

The Rapture Or Second Coming?

Are They The Same Event Or Two Separate Ones?

By B. D. Tate

Introduction:

What is the Rapture? The Rapture refers to the "Catching away" or the "departure" of the saints from this world. Why would God take away his saints from the earth? Didn't Jesus say, "*The meek shall inherit the earth? (Matt. 5:5)*"

It is true that God's saints do inherit the earth but other events dictate that there will be a removing of the saints of God from the final week called the **Tribulation!** The tribulation, also called "Jacob's Trouble," is the final week determined for the Jewish people.

Dan. 9:24 "**Seventy weeks** are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall **be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks**; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

From the time of the call for the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem from Babylon until the messiah the Prince was cut off, was sixty-nine weeks (Each week represents seven actual years). It took the Israelites roughly 49 years to build the second Temple (seven weeks). Then it was sixty-two weeks until the Messiah (Jesus was born, lived, and was crucified).

The final week is described in scripture at the culminating week that climaxes in the Millennial (1,000 years) Reign of Christ. The events of the tribulation are ended by the **Second Coming** of Christ to the earth. Jesus said,

Mt 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 "**And unless those days were shortened, no flesh** would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Special Note: Jesus said **no flesh** would be saved meaning that every human being would die. This strongly implies that the elect (those coming to Christ during the tribulation are still flesh and blood natural bodied). It also means that flesh and blood born people will enter into the millennial reign and continue to propagate. At the Second Coming Christ comes to the earth and there is no description of a resurrection occurring. The elect are gathered together from the four corners of the earth to Jesus at Jerusalem. Jesus has come with the saints who were invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19: 7, 8). This would also imply that God's saints will consist of two categories going into the thousand year reign of Christ; those with glorified bodies (raptured) and those still flesh and blood who survived alive during the Great Tribulation.

Two Different Events!

The **Second Coming of Christ and the Rapture** are two separate events for two different purposes. **It is the purpose of this booklet to present the fundamental differences between them.**

The Rapture is a revelation to the Church through Paul while the Second Coming is a major theme that begins in the Old Testament prophets, is repeated by Jesus, and is again confirmed in the New Testament. Jesus' teaching primarily focused on the Second Coming and addressing the Jewish nation. His teachings in several parables are keys however, to understanding the rapture. He alludes to it but does not specifically reveal the rapture. Some of the confusion regarding these two events, the Rapture and the Second Coming, happens when passages are not separated. Some passages are specifically about the Second Coming while others are referring to the Rapture.

There Are Two Major Themes

Two major themes from the Old Testament that **foreshadow the Rapture** and will help us understand the **purpose of the rapture.**

Noah

First, the scripture says,

Luke 17: 26 "**And as it was in the days of Noah**, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 "They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

As in the days of Noah so shall it be when the Son of Man comes (Second Coming). In remembering the days of Noah (Gen. 6), we read that the earth was filled with violence; God was grieved that He had made man for they only thought and did evil all the days of their lives. In this account, God decided to judge them by destroying all living things that had breath. God decided to flood the earth and destroy it by water. Yet, Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord. God told Noah to build an ark that eventually saved eight people and all the animals and living creatures He sent him. God did not destroy the earth until the ark was built. It took Noah 120 Years to build it. Only after they were safely in the Ark and God shut the door (rapture type), did the flood come and wash them all away. God removed Noah and his family from the judgment—saving them from it (tribulation type).

Sodom And Gomorrah

Second, the scripture continued:

Luke 17: 28 "**Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot:** They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

29 "**but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom** it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Sodom and Gomorrah were terrible cities of violence and blatant, open and aggressive homosexuality. A deplorable sinful condition existed. God sent The Angel of the Lord with two angels to Abraham and told him what they were about to do (Gen.18). Abraham knowing that his nephew Lot and family were there began to intercede that God would not destroy the cities if fifty righteous people lived there. Then Abraham began to implore that God would not destroy the cities if forty-five, forty, or thirty lived there. Finally reducing the number to ten righteous people, God agreed that He would not destroy (bring judgment) the cities because them. **As the story unfolds we find that God would not destroy the city if one righteous person lived there—Lot!** When the two angels arrived they command Lot, his wife, and two daughters to leave, saying, “We cannot destroy this city until you leave!” God has not appointed the righteous to wrath (I Thes. 5:9)! Lot and his family were being taken out of harm’s way (rapture type) before the terrible time of destruction (tribulation type).

Jesus said that just as it was in these two situations so it will be when the Son of Man comes again. God is going to remove from harm’s way (to take out of the world), His Church from the wrath of God upon a sinful world before the final tribulation period (judgments and wrath of God).

The scriptures teach us that the saints are not appointed for wrath. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we pass from death to life, from the kingdom of darkness, to the kingdom of His dear Son. This verse in context was written concerning the events surrounding the rapture.

1Th 5:9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

The "Day of the Lord" is an event written about over 300 times in the Bible, it is a day of God's wrath upon the earth. It is the time of Jacob's Trouble—the Great day of Tribulation. Or as one put it, it is a great troubled birth to bring in the millennial reign of Christ.

Paul's Revelation Of The Rapture

The apostle Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us about an event that Jesus doesn't openly reveal. Jesus' teaching and ministry was to the Jews. His teaching about the end times is mainly addressing the Jews, their plight, and their situation. This is because as this verse testifies Jesus was sent to the Jews first!

Mt 15:24 But He answered and said, "**I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**"

The Church isn't really understood until Jesus dies and is resurrected. Then the Church age begins when the Holy Spirit descends upon them at Pentecost. The Church age itself was a mystery until it's unveiling. But, Paul teaches us about **an event** that corresponds to, but is different in character, to Jesus' Son of Man appearance (Second Coming).

The Rapture Has These Major Characteristics:

1) Jesus is coming **for His bride** (the saints) as a groom. (Matt. 25 "The parable of the wise & foolish virgins.")

2) We are **going to a wedding feast**. The Rapture will take the Church/Bride out of the way to bring the in the final 70th week of Daniel's prophecy concerning the Children of Israel. (Rev. 19:7, 8; Luke 12:36; Matt. 22 "The parable of the Wedding Feast.")

3) **The dead in Christ shall rise**. Those who are asleep in Christ will rise first ... (I Cor. 15:52; I Thes. 4:16)

4) **We will meet Him in the air! (Clouds)** Those who are alive and remain "*shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*" (I Thes. 4:17)

5) **This is a "mystery" that only the saints will see** the Lord and experience. Like a "thief in the night." Those who are ready to go, will go, those who are not will be left behind. The world will experience the aftermath. (I Cor. 15; Matt. 25 "The parable of the wise and & foolish virgins"; I Thes. 5:2)

6) **The "restraint" will be taken out of the way**. That which is restraining the "lawless one" will be removed then the antichrist will be revealed. (II Thes. 2:7)

Paul wrote:

*"Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound **and the dead shall be raised ...** "* (I Cor. 15:51-52)

Also,

I Thes. 4:16 "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;

17 and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 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 so shall we ever be "with the Lord."

Special Note: The rapture event has God bringing together the saints of God to a wedding feast in heaven. Furthermore, **it describes the resurrection of the dead in Christ** which the Second Coming of Christ doesn't include. The Second Coming of Christ has the gathering together of the elect from around the world that convert during the tribulation period. They are gathered together with Him on earth (as opposed to the clouds). Again, there is no mention of this as a resurrection!

The Second Coming Of Christ Has These Characteristics:

- 1) Jesus, the Son of Man, is coming to the **Battle of Armageddon** to destroy the armies of the Beast and the Antichrist which are surrounding Israel. **He is coming as a warrior!** (Rev. 19: 17-19)
- 2) **Jesus is coming to the earth;** the battle takes place in the valley of Megido, or Armageddon, an actual location in Israel. (Rev. 16:16)
- 3) **Jesus is coming with the saints.** *"And the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses."* (Rev. 19:14; Jude 1:14)

4) **Jesus is coming in the “wrath of Almighty God.”** *“His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns ... He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, riding a white horse. **He is coming to destroy the armies of the earth with the breath of His mouth,** and the sword goes out to strike the nations. (Rev. 19; Matt. 24; Luke 22; Mark 13)*

5) **Jesus is coming to end the seven year Tribulation period.** (Rev. 19)

6) Jesus is coming to rule them with a rod of iron. **He will set up the millennial reign** of a thousand years. (Rev. 19 & 20)

7) **All eyes will see this event,** *“and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see** the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matt. 24:30)*

8) **Jesus is coming as one returning “... from the wedding feast.”**

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should **be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.** 9 And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Luke 12:36; Rev. 19:7, 8; Rev. 19:1)*

Special Note: The description of the army of the Lord wearing “fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the

saints..." Is consistent as those who attended the marriage supper of the Lamb and those coming *with* Jesus at His Second Coming. (Rev. 19:14; Jude 1:14)

Consider the Following Scripture Passages:

The Saints Worshipping Around The Throne

In Revelations chapter four, John is taken in the Spirit, he records:

"...I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice that I heard was, as it were, a trumpet talking with me; which said, 'Come up here and I Will show these things which must be hereafter.' And immediately I was in the Spirit and, behold, a throne was seem heaven and one sat on the throne. "

John went on to record that this throne was surrounded by twenty-four elders, and before the throne there was a "sea of glass, like crystal." This sea represents myriads of peoples, purified from their sins, spotless, without wrinkle or blemish.

Who are these people in heaven? Why would they be there? Where did they come from? It is an event before the **Second Coming of Christ** which is confirmed later in Revelations chapter nineteen. The Second Coming of Christ is an event that takes place on earth not in heaven. These saints could only be the "raptured" saints of Paul's revelation:

I Thes. 4:16 "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and

*with the trump of God;
17 and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 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 so shall we ever be "with the Lord."*

The Wedding Feast!

A Trumpet call brings John to the throne of God where myriads of saints are worshipping. This is **all during the Tribulation** period about to begin in John's Revelations (roughly chapters 4-19). In fact, we do not find the Church mentioned again until Chapter nineteen. The significance of this is that the chapters describing the Tribulation period do not mention the church on earth because they are in heaven. John wrote:

*Rev. 19:7, 8 "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thundering, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, **for the marriage of the Lamb has come**, and His wife has made herself ready." "And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."*

Then John was commanded to write:

"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! (Rev. 19:6-9)

Why would some be called but not all of the saints? Why would there be a division? It seems that the dead in Christ rise first and those who are alive and remaining are caught up *together* to meet the Lord in the air. Then, they proceed to a wedding feast that occurs during the tribulation period. During this period others come to Christ and find salvation. Certainly those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb are blessed. Certainly those who reject Christ would miss this event. But this event takes place before His Second Coming. This would mean that some of the saints who come to Christ after the rapture will also miss the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The Parable Of The Wedding Feast

Matthew chapter twenty-two teaches that God is preparing a wedding feast for His Son. He sent out His servants to call those who were invited to come to the wedding (Israel), but they were not willing. Then He said to His servants,

"The Wedding is ready, but those who are invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding".

The Jews were the ones originally invited. **The Gentiles are those being invited to the wedding now!**

The Parable Of The Wise And Foolish Virgins

Matthew chapter twenty-five teaches that we are all to be watching and waiting, ready to respond to the **Bridegroom** when He comes. The wise virgins took the oil and readied their lamps. This represents those who have received the Holy Spirit and are ready to go when the bridegroom

comes. The foolish virgins had their lamps but took no oil with them. They were not ready because they did not receive the Holy Spirit. The oil represents the Holy Spirit coming into the hearts and lives of the people. When the Bridegroom comes, five are ready; they are taken away with Him and go to the wedding feast. The other five are not ready, they are left behind. Where are they left behind? They are left in the world.

If this referred to the Second Coming then there would be confusion because Jesus is coming as a bridegroom not as a warrior (Rev. 19). The saints are taken and the ungodly are left behind. Where do the saints go? If He is coming as a bridegroom they'd be going to the wedding feast. If He's coming as a warrior (Second Coming) they would be going to a battle.

The Night One Is Taken And One Is Left

From Luke 17:33-36

"Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."

Jesus has just taught about the coming of the Son of Man and it being "...as in the days of Lot." Strongly implying that as Lot, his wife, and daughters were taken out of harm's way, so shall it be when He comes. Those that are

left behind, the foolish virgins, those left in Noah's day outside of the Ark, and those left behind in Sodom and Gomorrah, all faced or will face the wrath of God.

Special note: In this passage we have one taken during the night, one taken during the morning, and one taken during the afternoon. This would be consistent with the rapture occurring at the same time all around the world. In the world it is always morning, noon, and night at the same time somewhere. It is also interesting that Jesus said that it would be two men in bed. Would this infer homosexuality? Would this mean to confirm "...as in the days of Lot?" If so, God's grace in saving us is not based upon our sins but upon our believing and receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord. Even those who are caught up in the "gay" lifestyle can be born again and be taken.

Returning From The Wedding Feast

In Luke 12:36 Jesus speaking to the Jews says this,

*"...and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will **return from the wedding**, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately."*

This seems to strongly indicate that the master has gone onto a wedding feast. Then, returns to the Jews afterward to recover those who, after missing it the first time, are ready when He comes again.

What wedding feast did the master go to? It would have to be the one written about in Revelations:

Re 19:9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the

Lamb!" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Revelations teaches us that during the Tribulation period there will be many who will accept Christ from the nations, many will be martyred, and then there will also be many Jews who believe and are saved during this time (144,000 Jews! Rev. 7:4). This would explain why Jesus would warn them to be ready for his return after the wedding feast.

In Conclusion:

Listen to,

II Thes. 2:1-3 "Now we beg of you, brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our meeting together with Him, not to allow your minds to be readily unsettled or disturbed, either by spirit; or by message, or by letter allegedly from us, as if the day of the Lord had arrived." (This means that the Day of the Lord will not arrive until we meet together with Him in the air.)

Furthermore, vs. 3 says,

"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come the apostasy first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

For years scholars assumed that the "apostasy" Paul wrote about meant a falling away from the faith by the organized church (we certainly see that). But several modern scholars believe the root verb of the Greek, *aphistemi*, is better translated in this passage as a "departure" or

"disappearance" just as it is in eleven out of the fourteen times it appears elsewhere in the New Testament. If this is so, then it appears that

Paul wrote:

*"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come the **departure** first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*

For as long as the Church is here, so is the Holy Spirit, which the scriptures indicates that is what is restraining the demonic influence from bringing the antichrist to power. As long as believers are present to use the name of Jesus to cast out, deliver, heal, and restore, the demonic cannot rule.

*II Thes. 2:7 "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; **only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.** And then the lawless one will be revealed..."*

God has promised us that He would never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). When the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, it will be because the Church was raptured out of harm's way. Amen.

If you have been touched, or convicted of these things from reading this message, maybe you need to do something right now. The wise virgins trimmed their lamps (their spirits), with the oil of God's Holy Spirit. The gospel is supposed to be good news and it is for everyone who hears and repents. For God is not willing that anyone should perish, but repent, and come to eternal life in His Son (II

Pet. 3:9). If God is knocking on the door of your heart, this may be your opportunity to receive your salvation. For anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. What we all must do is pray. No one can save themselves, it is a gift of God's love; it is not by any good works we can do, it is through faith, responding to His call to come to Him. We are to come just as we are, praying for forgiveness in Jesus' name.

Pray this prayer: God in heaven, forgive me of my sins. I now realize that I do not know you. I am lost. Please come into my life, save me. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer with all your heart, God answered it.

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