophetic words and teachings, and founded the 7th Day Adventists (Ellen G. White).

True. However, Miller’s error in predicting the day is not Scriptural. That does not negate the Rapture. Nor does it make the “rapture” a 7th Day Adventist teaching.

4. The word “Rapture” is not found in the New Testament.

The word “rapture” comes from the Latin “reperere” meaning to snatch out. It is found in the Latin Vulgate. It’s corresponding Greek word is “harpazo” which is found in IThess 4:16-17.

5. The early church believed in the immanency of Jesus’ second coming. They didn’t develop end-time doctrine enough before the death of the last Apostle, John. The vital belief in the immanency of Jesus’ return was lost by the Church after the death of the Apostle, John.

If the teachings of the Rapture were taken with Scriptures on Jesus’ second coming, the early Church would have seen that there would need to be a Second Coming in two stages.

6. Futurism was first taught by two Jesuits, Ribera and Bellarmine, to take away the accusations of the Protestant Reformers that the Pope was the anti-christ. At the same time, Jesuit Alcazan developed Preterism claiming that Nero was the anti-christ and that end-time prophecy was fulfilled in 70AD. This belief is held by Presbyterians today among others.

This is true. However the Holy Spirit can use ungodly sources to advance His prophetic Word John 11:50-51

Just as the Church was a mystery to Old Testament prophets, so was the rapture a mystery that Jesus did not reveal until Paul became Apostle to the Gentiles. After Paul was saved on the Road to Damascus, he went into Arabia where he spent three years having the Gospel of Grace revealed to him by the risen Christ. (Galatians 1:12) Paul probably went to Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Mt. Sinai is not really located in the Negev. It is located in Arabia. **Gal 4:25** “for this Hagar is **Mount Sinai in Arabia**, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children”

Paul received Six Major Revelations in Arabia (Slide 4)

1. The mystery of Israel’s blindness Rom 11:25
2. The mystery of the resurrection of the dead in Christ 1COR 15:20-23
3. **The mystery of the catching away of the living saints 1Thess 4:16-17, 1COR 15:51-52**
4. The mystery of the dispensation of times Eph 1:9-10
5. The mystery of the Gentiles and the New Covenant Eph 3:5-9
6. The mystery of Christ & the Church Eph 5:32

1 Cor 15:51-52 (SLIDE 5)

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed (Greek: allasso to transform or change) -- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

(SLIDE 6) 1 Thess 4:16-18

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up
(Greek: harpazo catch up, take by force)
together with them
in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Other Scriptures using this word “harpazo:

- 2COR 12:2 “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was **caught up** to the third heaven.”
- the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away Acts 8:39
- She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Rev 12:5
- "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. Matt 13:19

The Revelation of Messiah in Old Testament and New Testament:

His coming to reign on earth
Was revealed to the prophets
Christ will rule on earth
We return from heaven to earth
Happens at the end of Tribulation
God saves Israel from destruction
Revelation to Israel

His coming for the Church
was revealed to Apostle Paul
We will be with Christ in heaven
we depart up to heaven
Happens before the Tribulation
God delivers us from wrath to come
revelation to the Church

The Visible Second Coming

At the Rapture Jesus remains in the air and catches up saints to Himself
At His Second Coming **Acts 1: 11** “**who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."** Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives.

Matt 24: 27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

Re 1:7 Behold, he comes 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. Even so, Amen."

Both 1COR 15:52 and 1Thess 4:16 mentions that we will be transported at the Trumpet of God or at the last Trumpet. Some Bible scholars, therefore, believe that this means that the Church will go through the Seal and Trumpet judgments in Revelation. However, Jesus promises to deliver us from the wrath to come

Numbers 10:1-6 shows that two silver trumpets were used to assemble the congregation and to alert the camp to move. The first trumpet blast alerts the camp to pack up. At the second trumpet blast, the last trumpet blast, the camp moved as the Shekinah Glory directed.

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout..."1Thess 4:16

There was a shout of the Bridegroom when He came for His betrothed to escort her to the wedding & the feast. **Matt 25:6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'**

Delivered from the wrath to come... **(SLIDE 7)**

1Th 1:10 "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

1Thess 5:9 "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Rom 5:9 "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."

God delivers the righteous before His judgment.

A. Matt 24:36-39 "But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not the angels of Heaven, but only My Father.

But as the days of Noah were, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark.

And they did not know until the flood came and took them all away. So also will be the coming of the Son of man.”

B. 2 Peter 2:5-10

and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) -- then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,”

(Noah was rescued 7 days before the flood – as the Church will before the Trib. Lot was rescued at the last minute before God’s judgment came, just as the believing remnant of Israel will be rescued. Zech 13:9)

The change in Revelation 4:1

Rev 1:19 “Write the things which you have seen, and **the things which are**, and **the things which will take place after this.**”

Rev 2 and 3 are 7 stages of Church history down to the present time. In Revelation 4:1, after the letters to the Churches, John is taken into heaven much as will happen in the rapture. The Scripture begins with

Rev 4:1

“After these things (Meta Tauta – Greek) “I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you **things which must take place after this.**"

The Church is not mentioned again until Rev 19:7 as the Bride of Christ. Believers are mentioned, churches are not.

SLIDE 8 As info, God-given boundaries of Israel



Three Forms of Eschatology Held in the Christian Faith

Preterism belief that all end-time prophecy occurred in 70AD

Futurism

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15:51**

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The mystery of the Gentiles and the New
Covenant Eph 3:5-9

The mystery of Christ & Church Eph



Two Scriptures Revealing the Rapture


I. 1 Cor 15:51-52

“Behold, *I tell you a mystery*: We shall not all sleep, *but we shall all be changed* (**Greek: *allasso***) -- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”



II. 1 Thess 4:16-18

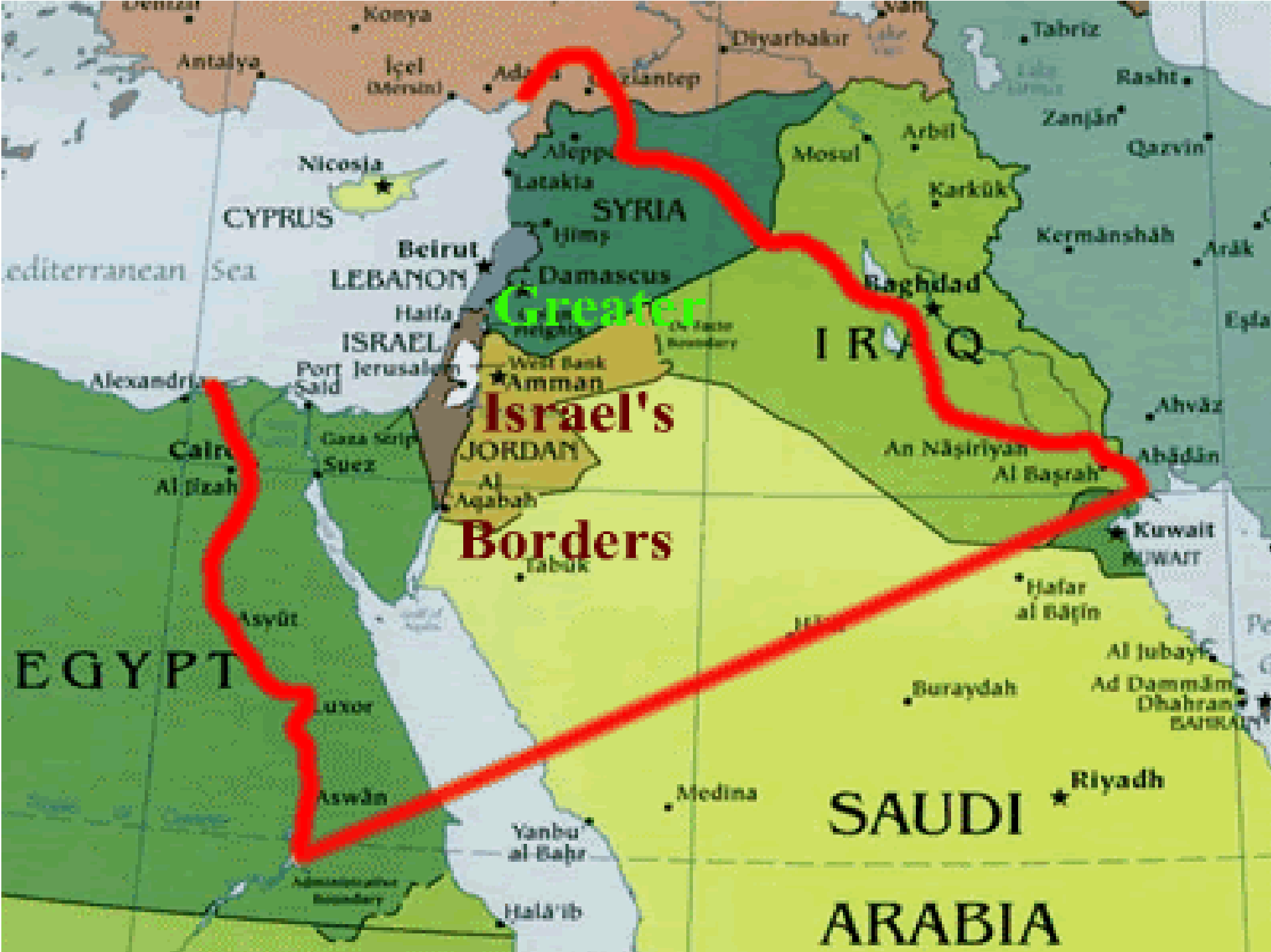
“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (Greek: harpazo**) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”**



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Greater

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