

THE RAPTURE?

The teaching on “the rapture” is a prime example of how someone can take a few verses out of context and create a complete doctrine.

The primary passage for the Rapture doctrine is 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

“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 by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ 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 thus we shall always be with the Lord.

If in verse 15 Paul refers to the Bible, as a whole, as the Word of the Lord, than I would have to say that from cover to cover you will find no mention of “The Rapture.”

If Paul is claiming that Jesus Christ, the Word of the Lord (John 1:1-4, 14-16; Revelation 19:13) told Him this directly, I find it strange that Jesus failed to convey this to His disciples when they ask Him, “what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24: 3. See also Mark 13:3 and Luke 21: 7).

Jesus gave us an excellent outline of events that would precede His second coming. This information can be found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. A comparison of these three chapters follows.

Note the number of times Jesus uses the word “then.” Keep in mind that in English usage “then” usually means “next in order of time.”

| Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 Comparison N.K.J.V. | | |
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| MATTHEW 24 | MARK 13 | LUKE 21 |
| <p>¹ Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.</p> <p>² And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not <i>one</i> stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”</p> <p>The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age</p> <p>³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And</p> | <p>¹ Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings <i>are here!</i>”</p> <p>² And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not <i>one</i> stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”</p> <p>The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age</p> <p>³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴ “Tell us,</p> | <p>⁵ Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ⁶ “These things which you see—the days will come in which not <i>one</i> stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”</p> <p>The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age</p> <p>⁷ So they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign <i>will there be</i> when these things are about to take place?”</p> <p>⁸ And He said: “Take heed that</p> |

what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ **Then** they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And **then** many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ **Then** many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and **then** the end will come.

The Great Tribulation

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the '*abomination of desolation*,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ **then** let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his

when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

⁵ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He*,' and will deceive many. ⁷ But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows. ⁹ "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹ But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

The Great Tribulation

¹⁴ "So when you see the '*abomination of desolation*,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), **then** let those who are in Judea flee to the

you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He*,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them. ⁹ But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately."

¹⁰ **Then** He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. ¹³ But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴ Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. ¹⁷ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head shall be lost. ¹⁹ By your patience possess your souls.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

²⁰ "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, **then** know that its desolation is near. ²¹ **Then** let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those

clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 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. ²³ **Then** if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it*. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

²⁶ "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁹ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ **Then** the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a

mountains. ¹⁵ Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁷ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ¹⁸ And pray that your flight may not be in winter. ¹⁹ For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. ²⁰ And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

²¹ **Then** if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or, 'Look, *He is* there!' do not believe *it*. ²² For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³ But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴ "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ **Then** they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And **then** He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

who are in the country enter her. ²² For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴ And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁵ "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ **Then** they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

The Parable of the Fig Tree

²⁹ **Then** He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will

trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

³² "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³⁶ "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ **Then** two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched

The Parable of the Fig Tree

²⁸ "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁰ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³² "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

The Importance of Watching

³⁴ "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." ³⁷ And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. ³⁸ **Then** early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

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| <p>and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.</p> <p>The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant</p> <p>⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed <i>is</i> that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat <i>his</i> fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for <i>him</i> and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and’ will cut him in two and appoint <i>him</i> his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</p> | | |
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From one “then” to the next, Jesus mentions nothing about a “rapture.” I would have expected some mention right before or after the verses pertaining to the Great Tribulation; yet, Jesus remains silent on the subject.

Next let’s check the book of Revelation to see what it has to say. Let’s begin in chapter 5.

Revelation chapters 5 and 6 sound amazingly like Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 and in the exact order Jesus gave to the disciples.

Revelation 5:1-14

“And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” ⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in

the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

⁸ Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying:

“ You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice:

“ Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“ Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Revelation 6

First Seal: The Conqueror

“ Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.” ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Second Seal: Conflict on Earth

“When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁴ Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth

“When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come and see.” So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth

"When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see."⁸ So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

"I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 7

The Sealed of Israel

"After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.² Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,³ saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:⁵

- of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- ⁶ of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- ⁷ of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- ⁸ of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed;
- of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

A Multitude from the Great Tribulation

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying:

" Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen."

¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

So he said to me, "**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** ¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

From the beginning of chapter 5 till the end of chapter 7 there are only two groups of people that are mentioned. One might think that if the "church" was to be "raptured" before the great tribulation chances are the "church" would be mentioned somewhere in these three chapters.

What does Revelation say about these two groups of people?

It appears the first group is found under the altar before the Great Tribulation takes place. These were "slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held."

Revelation 6:9-11

"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those **who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.** ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.

The second group comes out of the Great Tribulation.

Revelation 7:9-11

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying:

" Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,

Be to our God forever and ever.
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¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

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So he said to me, “**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation**, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

There’s no mention of the “church” being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord.

Another major Book on end-time prophecy is the Book of Daniel. So let’s check there. Daniel 12 seems to describe the Great Tribulation period. Prior to Chapter 12 there’s nothing that speaks of the “church” being raptured; but once again, the picture is persecution and martyrdom for the people of God. No easy outs here either.

Daniel 12:1-10

“At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time.

And at that time your people shall be delivered,
Every one who is found written in the book.

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

³ Those who are wise shall shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.

⁴ “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” ⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. ⁶ And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders *be*?”

⁷ Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and half a *time*; and **when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.**

⁸ Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*?”

⁹ And he said, “Go *your way*, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ¹⁰ **Many shall be purified, made white, and refined**, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

Now let’s look again at **1 Thessalonians 4:16**

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Following are two passages in the Book of Revelation declaring the return of Christ Jesus.

This first passage is recorded as occurring after the second woe is past, which occurs some time after the Great Tribulation.

Revelation 11:15-19

"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying:

" We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,
Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.
¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

This second passage describes Jesus returning as the King of kings.

Revelation 19:11-16

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

No where can I find Christ coming to snatch away the "church" to protect them while the rest of mankind goes through a series of horrors.

What about **1 Thessalonians 4:17**? What, if any thing does the Word have to say about us being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air?

1 Thessalonians 4: 17 above states,

"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 thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Caught Up (726) αρπαζω, — *har-pad'-zo*; from a derivative of (138) (αἰρεομαι - haireomai); to *seize* (in various applications): — (Translated in King James version as) – catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force).

Following are additional Bible passages pertaining to the return of Christ. Each fills in a little more of the puzzle regarding the order of events.

Acts 1:9-11

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? **This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.**”

Matthew 16:24-27

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the **Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.**

Matthew 24:30-31

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, 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.** ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and **they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

Mark 13:24-27

“But in those days, **after that tribulation**, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ **Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.** ²⁷ And **then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect** from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Gather Together (1996) επισυναγω, — *ep-ee-soon-ag'-o*; from (1909) (επι - epi) and (4863) (συναγω - sunago); to *collect upon* the same place: — (Translated in King James version as) – gather (together).

Elect (1588) εκλεκτος, — *ek-lek-tos'*; from (1586) (εκλεγομαι - eklegomai); *select*; by Implication *favorite*: — (Translated in King James version as) – chosen, elect.

What did the Prophet Zechariah prophecy regarding this subject.

Zechariah 14:1-17

“ Behold, the day of the LORD is coming,
And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
² For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken,

The houses rifled,
And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity,
But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

³ Then the LORD will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.

⁴ **And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,**
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
From east to west,
Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
And half of it toward the south.

⁵ Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee
As you fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

**Thus the LORD my God will come,
And all the saints with You.**

⁶ It shall come to pass in that day
That there will be no light;
The lights will diminish.

⁷ It shall be one day
Which is known to the LORD—
Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen
That it will be light.

⁸ And in that day it shall be
That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward the eastern sea
And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.

⁹ And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be—

“ The LORD *is* one,”
And His name one.

¹⁰ All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin’s Gate to the place of
the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses.

¹¹ *The people* shall dwell in it;
And no longer shall there be utter destruction,
But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

¹² And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought
against Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

¹³ It shall come to pass in that day
That a great panic from the LORD will be among them.
Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor,
And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand;

¹⁴ Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.
And the wealth of all the surrounding nations
Shall be gathered together:
Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

¹⁵ Such also shall be the plague
On the horse *and* the mule,
On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in those camps.
So *shall* this plague *be*.

¹⁶ And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.

Note - verse 4 is the fulfillment of Acts 1:9-11

Note - Verse 5, the saints are coming back with the Lord

Note - Verses 16-17, where will they go to worship the king?

There's no mention in the above verse that we will meet the Lord in the air and be carried off to heaven. These verses speak of a gathering together of the Lord's chosen people for the purpose of returning with Him to the earth. His reign and His kingdom will be on the earth. To be with Him, Jesus Christ, means we will be on the earth.

Revelation 30:4-6

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. **And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

It is recorded in Revelation 2 that Jesus said,

Revelation 2:26-27

"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

²⁷ *He shall rule them with a rod of iron;*

They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels—
as I also have received from My Father;

Even in Jesus' parables He spoke of these things. For example, Luke 19:11-27

Luke 19:11-27

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. ¹² Therefore He

said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this *man* to reign over us.'

¹⁵ "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. ¹⁶ Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, '**Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.**' ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹ **Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'**

²⁰ "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹ For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²² And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

²⁴ "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.' ²⁵ (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

²⁶ 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ²⁷ But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.'"

The receiving of His kingdom was foretold in the Book of Daniel.

Daniel 7:9-14

"I watched till thrones were put in place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow,
And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire;
¹⁰ A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered to Him;
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was seated,
And the books were opened.

¹¹ "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

¹³ " I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ **Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,**
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.

CONCLUSION

I believe we are truly in the last days and the time of Christ's return is nearer than when we first believed. I too would love a quick fix. An easy exit off this planet when the time came; but is the "rapture" truth, according to the Word of God, or just another deception? You decide.

This study was by no means exhaustive. There is far more to learn on this subject if we will prayerfully ask the Lord to show us in His Word.

I hope this study is a help to you. I hope you also see the dangers in :

- 1) Taking verses out of context
- 2) Misapplying and adding your own interpretation
- 3) Not taking the time to prayerfully study for yourself
- 4) Trusting more in others than in God to teach you the Word of truth

In the book of Genesis, God did not remove Noah when He decided to destroy the rest of His creation; yet, Noah was protected. God provided him with a place of safety, the ark.

In like manner, The Lord tells us that if we dwell in Him and in His Word, He is our protector, our place of safety. Can we take Him at His Word? Yes!

John 14:12-18

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

John 15:5-8

"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Psalm 91

¹ He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the LORD, "*He is* my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."

- ³ Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
 And from the perilous pestilence.
- ⁴ He shall cover you with His feathers,
 And under His wings you shall take refuge;
 His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler.
- ⁵ You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
 Nor of the arrow *that* flies by day,
- ⁶ *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness,
 Nor of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday.
- ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side,
 And ten thousand at your right hand;
 But it shall not come near you.
- ⁸ Only with your eyes shall you look,
 And see the reward of the wicked.
- ⁹ Because you have made the LORD, *who is* my refuge,
 Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
- ¹⁰ No evil shall befall you,
 Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
- ¹¹ For He shall give His angels charge over you,
 To keep you in all your ways.
- ¹² In *their* hands they shall bear you up,
 Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- ¹³ You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
 The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
- ¹⁴ "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
 I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
- ¹⁵ He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
 I *will be* with him in trouble;
 I will deliver him and honor him.
- ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him,
 And show him My salvation."

Links to articles on the Rapture

Rapture

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture>

History of Rapture doctrine by azindy

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/08/08/234333/-History-of-Rapture-Doctrine>

Outline Studies On The Rapture Question

<http://www.theologue.org/OSRQ-A2.html>