

## The Rapture

The term "rapture" comes from the Latin translation of the Greek for "caught up", from 1 Thessalonians 4:17. It refers to the translation of the church from mortality to immortality (cf. John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58).

### **Biblical terms related to the Lord's return**

1. "Parousia" meaning presence or coming.
  - In 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 5:23 it refers to the rapture.
  - In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 it refers to the second coming.
2. "Apokalupsis" meaning to reveal or revelation.
  - In 1 Corinthians 1:7 it refers to the rapture.
  - In 2 Thessalonians 1:7 it refers to the second coming.
3. "Epiphaneia" meaning to appear or to show.
  - In 1 Timothy 6:14 it refers to the rapture.
  - In 2 Timothy 4:1 it refers to the second coming.

These three terms are all non-technical. Amillennialists take all three words to refer to Christ's coming at the final judgment. Older Premillennialists over-reacted to amillennialists and said "parousia" always refers to the rapture and "apokalupsis" and "epiphaneia" always refer to the second coming.

However, it is the context that determines meaning. We must examine the passage that each word is set in and decide its reference. "Parousia" usually but not always refers to the rapture.

### **Rapture vs. Second Coming**

There is a definite distinction between the rapture and the second coming of Christ:

<u>Rapture</u>	<u>Second Coming</u>
The church will meet Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17)	The church will return to earth with Christ (Zechariah 14:4)
The church will be taken to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:17b)	The church will return to earth from heaven (Jude 14; Matthew 25:31)
Christ will come for His saints (2 Thessalonians 2:1)	Christ will come with His saints (1 Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 19:14)

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Christ Himself will gather the saints	The angels will gather the elect (Matthew 24:31)
Believers will be caught out from unbelievers (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)	Unbelievers will be gathered out first (Matthew 13:41-43)
The righteous will be removed (1 Thessalonians 4:17)	The wicked will be removed (Matthew 25:40-41)
No signs will be leading to the rapture (1 Thessalonians 5:4)	Signs will precede the second coming (Matthew 24:24)
Satan will not be bound	Satan will be bound (Revelation 20:3)

### **Scripture Passages on the Rapture**

The two central passage in Paul's epistles regarding the rapture highlight a different aspect of this event:

#### 1. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The emphasis here is on the resurrection of dead saints. The issue was what happened to those who had died before the return of Christ and Paul assures them that the dead in Christ will be resurrected just prior to the living saints being caught up in the air to be with the Lord.

#### 2. 2 Corinthians 15:51-58

The emphasis in this passage is on the translation of living saints.

### **The Church after the Rapture**

After the rapture and prior to the second coming of Christ to earth, the church will undergo a judgment. This judgment will only involve believers and the issue will not be of discipline but of reward on the basis of works which have been done while on earth. The major scripture passages regarding this judgment include:

- 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
- 2 Corinthians 5:10
- Romans 14:10

It is important to note that the quality of the works is emphasized, not the quantity.