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The Rapture Occurs at the Coming of Christ



By Steven J. Hogan

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The next greatest event in this world is soon to take place. It's the rapture of the church, when Jesus Christ suddenly and rapidly takes the believers living on earth and brings them to Himself, and to heaven. But when is the rapture? As I've said, God doesn't tell us the exact time, but He does tell us the general time (Matthew 24:32-36). To really understand God's timing, you need to see that the rapture occurs at the coming of Christ. Now some Christians believe it happens before His coming, but that's just not true. Here are four prophecy passages making it very clear that the rapture occurs at Christ's coming:

1) 1 Thessalonians 4:15 says, *"We who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord."* The phrase *"We who are alive and remain"* speaks of the Christians alive on earth at the end of this age, and it says they will remain *"until the coming of the Lord."* 1 Thessalonians 4:17 contains the same exact phrase, *"we who are alive and remain,"* that

we saw in verse 15, but goes on to say that those who remain *"will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."* Putting verses 15 and 17 together, we see that those who remain until the coming of the Lord (15) will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (17), and are those who are raptured. It is at Christ's coming that the church is raptured and is, in fact, the first event to occur at His coming.

2) 2 Thessalonian 2:1 says, *"With regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him..."* The subject is the coming of Christ and believers being gathered to Him at that time. *"Being gathered to Him"* is referring to the rapture of the church. What else would it be? This further establishes and confirms what we saw in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17, that the rapture takes place at the coming of Christ.

3) 1 John 2:28 tells us, *"abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."* A few verses later, 1 John 3:2, referring back to 1 John 2:28, says, *"When He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He is."* When we put these verses together, we learn that we will see Christ at His appearing and His coming, and then we will be like Him, that is, be glorified. Since we are glorified at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:21-23, 51-52), then we must conclude that the church is raptured at the appearing and coming of Jesus Christ.

4) Matthew 24 focuses on Christ's coming, and is mentioned in verses 3, 27, 37, and 39. This great prophecy chapter says the rapture takes place at the coming of Christ. Let me explain. The coming of Christ is described in verse 27, *"For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be."* Verse 30 further describes His coming, *"The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky... and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory."* Then verse 31 actually describes the rapture, *"He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of*

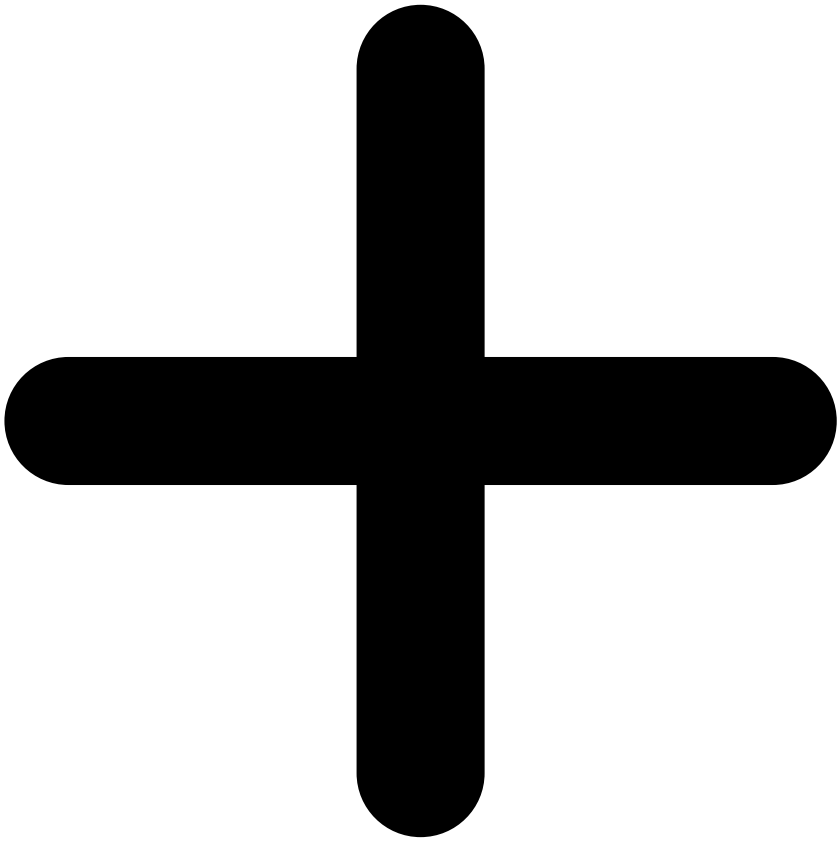
the sky to another." There's no question, no disputing the fact, that the gathering of the believers, which includes the rapture, must take place at the coming of Christ.

We have answered the *"when"* question by saying that the rapture occurs at the coming of Christ. But where, in the sequence of events described in Matthew 24, does the rapture take place? As I said, Matthew 24 speaks about the rapture of the church in verse 31. This means the rapture is after great tribulation (verses 9, 21), after the apostasy (verse 10), after the gospel is preached to all the nations (verse 14), after the Antichrist desolates the temple (verse 15), and after the signs in the skies (verse 29). Since the Antichrist is revealed at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:27), we know the rapture takes place sometime after the midpoint of the 70th week.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-9 also gives us insight as to the chronology of end-time events. *"That lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming."* This clearly states that the coming of Christ is after the revealing and coming of the Antichrist. Therefore, the rapture of the church, which occurs at Christ's coming, takes place after the Antichrist is revealed, sometime during the last half of Daniel's 70th week.

Why I am going into all this detail about the timing of the rapture? Because God repeatedly tells us about it in His Word, and therefore, it must be very important to know. The truth is, Christians will be alive on earth during the rule of the Antichrist, and during great tribulation. God doesn't want there to be any confusion, questions, doubts or errors about this. He doesn't want you to be surprised by His Son's coming, but to be working hard for Him, and ready and waiting to see Him. *"May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit, soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* 1 Thessalonians 5:23

P.S. If you have not yet read the article I wrote which goes along with this post, I encourage you to do so: Matthew 24: The Most Important Prophecy Chapter in the Bible.



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