

The Popular but False Doctrine of the Rapture



I believe this picture may depict an accurate description of 1 Thessalonians 4. But will it happen before a great tribulation? That's the subject of this article.

This post is about comparing popular doctrines about what Christians and evangelicals call "the rapture" to what the Bible actually says. The rapture is also called, "The blessed hope." What do teachers of the rapture mean by that? They mean that Jesus is going to take to Heaven His followers just before the Antichrist starts to persecute them in the Great Tribulation at the end of time! But does the Bible actually teach that?

My Bible says,

Revelation 7:14 And he said to me, These are they which came **out of** great tribulation,

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer persecution.**

The Bible is its own best commentator. It's a mistake to read things into Scripture based on our cognitive bias or based only on what some preacher says the Bible passage says. That's the mistake I made for 30 plus years. I trusted what my pastor taught me only to find later he himself admitted his interpretation of Endtime Scripture was only a theory which he got from C.I. Scofield!

What is the Rapture?

The word "rapture" is not found in the Bible. It apparently was coined by John Nelson Darby in the 19th century. The Bible calls the second coming of Christ, "the day of the Lord."

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10 But **the day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Wikipedia says,

The rapture is an eschatological concept held by some Christians, particularly within branches of American evangelicalism, consisting of an end-time event when all Christian believers who are alive, along with resurrected believers, will rise “in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.”

The Bible does talk about Jesus coming for His own at the end of time.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 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. – 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

But when does this happen? The most popular doctrine among American evangelical Christians is that it will happen just before a 7 year tribulation period. Where do they get this idea? From John Nelson Darby of the 19th century. He taught that Christ would return before a final great 7-year tribulation to save His elect from persecution by the Antichrist. C.I. Scofield picked up Darby's teaching and put in in the footnotes of the Scofield Reference Bible.

My Bible tells me just the opposite!

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together **first the tares**, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Matthew 13:30

When does this happen? On “the day of the Lord”! The day of the second coming of Christ! The Bible says the rejectors of Christ will be taken away *first*! And after that resurrection will happen and the believers in Christ will be taken up to be with the Lord in the clouds!

On what Scriptures do John Nelson Darby and C.I. Scofield base their pretribulation rapture doctrine on? If *you* believe in a pretribulation rapture of the Church, that is also my question to you. You can write the Bible verses you believe teach a pretribulation rapture in the comments section. When you do that, please remember that the cardinal rule of Bible interpretation is always to interpret the verse in the context of the other verses before and after it.

Even if you believe the latter part of Matthew 24 is talking about end-time events, verses 29 to 31 make it clear Christians will go through a period of tribulation.

29 **Immediately after the tribulation of those days** shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And **then** shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and **then** shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

For more about the Olivet Discourse of Matthew chapter 24, please see [Futurist Interpretation of Matthew 24 Exposed as Folly by John Gill](#)

Just imagine visiting a country where believers in Christ are undergoing severe persecution and telling them, "Don't worry! Jesus will come soon and save you from the Great Tribulation!" You might hear the following, "What can be greater tribulation than seeing my friends, members of my family, and fellow believers in Christ killed right before my eyes?"

If you cannot use the Bible to explain your doctrines, you either don't know those doctrines well enough, or you picked them up from some preacher you like and never took the time to search the Scriptures for yourself to see if the doctrines are biblically sound.

Further reading on this subject:

<https://www.ucg.org/world-news-and-prophecy/the-rapture-a-popular-but-false-doctrine>