

The Two Raptures

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Christ said, "I have foretold you all things" in Mark 13:23.

PRE-TRIB AND PRE-WRATH

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Some Christians expect the Rapture before the Tribulation. Others expect it at the end of the Tribulation just before the Wrath of God is poured out. The reason, as I see it after over 48 years of intense Bible study, is because there actually will be two Raptures. The first one is the Rapture of the Bride of Christ saints (the wise virgins), the second of the Tribulation saints (including the foolish virgins that got left behind the first time.

Can There Be a Partial Rapture?

There are also two views concerning the Pre-Trib Rapture. Some think that every Christian will go in the Rapture. It is the Body of Christ, and they say not a finger will be left behind. Others think that it will be a partial Rapture and that it is possible for a believer to be left behind.

I believe that the Philadelphian group of Revelation 3:7-13 will go in the FIRST TRUMP Rapture, and that the Laodicean group of Rev. 3:14-22 will be left behind at that time. However, they will be taken up with the Tribulation saints in the LAST TRUMP RAPTURE at the end of the shortened Tribulation.

Those who think a partial Rapture is impossible cite Romans 8:1. It says, "THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The Greek word translated "condemnation" is "katakrima," damnatory sentence, from "katakrino," to judge against, sentence, condemn, damn. However, damnation is different from disciplinary chastening.

Hebrews 12:6 says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." This is similar to Jesus' message to the Laodiceans. In Revelation 3:19, he said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." In both cases, the word translated "chasten" is "paideuo," discipline, to teach by punishment.

In Jesus' message to the Laodiceans, he is addressing the "church" (Rev. 3:14,22). These people are believers. They have to be in Christ before they can be spewed out of his mouth. Verses 15 and 16 say, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

These are behind a closed door, but they are still promised the chance to sit with Jesus in his throne. He tells them, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:20, 21).

Therefore, it looks like the lukewarm church will be left behind in the first Rapture and then be taken to Heaven with the Tribulation saints at the second Rapture.

The Open Door

The situation is different for the Philadelphian church. Addressing them, Jesus said, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door" (Rev. 3:8). This open door is a symbol of the Rapture. As the fourth chapter of Revelation begins, "behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard...as a trumpet...said, Come up hither."

Two Doors

Indicating more than one Rapture in the parable of the fig tree, Jesus said "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things (Israel grafted into her old rootstock and growing), know that it is near, even at the doors." Since "doors" is plural, two Raptures fit right in.

Days of Noah Versus Days of Lot

There are at least two days of the Son of man. In Luke 17:22, Jesus mentioned "one of the days of the Son of man" to his disciples. Two differences stand out when you examine the days of Noah and Lot in Matthew 24:37-42 and Luke 17:26-37. Marriage is mentioned in the days of Noah but not in the days of Lot. No fire falls in the days of Noah, but it falls that same day in the days of Lot. These types represent two different Raptures, one Pre-Trib and the other Pre-Wrath. Also, since marriage is mentioned in the days of Noah, it seems that the Bride of Christ will be taken to Heaven first, then the rest of the Body of Christ will be caught up just before the Wrath of God is poured out at the end of the shortened Tribulation.

Since the first Rapture is as the days of Noah, we should easily make the connection that the first Rapture is only for the Bride of Christ. Everyone that went into the Ark was married. Even the animals went in two by two.

First Trump Versus Last Trump

The Jews recognize that there are two trumps. They call the trumpet blast at Sinai (Ex. 19:16) the "Left Horn" or "the First Trump" of God's redemption. This refers to the two horns of the ram caught in the thicket that Abraham sacrificed on Mt. Moriah after Isaac was bound. They connect the "Right Horn," or "Last Trump," to the Feast of Trumpets.

Two separate gatherings. Some who teach that there is only one Rapture do not stop to think that if there is a "last trump," there has to be a first trump. Neither do they see that at the first trumpet call, **THE LORD HIMSELF GATHERS THE SAINTS**; and at the last trumpet call, **HE SENDS HIS ANGELS TO GATHER THE SAINTS**. Therefore, they must be two separate gatherings. We have to rightly divide the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15).

The reason Christ does not come to gather the Tribulation saints

The General Festal Assembly is taking place on the Feast of Trumpets in Heaven. It is Coronation Day, the day of the Marriage of the Lamb and the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is also the day of the Last Trump Rapture.

In Nu. 10:2, Israel was to "Make thee **TWO TRUMPETS** of silver...that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, **ALL** the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow but with **ONE** trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee."

The first trumpet is the first Rapture, when ""THE LORD HIMSELF shall descend from heaven with a shout" (I Thess. 4:16). This takes place in Rev. 4:1, after which the 24 elders are seen in Heaven. Twelve of those are the 12 apostles. The other 12 are "the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel." This is when they "shall gather themselves unto thee."

When the "last trump" of I Cor. 15:51,2 sounds, "ALL shall be changed." At this second Rapture, Christ will be in Heaven. That Feast of Trumpets is Coronation Day, when Christ gets his golden crown, also the day the Marriage of the Lamb and the Judgment Seat of Christ. Therefore he sends "HIS ANGELS, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth (Rapture II) to the uttermost part of heaven" (those who were taken to Heaven in Rapture I) (Mark 13:27). They are gathered before the judge to receive their rewards.

The two scriptures, I Thess. 4:16-18 and I Cor. 15:51,52, refer to the two Raptures. The first trump, similar to the first trumpet that sounded on Pentecost at Sinai, is mentioned in I Thess 4:16-18 and Revelation 4:1. I Thess 4:16-18 says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Rev. 4:1 says, "and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither."

The last trump is mentioned in I Corinthians 15:51-53. It says "behold, I shew 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 TRUMP: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Different Ranks

According to I Corinthians 15:22,23, those "in Christ shall all be made alive, But every man in his own order (tagmati, rank)." We realize that there are Church saints and Tribulation saints, each made alive in his own rank.

By the end of the shortened Tribulation, ALL Christians will appear in Heaven. Two groups will be gathered there. The Church saints who were taken to Heaven in the first Rapture will be gathered from Heaven. Those who are going in the second Rapture will be gathered from Earth. Mark 13:24-27 shows that this gathering is just before the Wrath of God is poured out. It says, "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

The Two Raptures in the Book of Revelation

Both Raptures are depicted in the last book of the Bible. The first is seen in the "Come up hither" of Rev. 4:1. The heavenly scene right after the Rapture is described in Rev. 5. The great multitude who are part of the second Rapture are described in Rev. 7:14,15: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God."

These cannot just include the 144,000 Jews, for this is "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations" (Rev. 7:9). Obviously, the 144,000 can be numbered.

Sandwiched between these two references to Raptures in the Bible is Revelation 6, which depicts the Tribulation. This chapter starts with the Beast riding forth on a white horse at the beginning of the Tribulation and ends with "the great day of his (the Lamb's) wrath is come." The Day of God's Wrath is at the end of the shortened Tribulation. The sixth seal is broken, then Rapture II takes place just before the seventh seal releases the seven trumpet judgments.

The Righteous Are Taken Away From the Evil to Come Both the Old Testament and the New Testament agree that the righteous are taken away before the evil to come, i.e., the Tribulation. Isaiah 57:1,2 says, "merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness."

In the New Testament, Revelation 3:10 shows that the Philadelphian church group will be kept from the time of trial we call the Tribulation. It says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (peirasmou, trial), which shall come upon all the world, to try (peirasai) them that dwell upon the earth.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

The Prize

To be chosen as part of the Bride of Christ and be taken to Heaven before the Tribulation is the prize we are running the race to win. The Philadelphians win the prize and the Laodiceans must be the castaways.

In I Corinthians 9:24-27, Paul said, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Paul could not lose his salvation. The only way he could end up being a castaway would be to be part of the group called the friends of the Bridegroom, who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, instead of being part of group called the Bride of Christ, who are chosen to attend the Marriage of the Lamb. This is the difference between the groups participating in the two Rapture-Resurrections.

Paul also said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). The high calling here is the first Rapture, the prize that can be worked for. Salvation is a free gift. Rewards can be worked for, and we should strive to win the prize of participating in the first Rapture.

I am hoping for the first Rapture on April 15, the LAST DAY of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 21, 5769 and the second on the Feast of Trumpets in 2015 (Sept. 14, 5776).