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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

Introduction

A biblical event will occur in the future that will have an unimaginable impact upon every living person who remains upon earth. For in an instant of time, Jesus will return to claim those whom He purchased by His sacrificial blood on the cross. For those whose sins are eternally forgiven—because they believe in the Son of God—will be transformed from their fleshly body into their spiritual body. Although the word "rapture" is not in the Bible, "rapture" is derived from the Greek word "harpazo," which means to snatch away, take by force, and claim for one's self.

"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." I Corinthians 15:51-52

"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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. 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. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words." I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Take some time to mentally visualize the consequences of the rapture. In terms of significance, one may determine that other than the flood, this global event will supersede any other event in the history of man. In the twinkling of an eye—in a fraction of a second—a countless number of persons will cease to physically exist on earth.

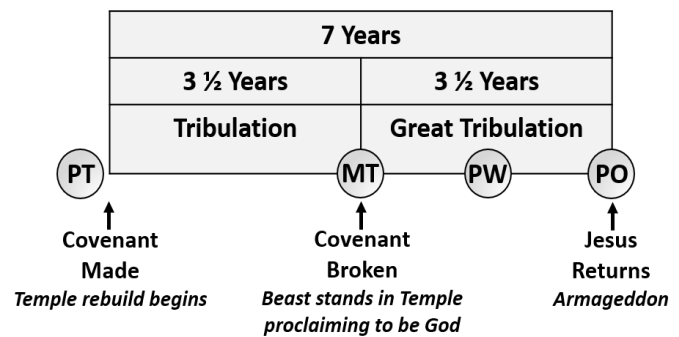
Take time to consider:

- News reports attempting to explain the event.
- The degree of:
 - Changes and social upheaval that will occur in daily life.
 - Systemic disruption to the global economy.
- Demonic-inspired conspiracy theories and lies that will redirect the truth about what occurred.
- For those who remain:
 - The depth of loss and mourning for loved ones and friends.
 - The degree of anxiety and terror experienced by those who knew but rejected the truth.

Jesus said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 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, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Matthew 24:36-44

The Rapture

There are four basic beliefs when the rapture will occur: Pre-Tribulation (PT), Mid-Tribulation (MT), Pre-Wrath (PW), and Post-Tribulation (PO).



Pre, Mid, Wrath, and Post Belief Overview

Pretribulationists believe:

- God has not and will not pour out His wrath upon His faithful. Therefore, He will extract the church prior to when He delivers His wrath.
- The entire 7-year Tribulation is filled with God's wrath.
- The rapture is imminent and may occur at any time.
- Christ's second coming is comprised of two separate events (rapture and return).
- The Holy Spirit (via the church) has restrained the works of Satan. However, when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way (to enable and empower Satan during the last days), this also means the church (which seeks to circumvent the works of Satan) is removed from earth.

Midtribulationists believe:

- God has not and will not pour out His wrath upon His faithful. Therefore, He will extract the church prior to when He delivers His wrath.
- Tribulation will occur during the 1st half—not because of God's wrath, but because of:
 - Satan's granted power upon earth to influence and drive man's wrath via wars.
 - The consequences of war are destruction, death and famine.
- The 2nd half of the Tribulation (the Great Tribulation) is when God's wrath will occur. Therefore, the church will be raptured prior to this time, or near the midpoint of the Tribulation when the Antichrist stands in the Temple proclaiming to be God.
- Christ's second coming is comprised of two events (rapture and return).

Pre-Wrath believe:

- God has not and will not pour out His wrath upon His faithful. Therefore, He will extract the church prior to when He delivers His wrath.
- The Tribulation is segmented into three periods.
 - The first 3½ years is the first period (i.e. the "beginning of sorrows" Matthew 24:8).
 - The second half of the Tribulation (42 months) is segmented into two periods of time:
 - The Great Tribulation (lasting 21 months).
 - The Day of the Lord (or the time of God's wrath—which begins with the opening of the 7th seal and will occur during the final 21 months of the 7-year Tribulation).
- Christ's second coming is comprised of two events (rapture and return).

Post-Tribulationists believe:

- The church will go through the Tribulation and God's wrath, and will be raptured at the end.
- Christ's second coming is comprised of one event. The raptured church will meet Jesus in the air when He returns.

Belief	Pre	Mid	Wrath	Post
God has not and will not pour out His wrath upon His faithful. Therefore, God will extract the church prior to when He delivers His wrath.	√	√	√	
The entire 7-year Tribulation is filled with God's wrath.	√			
The 2 nd half of the Tribulation is when God will pour out His wrath.		√		
The final 21 months of the Tribulation is when God will pour out His wrath.			√	
The rapture is imminent and may occur at any time.	√			
Christ's second coming is comprised of 2 separate events: rapture & return.	√	√	√	
He who restrains (2 Thess 2:1-8) is both the Holy Spirit and the church.	√			

These different beliefs exist because the Bible does not state a specific date, time, or event when the rapture will occur. However, there are 3 absolutes in the Bible regarding the Rapture:

- Jesus will come at a time no one expects (Matthew 24:44, Luke 12:40).
- The Rapture will occur speedily and “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52).
- No one knows when but the Father (Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36).

No Specific Timing of the Rapture is God's Design

To more fully understand why no one knows but God, be absolutely “truthful” to yourself in answering each of the questions below.

How would your life change if you knew the rapture would occur:

- Tomorrow.
 - What would you do in the few hours that remain?
 - If you do not know Jesus, would you accept Him as your Savior and Lord?
 - If you know Jesus, would this change your witness to others?
- Next year.
 - What would seek to change and/or accomplish during the months that remain?
 - Would become more focused upon God as the months progressed and as the “time” became closer—culminating during the last few days when you finally accept God's forgiveness?
- 10 years from now?

Your personal reflection and response to each of the above scenarios provide an explanation as to why the Bible does not provide timing specifics. As such, Jesus said we need to be continually ready for His return. In addition, anyone who provides a specific date when the Rapture will occur is a fraud, and is likely demonically inspired. Many persons have been led astray—and some have perished—because of a “spiritual leader” who “discovered” or received a “divine revelation” of when Jesus Christ would return.

Personal Note: I initially desired to include biblical scripture that supported each rapture timing belief, and scripture that argues against each belief. However, each attempt to do so resulted in me experiencing a spiritual “uneasiness.” My discomfort is because of my desire to:

- Never write content that conflicts with someone's foundational beliefs.
- Write content that speaks to the heart and not to the mind.

In truth, arguments for and against each belief speaks to the mind and not the heart.

Conclusion

With regards to the timing of the rapture, it is important to note that (1) we humans have a basic need to fully understand everything, and (2) we have a tendency to use analytical thinking to figure out what we do not understand. As such, it is important for Christians to remember that others will have a different view of when the rapture will occur. But what is most important, those who believe in a pre-Tribulation rapture should never judge, condemn, nor argue with those who believe in a mid-, pre-wrath, or post-Tribulation rapture—and vice versa—but express humility and grace as ideas are shared.

Besides, when we look at things from a “distance” and recognize what is important, our entrance into Heaven is not based upon whether we believe in a pre, mid, wrath or post rapture. Our entrance is based upon God’s grace and our faith. Therefore, in lieu of determining when the rapture will occur, it is spiritually prudent for every Christian to:

- Know the last day signs and watch.
- Continually align our hearts with the One who will come in the twinkling of an eye.
- Pray for the best.
- Prepare for the worst.

Jesus said, **“Be ready and dressed. Have your lights burning. Be like men who are waiting for their owner to come home from a wedding supper. When he comes and knocks on the door, they will open it for him at once. Those servants are happy when their owner finds them watching when he comes. For sure, I tell you, he will be dressed and ready to care for them. He will have them seated at the table. The owner might come late at night or early in the morning. Those servants are happy if their owner finds them watching whenever he comes. But understand this, that if the owner of a house had known when the robber was coming, he would have been watching. He would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You must be ready also. The Son of Man is coming at a time when you do not think He will come.”**
Luke 12:35-40

For more information on last day signs, read the following lessons on UniqueBibleStudies.com



All for His Glory!
Harold D. Thomas

Can you think of at least one person who may benefit from this lesson? If yes, pass it on!