

Chapter 2

When Will the Rapture Come?

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed --- 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.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

The word “rapture” is not found in the King James Version of the Bible. It comes from the Latin word “raptus” and in this context means moving a person from one place to another. The doctrine of the rapture is that at some point in time Christ will suddenly and without warning call His Church to move from earth to Heaven. We will be called to join Him. Our physical, natural bodies will be transformed into glorious spiritual bodies not unlike the one Jesus had when He appeared after the resurrection. Remember that He could suddenly appear from seemingly nowhere, yet He was not a ghost because He could be touched. He was more than spiritual. The best way to describe it is the same way the Bible describes it – a glorified body.

The problem is not whether there will be a rapture or not, because the Bible plainly indicates in several instances that there will be a rapture. The question is when? Some teach that the rapture will take place before any part of the tribulation period begins, while others teach that it will take place in the middle of the tribulation just before the time when God will pour His wrath out upon the earth. A third group teaches that it will all take place at the very end just before the judgment.

For many years I believed like the first group. This is the most popular version of the rapture. It seems very reassuring to believe that we can live our Christian life here on earth and be rewarded for our faithfulness by being taken out before any of these terrible things begin to happen. However, over the past few years my heart has been deeply troubled. I would begin to teach about this subject only to be pricked in my heart. It was as if I was teaching something that I knew wasn't true. It was a terrible battle for me because my heart's desire has always been to “rightly divide the word of truth.” I don't want to teach or preach something that isn't so.

I began to re-study the Books of Daniel, all the prophecies I could find concerning the end-time events and the Book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ. The more I did the more alarmed I became. As a result of those studies I have changed what I believe and teach concerning the rapture. I believe that the Bible actually teaches a mid-tribulation rapture.

Before I go any deeper into this I want to go on record as stating that I hope I am wrong. It won't hurt my feelings at all if the Lord calls us home before any of these terrible things begin to take place. I will gladly apologize to anyone who feels they need an apology right after I get finished kissing the feet of Jesus! You see I don't look forward to going through the first three and one half years of the Tribulation. I don't like pain. I am not eagerly anticipating being tortured and persecuted because I believe in Jesus Christ. It is going to be a very trying and

terrible time for believers. I don't want to go through it. So folks, I really hope I am wrong. But I'd rather be prepared and be wrong as to not be prepared and be right. For several years now I have prayed and sought the Lord as to how He would have me share the discoveries made from studying this period of time. The result is this book. I feel an urgency to share these thoughts.

Those believing in the Pre-Tribulation rapture base their teaching mainly on the phrase found at the beginning of Revelation 4. It says, "*After these things 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.'*" This group has taught that John is representative of the Church being translated to Heaven. The only similarity to this great event that could be interpreted as such is the phrase, "voice . . . of a trumpet speaking with me." The Bible does tell us that a trumpet will sound calling us to the Lord (Matthew 24:31, 1 Corinthians 15:52). From there, however, much symbolic interpretation must take place to make it fit. There are several of these "spiritual requirements" but the one that bothers me the most is the sea of glass before the throne of God (Revelation 4:6). In this incident that sea of glass is empty. No one stands on it. But in Revelation 15:2 this same sea of glass is mixed with fire and a multitude is standing on it. Unless we spiritualize and symbolically interpret the incident, there is nothing there to indicate that the Rapture has taken place in Revelation 4. It is merely John being caught up in the Spirit in the vision being given him by our Lord Jesus Christ, to witness what will take place in Heaven while the Tribulation begins on earth.

I agree that there are some things in Revelation which are symbolic but we must use the same rule in Biblical interpretation all the way through. We can't say that we only interpret symbolically when the scripture is clear that it is symbolic and then place symbols and mysterious meanings wherever it is convenient in the Book of Revelation. When something in the scripture is to be interpreted symbolically the language is clear. For instance, in His parables Jesus often said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like . . ." It is very clear that He is using a story to compare a point. It is the same throughout the Bible. This being the case other than those who were already there, namely the Lord, the angels, and the elders, John stands by himself as the only participant at this point from earth.

For many years I was confused because it seemed like things taking place in the Book of Revelation jumped around. I've even read where some have claimed the book not to be a progressive account of events. But if one does not follow the other then we only have a chaotic mess to figure out.

Years ago I read a study on Revelation by Gordon Lindsey. I thought his point of view was interesting at the time but dismissed it because frankly it wasn't what most people were teaching. As my years of study progressed I could never seem to get his teaching out of my mind. He basically taught that the events of Revelation, especially those concerning persecution and judgment, were divided into two parts, each looking at the prophecy in different detail. The more I studied this interpretation the clearer it formed in my mind that he was right.

When read and studied in this light the Book of Revelation is progressive, makes much more sense, flows with ease and tells much more of the story and events. Despite arguments

from critics it breaks no guidelines as elsewhere found in the Bible; it fits like a well-made glove and, contrary to accusations, does not try to pinpoint a time for The Rapture and Christ's return. We were never told by Jesus that there wouldn't be signs to look for but only that we would not know the hour and the day (Matthew 24:36).

This being said, it places the Rapture of the Church in Revelation 7:9 and also in 14:12-16 (both speaking of the time just before the wrath of God is poured out on the earth).

If this is the case, then the Rapture of the Church will not take place until the first three and one half years of the Tribulation period have been completed. Again, if this is correct, a generation of Christians will see the Anti-Christ come into power and will be subject to persecution by him. I believe that we are that generation.

One of the arguments against this is that God will not pour out His wrath upon His people. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 tells us that we are not appointed to wrath but to gain salvation by Jesus Christ. This is true as every word in the Bible is true. It is speaking of the wrath of God. If it meant that God's people were never to experience the wrath of any man then Christians throughout the ages would not have experienced the terrible traumas that they have. The first generation of Christians paid dearly with their lives simply because they believed in Jesus Christ. As well, down through the ages every generation of Christians somewhere in the world has experienced the wrath of man (which is ultimately the wrath of the devil).

Yet today in many regions of the world Christians are paying for their faith with their lives, and that hatred and persecution seems to be growing throughout the world. God loves His people and even though He may allow them to be punished and persecuted by man He will not send His judgmental wrath upon His people. A mid-tribulation rapture does not alter this. If you read closely in the Book of Revelation you will discover that the first half of this period of time, all the terrible things that happen take place as a result of persecution and destruction by mankind. It is not God, but only God allowing man to climax in his wickedness.

But in the second half of the tribulation period God does send horrible creatures and terrible storms upon the earth as a result of His anger, wrath and judgment. He will remove His people from the earth before that takes place.

As I have said, unlike most writers who have done such research and insist that they are right, I hope that I am wrong. It is not a pleasant thought to discover that in the coming years we may experience poverty like never before. I don't look forward to a time when we can't buy or sell without taking the mark of the beast. I'm not happy that the chance exists that I could literally lose my head simply because I believe in salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ. I would much rather be embarrassed for publishing something that proves me wrong than to experience these horrific consequences of being a Christian.

But I'd rather be embarrassed and apologize to you in Heaven than to remain silent and be accused by our readers and God Himself for not warning of these coming events. I would rather be prepared and sound the alarm to help others to be prepared and take the chance of being wrong than to be embarrassed before God Almighty.

The things that I am going to share in this book may result in accusation of being unpatriotic. That is the farthest thing from the truth. I love this country. I served my time in the US Army (although I saw no action during my service – however I was on call had something happened). I stand at attention and place my hand over my heart when I hear the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance. God has used the United States of America greatly in helping the world and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ through missionary service. Though we all may have a lot to complain about concerning our Government these days, still we live in the greatest country the world has ever seen. I know that, realize that and acknowledge that.

But things are changing. Times are not what they once were. Power, greed and the desire for control has grasped this country by the throat and it seems it will not let go until it has strangled the very life from us. You may be shocked and appalled at some of the things I believe God has shown me but I ask you to look at them with an open mind, seek God about them and let Him speak to your heart as to whether I am right or wrong.

I have never considered myself to be a prophet. However, after all the years of study in the scriptures God has allowed me to “rightly divide the word of truth.” Sometimes I am humbled that God would choose to reveal these things to me. At other times I am troubled because I know it will not be popular. However, the Bible also tells us that the surest sign that someone has prophesied in truth is to wait and see if it comes to pass. That is certainly the case here. I will have no trouble publishing a retraction and admitting that I am wrong if it doesn’t.

Please read this with an open mind and an open heart. Let God speak to you. Compare these things with the Word of God for yourself. Investigate it like you would if you were about to put all your savings into a financial deal. It pays to be ready and prepared and that is what this work is all about.