

Scriptures That Speak About The Rapture of The Church

I. Matthew 24

(Matthew 24:29-31, 36-41 NASB), “For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. 29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet blast, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other...But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 At that time there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.”

- a. Coming (Gk. *Parousia* - The visible coming or arrival of; and the remaining).
- b. Immediately after the tribulation of those days – This is the tribulation that was talked about in vv. 9 & 21. It is the Great Tribulation or the final 3 ½ years of this age.

(Matthew 24:9 NASB), “Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.”

(Matthew 24:21 NASB), “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will again.”

- c. The sign of the Son of Man – His visible and public post-tribulation appearing is the sign of the Son of Man. The tribes of the earth will all see him. This is the only coming (*parousia*) depicted in this scripture. There is no other “secret” coming found in scripture.
- d. With a great trumpet blast – This great trumpet blast (also mentioned in *1 Corinthians 15, & 1 Thessalonians 4*) is a reference to the seventh Trumpet in *Revelation 11:15-19*.
- e. Gather together His elect - (Gk. *Episynagō* - gather together in one place). Jesus says this gathering of the elect takes place in the sky. The only gathering of the righteous in this passage appears only after the “tribulation of those days”.
 - i. Elect (chosen ones) – Some think this is a reference to Israel (not the rest of the body of Christ). This however, is not the most obvious understanding of “elect”. Early Christians usually understood this term with respect to themselves (*Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1*).
- f. About the day or hour – A reference to the coming (*parousia*) in verses 30-31.
- g. Will be just like the days of Noah – Noah’s day was an extended period of judgment comparable to the Great Tribulation. It was characterized by sudden destruction. The wicked were “taken away” by surprise. God warned Noah and gave Him divine blueprints to thrive in the hour of judgment.

(Hebrews 11:7 NASB), “By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household...”

(Genesis 7:4 NASB), “For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and I will wipe out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”

- h. One taken one left – The context clearly shows that the ones taken (from the field and at the mill) are taken to “sudden destruction”. In Luke’s account of this teaching the disciples ask, “where are they taken lord?” and Jesus responds by saying, “*Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather*” (Luke 17:37).

II. 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

(1 Corinthians 15:5-52 NASB), “Now I say this, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: “Death has been swallowed up in victory. 55 Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- a. I am telling you a mystery – What was once a mystery, Paul is unveiling and making it common and comprehensible truth. The “mystery” is that believers will be changed.
- b. We will all be changed – (Changed - Gk. *allaso* – to transform)
 - i. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye – our transformation will only take a moment.
- c. At the last trumpet – Paul specifies when this transformation takes place; At the last trumpet. The last trumpet is the 7th trumpet in the book of Revelation.
 - i. Some might say the “last trumpet” cannot refer to the seventh trumpet of Revelation because John hadn’t even written Revelation yet. Paul is actually referring to the “great trumpet blast” in Jesus’ teaching in *Matthew 24:31* (Which we believe is the same as the 7th trumpet of Revelation). If our transformation takes place at the “last trumpet”, logically, there wouldn’t be any other trumpets after the great (seventh) trumpet blast in Revelation.
- d. Death has been swallowed up in victory – Paul not only connects our resurrection to the last trumpet, but also connects our resurrection to the swallowing up of death, which is the “last enemy” of believers (*1 Cor. 15:26*). If we’re transformed before the tribulation, and death is defeated, there cannot be another “last enemy” to defeat.

(1 Corinthians 15:26 NASB), “The last enemy that will be abolished is death.”

III. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-5 NASB), “Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit, or a message, or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 No one is to deceive you in any way! For it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?”

- a. Paul ties together the Coming of our Lord (*parousia*), our gathering together to Him, and the day of the Lord. They are all events that happen on the same day, which is foundational to understanding this

passage. Reading this text without having any preconceived ideas, one would not assume our “catching up” and “His coming” were separate events that take place seven years apart.

- b. The coming of our Lord Jesus – (Gk. *Parousia* - The visible coming or arrival of; and the remaining).
- c. Our gathering together to Him – (Gk. *Episynagoge* – assembly; gathering together in one place). This is a reference to us being “caught up”(similar to the phrase used for “caught up to meet Him” used in *1 Thessalonians 4*).
- d. Day of the Lord – Context suggests that the “Day of the Lord” refers to Jesus’ coming and our gathering to Him. Paul refers to the “Day of the Lord” in his other letters as; coming like a thief in the night (*1 Thessalonians 5:2*), a day of reward that believers look to (*2 Corinthians 1:14*), and a day of Jesus’ public revelation that believers await (*1 Corinthians 1:7*).
 - i. In light of the Old Testament, the “Day of the Lord” is also a day when God will destroy the wicked (*Isaiah 13:6, 9; Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18–20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:17, 14*).
 - ii. Apostasy comes first & man of Lawlessness is revealed – Paul lists two events that must precede Jesus’ second coming in order that the Thessalonians Church would not be tricked into thinking the Day of the Lord had already come. The two events are the Apostasy (Gk. “*apostasia*” – a desertion or departure from the faith; great falling away) and the revealing of the man of lawlessness (antichrist). The antichrist is not revealed as a man of lawlessness until the abomination of desolation which takes place 3 ½ years into the tribulation period).

IV. Revelation 20:4-6

(Revelation 20:4-6 NASB), “Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

- a. This passage promises resurrection for those who were martyred under the reign of the antichrist. This post-Tribulational resurrection of believers is expressly called “the first resurrection”. This clearly and simply means there can be any eternal resurrection before this one.

V. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 NASB), “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. 15 For we say this 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, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore, comfort one another with these words.”

- a. We who are alive and remain until the coming (*Parousia*) of the Lord – Paul understood there to be believers alive at the second coming of Jesus. In the previous chapter, Paul prays for believers to remain

blameless until “the coming” of the Lord. Paul would not pray this prayer if he understood the saints to be gone at the time of the second coming.

(1 Thessalonians 3:13 NASB), “So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”

- b. Descend from heaven – (Gk. Katabaino – To literally come down, go down). Each New Testament usage of this expression refers to a full descent to earth, when tested by it’s context. (***Matthew 28:2; Luke 9:54; John 1:32, 51; 3:13; 6:33, 38, 41, 50–51, 58; Acts 11:5; Revelation 10:1–2; 13:13; 16:21; 20:9, 21:2***).
- c. With a shout, with the voice of the archangel – At His coming, there is a loud shout and the voice of an archangel. The nations will hear this shout; His coming is not a quiet or secret event.
- d. The trumpet of God – This trumpet is the same trumpet that Jesus spoke of, and that Paul spoke to the Corinthian Church. His return is loud and dramatic and is meant to capture the attention of the whole world, displaying that God is not ashamed to be joined with His bride.
- e. Then we who are alive, who remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air – (Caught up – Gk. *Harpazo* – to snatch or catch away) At the great trumpet, God snatches up the believers to meet Him in the air. This will be a glorious sign and final judgment of God on the unbelieving world.
 - i. The term used for “meet” (Gk. *apantesis* - To meet one; a (friendly) encounter) was often conjoined with *parousia*. When an important person was coming to a city (*parousia*), a delegation (group of people representing something) from the city would go out to meet (*apantesis*) him and then escort him on his way into the city. Likewise, Jesus does not meet us on our way up to heaven, but we meet Him on His way down to rule earth.
- f. Comfort one another with these words – In context, this scripture is also highlighting the fact that many believers (in Thessalonica) died and went to be with the Lord. Paul is telling the Church that at Christ’s glorious second coming, the dead saints will rise again and unite with those alive at Christ’s second coming. The Thessalonian Church was heavily persecuted for the gospel. Paul tells them to comfort one another with the hope that Christ is coming again. In his next letter to the Thessalonians, Paul expands on the Day of Lord and their vindication.

(2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 NASB), “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is only fitting, because your faith is increasing abundantly, and the love of each and every one of you toward one another grows ever greater. 4 As a result, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. 5 This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you indeed are suffering. 6 For after all it is only right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted, along with us, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God, and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These people will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified among His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—because our testimony to you was believed. 11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will consider you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, in accordance with the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”