

The Rapture: Questions and Comfort

1 Corinthians 15.51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18

The Rapture isn't the Second Coming, but what *is* it? Is it before the Great Tribulation? What happens when Christians die? What rises at the Rapture? Where do we go after the Rapture? Why is the Rapture a comfort for Christians? Questions...and comfort!

Answering Questions about the Rapture

- Why it must be before the Great Tribulation
- What it tells us about after Christians die
- Where Christians go after the Rapture

Discovering Comfort in the Rapture

Christians who have died are with Jesus now; when He descends from heaven, they will be with Him (1 Thess. 4.13-14)

The bodies of all Christians, dead or alive, will be transformed from mortal to immortal (1 Cor. 15.51-53)

All Christians, in their immortal bodies, will meet the Lord in mid-air, in the clouds (1 Thess. 4.16-17a)

From this moment on, Christians will be with the Lord forever (1 Thess. 4.17b)

COMFORT ONE
ANOTHER

1. Many Christians don't believe in a Rapture, a seven-year Great Tribulation, or a thousand-year Millennial Kingdom. They treat prophecies about the Rapture as 'part of' the Second Coming. They say that *at Jesus' Second Coming, Christians who have died are raised, and with living Christians meet the Lord in the air, go to heaven, and are with Him there forever*. The Great Tribulation, Jesus' defeat of the Beast and the False Prophet, and Christ's Millennial reign on earth, are all just symbolic or allegorical depictions of spiritual struggles down through the centuries. Details recorded in Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 33, Ezekiel 38-39, Zechariah 14, Matthew 24, 1 Corinthians 15.51ff, and Revelation 6-20, and many other Scriptures, are 'figurative' – they aren't *really going to happen!* If you can, take time to read some of these passages. *How do they sound to you? Do you think God would reveal all the details (places, names of nations, natural phenomena, etc.) if none of it was literal?*
2. There are different views on when the Rapture will occur. All but one say it will happen after the Tribulation period begins. Do your own research! What is 'the wrath to come' that Jesus will deliver Christians from (1 Thess. 1.10; 5.9)? When will people on earth be going about their business as usual, without any expectation of judgment (Matt. 24.36-44; 1 Thess. 5.2-3)? Would this be *during the Great Tribulation*, or before it?
3. Too often, Christians debate opposing prophetic views, and end up dividing over them. Cults like Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses especially do this. But that is *explicitly not* the purpose for which God revealed them! How would Old Testament prophecies of Messiah reigning in Jerusalem, nature at peace, and an end to wars have affect Jews? How does Paul close his prophecy of the restoration of Israel in Romans 9-11 (see 11.33-36)? After revealing the terrors of the Great Tribulation in Rev. 6-19, what do the awesome revelations of Rev. 21-22 do for us? What does Paul say the revelation of the Rapture should give us (1 Thess. 4.18)?