

Before the Tribulation

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for the marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7) before Jesus' Second coming which is at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 19:11-14).

❖ Twenty four elders (Rev. 4:4), including representatives of the church ages, will be in heaven before the seventh seal is opened (Rev. 8:1).

❖ It is never mentioned in God's Word that the church will go through the Tribulation. The church is no longer mentioned in what occurs on the earth after Rev. 4:1, because the church is no longer here! The tribulation is mostly about Israel, not the church!

Since we are currently in the last church age, the rapture mentioned in Revelation 4:1 is the next event in God's plan. It could be today or tomorrow. The big question is are you absolutely, positively sure you will be included in the rapture? If not, now may be your last opportunity to trust Christ as Saviour and be saved!

Previous Examples of "Raptures"

Some do not believe the Rapture could happen. Reading the Scriptures, one will learn that

**"When Jesus comes
for His own in the air,
will you meet Him?"**

there are examples of the Rapture that have already occurred, and another that will occur in the future:

Enoch:

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:24

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. 11:5

Elijah:

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." II Kings 2:11

Jesus:

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he [Jesus] went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;"

Acts 1:10

The two witnesses:

"... And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."

Rev. 11:3-12

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The Rapture

Bill Brinkworth

"... 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them



which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which 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 ..."

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Hundreds of biblical prophecies have been fulfilled. In I Thessalonians 4 there is one mentioned that will be the next to be fulfilled. Billions, in the last two thousand years, have been waiting for this one (vs. 13-18) to be accomplished. It is the great catching up of the dead in Christ and the Christians that are living (vss. 16- 17) at that time.

The Greek word used for "caught up" (vs. 17) is "harpazō", and it means "to catch away, to seize, pluck, pull, and take by force". It is very similar to the English word "rapture", which means "transport, seizing away". Although the word "rapture" is not used in the preserved King James text, this futuristic happening is often referred to by that name.

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Revelation 4 signals an event that is a most anticipated promise given to believers. Every Christian from the time of the first church anxiously awaited the event that is described in this verse. Revelation 4:1 announces the occurrence of the long-awaited rapture!

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of

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When the Lord shouts, the archangel's voice is sounded, and God's trumpet is blown, the rapture will occur (vs. 16). The first to ascend will be the dead in Christ. Those that have trusted Christ as Saviour and died will be called up. Their souls are already joined with Him (II Cor. 5:8, Eccl. 12:7) as a soul never dies; but the body sleeps (vs. 14), awaiting its wake-up call by the heavenly summoning of the rapture.

"Then we which are alive ..." (vs. 17), all Christians living at the time, will follow the dead in Christ to meet the Lord in the air with them — without dying and without going through the terrible Tribulation-time happenings. No one knows when this catching away will occur (Mat. 24:36). It could be today. It could be tomorrow or twenty years from now, but it will happen; God promised!

If the heavenly trumpet were blown to call the living saved from this world, are you absolutely, positively sure you would be called away home to heaven? What a terrible time it will be when a lot of well-intentioned, good-deeders, and many religious-but-lost find out that they never were summoned by the heavenly call. It will be

too late for those that have already heard God's message and have rejected it. What a frightful time it will be when the prophesied wrath of God is finally poured out on this earth to give those that have never heard the Gospel message a chance to turn to Christ for salvation.

If you are not sure you will be going up during the catching away, make sure of your transport "ticket" today. Admit your sinnership, and trust Christ's death on the cross as the only payment for your sins. If you do, then you will be one of many that will hear the heavenly trumpet sound its victory call to Christians one day soon.

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a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." Revelation 4:1-2

The rapture is when God says, "Enough" of rampant sin and takes his church, living and dead, out of this earth (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). After the church is removed, then all the terrible prophecies concerning God's wrathful judgment upon

the residents of the earth will begin. For the living child of God from this point on in the book of Revelation all that happens on this earth will not involve him; as he will be gone to heaven! Amen and Amen!

Although Revelation is a record of what John saw and heard revealed to Him by Jesus, it is meant to give us an understanding of what will happen in that day. It is believed that verse one is when the rapture happens because:

❖ It says "After this ...". After what? After the periods of the seven church ages are completed (Rev. 2-3). The last church age, as compared to the church of Laodicea, pictures perfectly how the majority of churches have become today. It is after God sees the last person has gotten saved, that He ends the church ages and starts a new era; an era of His judgments!

❖ "... a door was opened in heaven ..." A door is a means to pass from one place to another. This "door" moves the dead and living in Christ from this earth to the next "room"; the "room" where God is! In Revelation 3:20, the door was where Jesus was last standing. He gave all an opportunity to trust Him as Saviour one more time during the indifferent, Laodicean church-age (the "age" we are currently in). No more answered His pleas, so He opened the door of Heaven and called His own home.

❖ The trumpet of God was sounded just like it was foretold it

would be at the time of the rapture (I Thes. 4:16).

❖ A voice was heard calling John to heaven as it was prophesied (I Thes. 4:16) the church would be summoned up: "... Come up hither..."

❖ It was prophesied that the Lord would come again when the earth became like the days of Noah (Mat. 24:37-38. Luke 17:26). Those days are certainly here. After the Lord judged the world of Noah's time He sent a reminder of His judgment: the rainbow. In Rev. 4:3, there was a rainbow around God's throne. The judgment of Noah's day preserved only God's own who were inside the ark. The upcoming rapture will also have His own safely preserved (in Heaven), while God's judgment of the tribulation takes place on earth.

❖ Matthew 24:36 says that no one can know the day or hour of the Lord's Second coming. If the church were to go through the Tribulation Period, as some teach, some would know the day because it would be seven years from the signing of the seven-year covenant (Dan. 9:24-27) and 1,260 days from when the Antichrist defiles the temple (Rev. 12:6).

❖ I Thessalonians 4:18 says we are to get comfort in thinking of the Rapture. If the Rapture were to occur during the Tribulation, certainly no one would be comforted!

❖ The Church will be in heaven

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"We are going either by the clods or by the clouds. Are you ready?" — Pastor Tommy Seay