

Eschatology

Providence Baptist Church

Week 7: The End of This Age and the Rapture of the Church

1 Thess. 4:16-18

I. The Rapture is Real – 1 Thess. 4:16-17

1 Cor. 15:50-53

Matthew Henry: At, or immediately before, this rapture into the clouds, those who are alive will undergo a mighty change, which will be equivalent to dying. This change is so mysterious that we cannot comprehend it: we know little or nothing of it...

II. The Rapture is Very Public – 1 Thess. 4:16

Matthew 24:31 – *“And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*

Revelation 1:7 – *“Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.”*

III. The Rapture Marks the End of this Age – 1 Thess. 5:1-4, 2 Thess. 2:1-4

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: The word ἀπάντησις is to be understood as a tech. term for a civic custom of antiquity whereby a public welcome was accorded by a city to important visitors. Similarly, when Christians leave the gates of the world, they will welcome Christ in the ἄρῃ, acclaiming Him as κύριος.

F.F. Bruce: When a dignitary paid an official visit or parousia [coming] to a city in Hellenistic times, the action of the leading citizens in going out to meet him and escorting him on the final stage of his journey was called the apentesis.

John Gill: Christ will now appear as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, as the Judge of the whole earth, attended with the host, or armies of heaven, and the shout of a king will be among them: perhaps the same is intended, as by the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings upon the coming of Christ, the destruction of antichrist, and the marriage of the Lamb, in Rev. 19:1, 6, 7, 14, 15.

Matthew 24:29-31 – *“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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, 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. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*

Matthew 25:31-33 – *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.”*

1 Cor. 15:51-52 – *“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 imperishable, and we shall be changed.”*

Sam Storms: The return of Christ at the close of history is a singular, unitary event.

Cornelis Venema: The teaching of a pre-tribulation rapture as understood within the framework of Dispensationalism is not founded upon the teaching of any biblical passage.

Wayne Grudem: The doctrine of a pretribulation rapture is an inference from several passages, all of which are disputed. Moreover, even if one believes this doctrine to be in Scripture, it is taught with such little clarity that it was not discovered until the nineteenth century. This does not make it seem likely.

Louis Berkhof: On the basis of Scripture it should be maintained that the second coming of the Lord will be a single event. Happily, some Premillenarians do not agree with [the] doctrine of a twofold second coming of Christ, and speak of it as an unwarranted novelty. Says Frost: “It is not generally known, and yet it is an indisputable fact that the doctrine of a pretribulation resurrection and rapture is a modern interpretation—I am tempted to say, a modern invention.” According to him it dates from the day of Irving and Darby.

3 Reasons Why Understand the Biblical Teaching of the Rapture Matters:

1. It simplifies eschatology –
2. It causes us to be prepared for the days ahead –

Sam Waldron: Satan is not so bound that he is prevented from going about as a roaring lion. He will be loosed in the future in such a way as to bring a worldwide persecution on the church. Forewarned is forearmed. There is no Christianity where there is no willingness to suffer for Christ’s name. An Easy Christianity which expects God to deliver us from all present and future tribulation and is unwilling to endure such persecution for His name is a false Christianity. The theory of a secret rapture of Christians prior to the great tribulation plays right into the hands of such Easy Christianity. Suffering is the test of true Christianity and the condition of reigning with Christ (Romans 8:16, 17; 2 Timothy 2:11-13).

3. It causes us to be more serious about evangelism –

Matthew Henry: The doctrine of the resurrection and the second coming of Christ is a great antidote against the fear of death and inordinate sorrow for the death of our Christian friends.