

GNITN
The Rapture The Blessed Hope or Blessed Nope
Week 2
Two Returns, Not One
Rapture vs Glorious Appearing

What Is The Rapture?

*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, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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 will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain **will be caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. ([1 Thess 4:15-18](#), NASB)*

We need to define the term before we go any further. In essence it is Jesus coming back in the air to take His Church out of the world before it is judged in the Tribulation. While we don't know when it will happen, we know it will happen before Jesus comes back physically to the Mount of Olives.

Eight Events Of The Rapture

Looking at the passage in *1 Thess* we can see eight distinct things happening.

1. The Shout

Jesus will descend from heaven with a resurrection shout. This shout is from experience since Jesus raised three people from the dead in the New Testament.

2. Voice Of The Archangel

This is most likely a reference to the voice of the Archangel Michael.

The Trumpet Of God

This is only for the Rapture. This is different that the trumpets that are described in [Revelation chapters 6-19](#).

3. The Dead In Christ Will Rise First

Not only will the dead in Christ be remembered in the rapture, but their resurrection will also precede that of the believers who are alive at the time.

4. Living Believers Will Be Transformed And Receive Glorified Bodies

This is the resurrection Paul talked about in [1 Corinthians 15:50-57](#), when our corruptible bodies (those inherited from Adam which are in a constant state of dying) will be changed and made incorruptible, just like Christ's resurrected body, which is immortal and eternal, thus giving us victory over sin and death.

5. Both Groups Will Be Caught Up Together In The Clouds

As we talked about last week, the phrase "*will be caught up*" since in the Greek this is really one word, "*harpizo*" which means "*to be snatched*." In Latin the word for *snatched* is the word "*raptus*" which is where we get the modern English word "*rapture*." Both the dead in Christ and those alive will get to meet Christ in the clouds.

6. We Will Meet The Lord In The Air

Our scheduled meeting with Jesus will be above the clouds, but not in Heaven – that will come later. The Lord will meet us in the atmosphere or the first heaven.

7. We Will Always Be With The Lord

Yes, this is a good place for an amen. From this point on, we will always be with the Lord! Think about that. No more distance between your savior, the healer of your body, your redeemer and your King. No need to wonder where He is for you will be with Him.

Where Did Paul Get The Terms of The Rapture?

12 “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. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. ([Dan 12:1-2](#), NASB)

There was no New Testament at the time Paul visited the Thessalonians so he had to get his terms from the Old Testament. In particular the Book of Daniel describes the events surrounding the last days in the above scripture. Note the people taken will be rescued from the great distress. And also note that the people who will be taken are the ones whose names are in the book. The book referenced is the Book of Life so these will be Christians who will be spared the Tribulation.

Second Coming And The Rapture

Many people make the mistake of thinking these events are the same event. It’s easy to see how this could happen, however if one takes the Bible literally the two are clearly seen as two parts of Jesus’ return to earth. The Blessed Hope and Glorious Return are two different things:

*11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for **the blessed hope and glorious appearing** of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ ([Titus 2:11-13](#); NKJV)*

These two phrases describe two different events. The blessed hope refers to the rapture while the glorious return refers to Jesus coming physically back to earth to set up His 1,000 year reign. So He does return twice but the differences show us which event is which. It’s not all that confusing, but it can be.

	Rapture		The Return with the Saints
1	Jesus coming for His Church/Bride up to Heaven, before tribulation. (Luke 21:36 ; John 14:1-3 ; 1Thess 1:10 , 4:14-17 , 5:9 ; Rev 3:10)	1	Jesus coming with His Church/Bride down from Heaven, after tribulation. (Zech 14:5 ; Col 3:4 ; Rev 19:7-8,14 , 21:9-10 ; Matt 24:29-31 ; Jud 1:14,15 ; 1Thess 3:13)
2	Caught up with Him in the air, in the clouds, (1Thess 4:13-18); Appears to Believers only. (Mat 5:8 , John 11:40 , Heb 9:28)	2	Jesus' feet touch the earth (Zech 14:4 ; Rev 19:11-21), and He brings war, then peace. Every eye will see Him, including unbelievers. (Rev 1:7 , Zech 12:10 , Mat 24:30 Luke 3:6 John 19:37)

3	Christians taken first, unbelievers are left behind a shut door. (<i>Mat 25:1-13; Rev 3:8-10; Rev 4:1, 1Thess 4:13-18</i>)	3	Wicked are taken first, (<i>Mat 13:28-30</i>) the righteous (Tribulation saints) are left to populate the millennium
4	Purpose: To present the Church to Himself and to the Father in Heaven, (<i>2 Cor 11:2; Rev 19:6-9</i>)	4	Purpose: To execute judgment on earth and set up His Kingdom on earth. (<i>Zech 14:3-4; Jud 1:14-15; Rev 19:11-21</i>)
5	Christians are changed, and get spirit bodies, go to heaven and do not marry, and become immortal; (<i>Mat 22:30; 1Cor 15:52; 1John 3:2</i>)	5	People populate the earth during the millennium, some people still die, not being changed to immortality as at the rapture. (<i>Isa 65:20</i>)
6	Jesus descends with a shout (for resurrection) and trumpet noise. (<i>1Thess 4:16</i>)	6	No shout mentioned (<i>Rev 19:11-21</i>)
7	Occurs as a thief in the night, at the 'no man knows the day or hour' festival of the Feast of Trumpets. (<i>Mat 24:43; 1Thess 5:4-6; Rev 3:3</i>)	7	Occurs at end of 7 years of Tribulation; exact day predicted; 3.5 years or 1260 days after the abomination of desolation: (<i>Dan 9:24-27, 12:11-12; Rev 11:2, 12:6,14, 13:5</i>)
8	It is likened to the abduction of the bride during the Jewish Wedding, and the union of the bride and groom, which occurs at the start of the 7 day bridal week. (<i>Gen 29:22-28, Judges 14:1-18</i>)	8	Is likened to the marriage feast, which occurs after the 7 day bridal week, returning from the wedding. (<i>Luke 12:36; Rev 19</i>)
9	The dead in Christ rise and together with then living will be changed into their new bodies and leave Earth with Jesus. (<i>1Thess 4:14-16</i>)	9	Christians return with Jesus in already resurrected bodies riding on white horses. (<i>Rev 19:11-21</i>)
10	Jesus returns as a savior from wrath (<i>Luke 21:36; Rom 5:9; 1Thess 1:10, 5:9; Rev 3:10</i>)	10	Jesus returns on a white horse, full of wrath. (<i>Rev 19:11</i>)
11	A message of hope and comfort (<i>1Thess 4:18; Titus 2:13; 1John 3:3</i>) Like the days of Noah and Lot, which show deliverance and salvation from judgment. 2 Peter 2:7-9, Mat 24:37-44	11	A message of judgment and woe (<i>Joel 3:12-16; Amos 5:18; Mal 4:5; Rev 19:11-21</i>) Like the plagues of Egypt, many of which are mirrored in Revelation, pouring out his Wrath, and He comes after the judgments.

Other Names For The Rapture

While we have noted that the rapture is mentioned in scripture, there are also other terms used referring to it. It is called “the appearing” in [Hebrews 9:28](#) and “the blessed Hope” in [Titus 2:13](#). It is called the “catching away” in [1 Thess 4:17](#) and “the changing” in [1 Cor 15:52](#). It is called “the entering the bridal chamber” in [Isa 26:19-21](#), “the gathering” in [2 Thess 2:1](#) and “the manifesting of the Sons of God” in [Rom 8:18-25](#). It is called “the mercy” in [Jude 21](#), “the receiving” in [John 14:3](#), “the redemption of the body” in [Rom 8:18-25](#) and “the rescue/deliverance” in [1 Thess 1:10](#). As mentioned previously, it is called “the rescue/escape” in [Dan 12:1-2](#), it is also called “the revelation of Jesus Christ” in both [1 Cor 1:7](#) and [1 Pet 1:13](#) and finally it is called “the transformation” in [Phil 3:20-21](#).

Past Raptures

Yes, there have been raptures in the bible before we get the future one. Enoch was taken up by God and translated as referenced in [Heb 11:5](#). In the *Ancient Seder Olam*, a respected history of Jewish history this translation is referred to as a rapture. Elijah, the prophet was carried up to Heaven in a chariot of fire as described in [2 Kings 2:11-12](#). *The Ancient Seder Olam* also notes that this was a rapture. Of course, Jesus ascended after He was resurrected so this is added to our list. Philip was taken from one part of the world to another as mentioned in [Acts 8:39-40](#) although in this case his body was not changed to an immortal one.

Living For The Blessed Hope

This means we don't just believe Jesus *will* come-we live like He *could* come at any moment. That expectation makes us different. It pulls us out of drifting, out of panic, and out of living for this world like it's permanent. We stay watchful, faithful, and focused - not to earn salvation, but because we love the One who saved us and we want to be ready. This hope also steadies us when the world feels darker. God's judgment is real for a world that keeps rejecting Him, but the Blessed Hope reminds us that Jesus is not preparing His Bride for wrath - He's preparing His Bride for Himself. So, we don't anchor our peace to headlines, governments, or "better times." We anchor it to Christ and His promises. That's the Blessed Hope: urgency without fear, purity without pride, comfort without denial - and a joyful confidence that Jesus is coming. Now *that* is good news.