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When Does the Rapture Take Place?



By Steven J. Hogan

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Some things about the future aren't clear at all, and other things, like when the rapture takes place, are as plain as day. You see, God wants us to have clarity as to the timing of Christ's coming and the rapture, and not be naïve, confused, or in error. As I have said before, we do not know the exact time of Christ's coming and the rapture, but we are to know the general time (Matthew 24:32-36). That's because the Father wants us to be excitedly looking forward to seeing and being with His Son.

There are two things we need to know to determine the timing of the rapture. The first is realizing that the rapture takes place at the coming of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4:15 says, *"we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord."* This means Christians will be alive on earth at the coming of Christ. Then verse 17, referring back to verse 15, says we *"who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."* By putting these two verses together, we understand that the Christians will be caught up, will be raptured (vs 17) at Christ's coming (vs 15).

2 Thessalonians 2:1 confirms this point, for we read, *"with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him."* It is at the coming of Christ that believers are being caught up (raptured) from the earth, and will be gathered together with believers who have already gone to heaven, and will *"meet the Lord in the air."* 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 says, *"those who are Christ's at His coming"* will be resurrected (glorified). Those who are glorified includes those who are raptured. Therefore, we must conclude that the rapture of the church takes place at the coming of Christ, and is, in fact, the first event to take place at His coming.

The second thing we need to know is when Christ's coming and the rapture take place in the sequence of end-time events. By studying prophecy passages we find the answer to this question. When you examine Matthew 24, you discover that the coming of Christ is spoken of in verse 30 – *"They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky."* Then verse 31 speaks about the gathering of all the believers, which includes the rapture of the Christians. *"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 the other."*

Look at Luke 21. Verse 27 says, *"They will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud…"* That's Christ's coming, and in verse 28 we read that the Christians are redeemed, delivered from the earth which, of course, occurs at the rapture. 2 Thessalonians 2:1, as I have already said, is a rapture verse. Revelation 7 talks about a great multitude of believers who have just come out of the great tribulation on earth (vs 14), and they are assembled in heaven, standing and celebrating before the Lamb, before Christ Himself (vs 9). This multitude is, no doubt, speaking of the raptured believers.

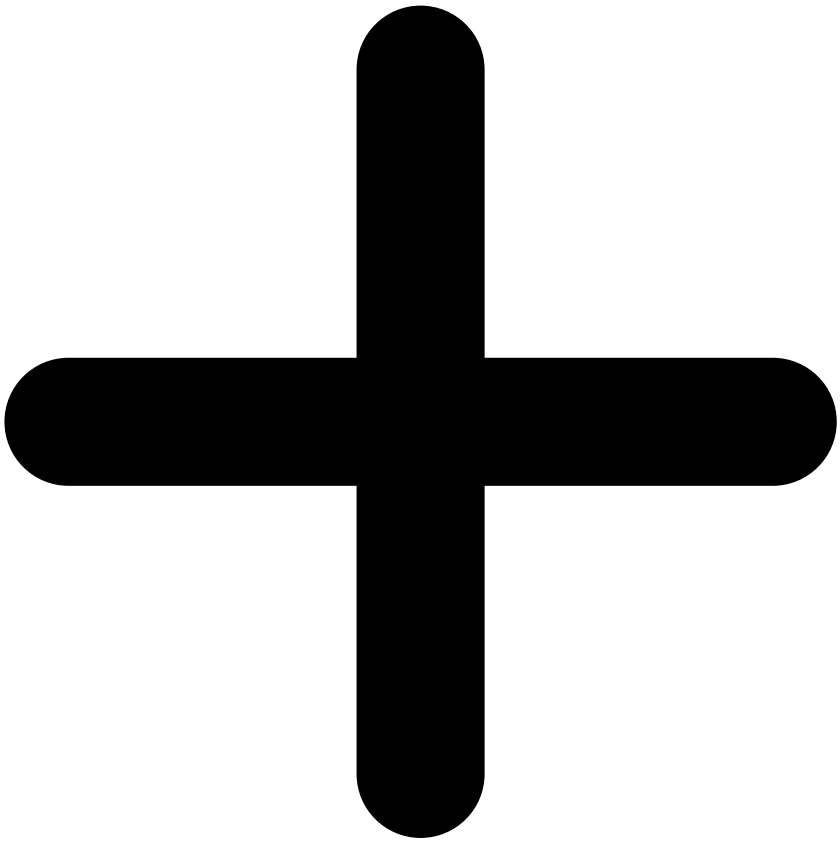
Knowing where Christ's coming and the rapture takes place in the context of Scripture enables us to see where they take place in the chronology of end time events. And what do we learn? Matthew 24:3-31 tells us that the rapture takes place after the birth pains, after the

abomination of desolation, after great tribulation, after the gospel is preached to the world, and after the signs in the heavens. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9 says the rapture occurs after the building of the temple, after the coming of the Antichrist, and after the apostasy. Revelation 6-7 substantiates this same order of events. The fact that the rapture is seen in Revelation 7, means believers are rescued from this earth before God's wrath is poured out upon unbelievers, which is described in Revelation 8-9.

These prophecy passages clearly tell us where in the sequence of end time events that the rapture takes place. By looking at these passages, it's obvious that the rapture is not imminent and cannot happen at any time, for many events still need to take place before we fly off this earth to be with Jesus Christ. There's one more thing you need to know about the timing of the rapture. Daniel 9:27 says the Antichrist is revealed at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9 says Christ's coming occurs after he is revealed. Therefore, we must conclude that the rapture takes place sometime during the 2nd half of that week, that seven-year time period.

In the near future, millions and millions of Christians will be living at the time of Daniel's 70th week, serving the Lord, and experiencing great tribulation. You and your family may be among them. That's why it's so important for you to know when the rapture takes place in the whole sequence of end-time events. As time goes on, you will be seeing and hearing that these prophesied events are taking place, giving you an even greater confidence that Christ's return and the rapture are getting closer and closer. *"When you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door"* (Matthew 24:33). Yes, life will be extremely difficult during those tribulation days, but remember that the Holy Spirit will be with you until the end of the age, and then you will, for the first time, see your loving Savior face to face. *"Do not let your heart be troubled… I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may also be."* John 14:1-3

P.S. Over 2500 years ago there was this question in Daniel 12:6 – *“How long will it be until the end of these wonders?”* People are still asking this question today, and God gives us the answer, not specifically, but in general. That’s why I have written other posts similar to this one, to help you know what God wants you to know, especially in these days of the end times. If you haven’t already, I would encourage you to read these two related posts – The Timing of the Rapture, and The Rapture Occurs at the Coming of Christ.





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