

The Rapture Theory



I believe this picture may depict an accurate description of 1 Thessalonians 4. But when?

Introduction by the webmaster

The full title of this book is, "The Rapture Theory. Should We Trust THE RAPTURE THEORY? by Paul Benson. I got the text from a 84 page PDF file but I'm posting only the first 15 pages of it. At first, I thought to post all of it but Paul Benson started to talk about the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24 as an endtime event, something the regular readers of this website know I don't agree with. In other articles on this website, I explained by comparing the other two synoptic Gospels of Mark 13 and Luke 21 that the Great Tribulation Jesus talked about in Matthew 24 was the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the killing of Jews by the Roman army. It was not talking about persecution of Christians as many seem to believe today! No true follower of Jesus Christ was in Jerusalem when it was destroyed as the Romans were murdering the Jews! How do I know that?

Luke 21:20-23 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then **let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains**; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be **the days of vengeance** (on the Jews who rejected Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah), that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

All true followers of Jesus obeyed those words of Jesus, fled Jerusalem and Judaea when they saw the Roman army coming and were saved! If anyone who called himself a Christian did not heed that prophecy, they certainly were not a true follower of Jesus.

This doesn't mean I don't think Christians will face persecution before Jesus returns. It only means we shouldn't think of the great tribulation of Matthew 24 as an endtime event.

Mr. Benson makes some very good points in the first 15 pages, things I have written about before, such as we should read the prophecy in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 as it continues into chapter 5 as if there is no chapter break. We should read it all as the Second Coming of Christ and events that happen all on the same day!

**Should We Trust
THE
RAPTURE
THEORY
?**

**Is it True or False?
by Paul Benson**

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PREFACE

The promise of the Resurrection of the Dead and the 'catching away' of the Church is at the very heart of our Christian faith. It is our blessed hope which the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross has purchased for us. Teaching on this amazing promise Paul wrote that we should 'comfort one another with these words'. I hope you know the peace and comfort received from a confidence in our future joining together with Jesus to live forever as the Redeemed.

The purpose of these writings is not to discourage folk from looking for the 'catching away' of the Church, but to encourage them to look for it in a fashion and time-frame which is in accord with the truth of the Scriptures; and not be turned aside to follow any of the deceptive teachings which have grown so prevalent in our generation.

But evil men and seducers shall **wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived**. 2 Timothy 3:13

The Scriptures foretold of a progressive increase in the warfare against the Church in the area of false doctrine, There have always been falsehoods trying to seduce the Church. Even from the first century the Gnostics, Nicolaitanes, and money hungry Balaams were at work to pollute the beliefs of the early Church.

But whereas in those days the watchmen were fighting at the wall to keep the enemy out, in our day the battle rages on the streets of a city whose walls have crumbled from neglect. And these defenders of the truth must now contend with not just the enemy, but with many who have been so inundated with falsehood they now wage war against their own watchmen, and against the very truth itself.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable **for doctrine**, for reproof, **for correction**, for instruction in righteousness: 2 Timothy 3:16

Paul told Timothy the Scriptures were for, among other things, administering correction. My aim in writing this booklet is not so much to win others over to my doctrinal view-point; but that they would adopt a pattern of critical examination of what is preached and taught, and effective study habits which root out error and put it to flight. It is my hope people would realize how deceived we have been by the teachings of man; and thus be convinced of the need to embrace the corrective apparatus of proper Bible study; looking for the true meaning of verses of Scripture through studying them in the passages of their origin. I believe this will ultimately lead to a similar belief structure as I have; for that has been the source of mine. And so much better to get there on efforts of your own, and not just because of what others have taught. I am definitely fallible; but God's Word is not.

We need to verify whether people are preaching the same meaning for Bible verses as what you get reading them in context. This practice of critical appraisal destroys the majority of false teaching; and will prove to be a valuable defense.

'Proof texts' that are snippets of Scripture taken out of context are the basic building blocks of all pseudo-Christian false teaching. And these false teachings are not only damaging and defiling, but also divisive.

The introduction of the rapture theory into the belief system of the Body of Christ in the 1800's, and its rise to extraordinary popularity in the last 6 to 8 decades, has produced a schism among us. A unified belief in proper doctrine concerning end-time events would help heal that damage. It is toward that end I write these words.

Paul Benson

INTRODUCTION

I can't help but notice a trend in today's preaching that does not mirror a ratio of emphasis we see in the Bible. What I mean by that is: How many times do the Scriptures mention the 'catching away' of the Church? Not many. One clear description we find in 1Thessalonians 4 and a few references to it elsewhere. But the coming Resurrection of the Dead and the transformation of the living Saints, which is going to be such an indescribably awesome phenomenon, is either vividly described or plainly referred to dozens of times in the Bible. It is a theme thoroughly woven into the fabric of Scripture.

How old is the teaching of the coming Resurrection of the Dead? Many claim Job to be possibly the earliest writings of the Scriptures; even he spoke of the event:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that **he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:** And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet **in my flesh shall I see God.** Job 19:25-26

Throughout the books of the Bible we see people speaking of their hope of the Resurrection. Martha said she knew her brother Lazarus would rise someday:

...Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. John 11:24

Paul cited the hope of the Resurrection:

...Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, **Touching the resurrection of the dead** I am called in question by you this day. Acts 24:21

The Pharisees trying to trap Jesus in his words asked:

In the resurrection therefore, **when they shall rise**, whose wife shall she be of them?... Mark 12:23

Jesus spoke often of the blessedness of those who will be counted worthy of the Resurrection:

...for thou shalt be recompensed **at the resurrection of the just**. Luke 14:14
And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the **resurrection of life**; John 5:29

David voiced his hope in the Resurrection:

...For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Psalm 16:9-10

Isaiah joins the crowd marveling at this wonderful promise:

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and **the earth shall cast out the dead**. Isaiah 26:19

But not one of these people, or any others in the Bible, referred to their 'blessed hope' as that short trip from earth to the clouds known as the 'Rapture', 'Harpazo', 'catching away', or whatever you want to name it. Their hope was in, and their focus upon, the Resurrection of the Dead. Other than its popularized mention in 1 Thessalonians 4 where do you see in the Bible any notable emphasis placed on the 'catching away'? I surely do not.

So I ask again, why all this modern day focus on the 'caught up to meet him' aspect of Christ's Coming? Does the Bible put any emphasis there? If you stop and think about it the 'caught away' part of what we experience that day is relatively minor compared to the Resurrection aspect. How did things get so turned around to the point where a brief journey from earth to the clouds overshadows what transpires in the Resurrection? The dead awake with the image of Christ. The mortal has put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:54). No more sickness, disease, or dying! We've carried the earnest (down-payment) of our inheritance all these years and now we have the fullness of that promise. We have now entered eternity in a glorified body and death can never touch us. Why minimize that and maximize being carried up into the sky?

I realize rapture folk believe that the Resurrection and the 'catching away' all take place in the same micro-second (a false belief discussed later). But

my point is why carry on and on about the catching away and say so very little, or nothing at all, about our resurrection/transformation and what that accomplishes. You might hear it mentioned in the reading of a text, but the preaching or teaching rarely touches on it. Usually the brunt of the message deals with avoiding the time of great tribulation; which they incorrectly state is the wrath of God (a false notion we will also discuss later).

In all false teaching there is found an appeal to the flesh; some allure or benefit to the carnal nature. I find it telling that the rapture teaching is usually couched in the context of escaping the time of tribulation and the mark of the beast. While the focus there is on escapism and personal well-being, the teachings of the Bible concerning the Resurrection don't carry the same focus. Our anticipation of resurrection centers on laying aside concern for your own life to, thru faith in his death on the Cross, follow in the footsteps of Christ; and identify with his sufferings, death, burial, and rising from the dead, in the hope of inheriting eternal life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, **we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:** Romans 6:5

We'll look a little more at identifying with his sufferings and death later. Let's see if our beliefs fit this Parable of the Tares:

...The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 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 13:28

... the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. Matthew 13:39

The Resurrection of the Just will be God's end of the world harvest of all the fruit his good seed, the Gospel, has produced. Jesus gave the parable of the tares to show us a pattern of the Resurrection. It will follow the pattern of a farmer in those days harvesting his crop. At harvest time they would go through the field and separate the tares (weeds) out from among the wheat so the bad seed would not be mixed with the good when it was reaped. These tares would be tied or bound in bundles and set aside for later burning. Then the harvest could now take place with the wheat taken away from the field. Later the farmer would return and burn the bound up weeds. That is the pattern given for the end of the world harvest; but the teaching of many on this issue doesn't follow that pattern.

Those promoting the rapture theory say this parable cannot be about the Resurrection of the Just because the tares (they say) are destroyed first then the wheat is harvested so it must be a later judgment. What they miss is the tares are not destroyed first only separated and marked for destruction; (...bind them in bundles). The tares couldn't be burned with the wheat still in the ground, it would destroy the crop! They are not following the pattern.

This pattern fits perfectly with the end-time events. The mark of the beast will identify and separate the tares, sealing their fate, marking them for later destruction. Then the Lord will harvest the wheat, gather us up unto him, and return to burn his field. God's harvest will fit the pattern of the literal harvest or there was no point in giving the parable in the first place. Also the Bible says the harvest is **the end** of the world. This must take place in conjunction with the Return of Christ which is the end. The rapture (they say) does not happen at the end but 7 years before the end; that is out of sync with the parable. It has the wheat harvested before the tares are bound up; and more wheat growing after the harvest: the (so called) tribulation saints and saved Jews!

It is my firm belief the Bible does not teach two 'catching aways' of the Church; one before the great tribulation in addition to the one clearly taught at the Second Coming. Since I do not believe the teachings of a 'pretribulation rapture' are portraying the same event the Bible describes, I will be referring to those teachings as the 'rapture theory'; and the genuine event which transpires at Christ's Return after the tribulation as the 'catching away'.

I will show many examples of why I say the rapture theory is a deceiving and damaging false doctrine; and has been fabricated from Stolen Snippets, Deceiving Distractions, Unbiblical Concepts, and Outright Lies. This is a bold accusation, and will likely offend many, but as they say: "The proof is in the pudding!" I hope you will consider what is written here prayerfully and with an open Bible. May the Holy Spirit guide you into all truth.

CHAPTER ONE STOLEN SNIPPETS

Unknown to most is the fact a large share of the makeup of the 'rapture theory' is built upon catchy phrases which are bits of verse lifted out of a passage speaking, not of a pretribulational rapture event, but instead of the return of Jesus at his Second Coming. Snippets of Scripture stolen away from their rightful context and deceitfully promoted as Bible verse on the 'rapture'.

Stolen Snippet:

'...Like a thief in the night...'

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. 2 Peter 3:10

The phrase 'like a thief in the night' is such a pillar in the structure of the rapture theory you will rarely hear a sermon on it where it's not used. Also used as a book and film title, and even as labeling on merchandise, many would be shocked to know this phrase was lifted from the context of the Second Coming and the ensuing wrath. Christ's Return **will** come as a thief in the night! Anyone who would claim the above passage from the writings of Peter was referring to a pretribulation rapture of the Saints would have some serious problems in the area of reading skills.

And yes I do realize the same phrase is used elsewhere in the Bible; let's take a look at that one also. In 1st Thessalonians we have a situation where a chapter break splits a passage in two and if not careful we lose some of the contextual information.

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. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.** 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; **then sudden destruction cometh upon them,** as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:3

Do you notice any difference reading this passage without the interruption of the chapter break? It more clearly shows it's a description of the Second Coming and the sudden destruction that follows. Mankind taken by surprise by the wrath of God just as in the days of Noah and the days of Lot; exactly as Jesus prophesied in Luke 17:26-30 (our next example).

Reading the entire above passage we once again see the phrase 'like a thief in the night' smack in the middle of a description of the Second Coming. But instead of leaving it in its context the phrase is pulled out and deceitfully applied to other use. It now becomes one of the many stolen snippets of Scripture used to fabricate the rapture theory. There are also a couple other places where Jesus uses not the entire phrase, but only the two words 'a thief'. But an ambiguous usage there is no proof of reference to a rapture either. There is no justification for claiming any of these usages are the rightful property of' the rapture theory; they have been stolen, and restitution is in order.

Stolen Snippet:

'...As it was in the days of Noah: as it was in the days of Lot...'

And **as it was in the days of Noe**, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, **until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.** 28 Likewise also **as it was in the days of Lot;** they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even **thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.** Luke 17:26-30

Many use a twisted interpretation of these verses to promote a number of false teachings about the end-times. They say Jesus was comparing the conditions of society and moral decay, of our age and theirs, in these passages. I see nothing in this passage about the decay of society or even a mention of the sinfulness of the people. The focus was on the fact that life was just going on as usual until judgment fell. I would have to agree there are many similarities between our day and theirs, but pointing that out was not his objective at all. He was making just one significant point.

You hear people preaching about the rapture making statements like: "Jesus said it would be just like the days of Noah and Lot when the rapture happens." See how cleverly they now have Jesus acknowledging their rapture theory. This is subtle deceit. They are claiming Jesus was referring to the 'rapture' when he said these phrases. This is not true. These allegorical references to Noah and Lot are unmistakably both found in the immediate context of Jesus teaching on his Return. Notice in the passage above the words: thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is **revealed**. That is the Second Coming!

If you study it out you would be amazed how many rapture 'proof texts' are snippets of Scripture stolen out of passages clearly belonging to the Return of Christ. They are stealing these snippets out of Matthew 24 and applying them to their theory for the same reason they always do; they don't have any of their own. The Bible does not teach a previous event, only the Resurrection of the Dead at the Second Coming. There are no rapture verses!

The notion that Jesus was making a statement that the endtime social climate would be just like in the days of Noah and Lot is a mistaken assumption. That's not what he was getting at. The focus of these allegories was the similarity of the sudden destruction following the deliverance of the Righteous. The very same day the door was closed on the ark God's wrath began to descend upon mankind. The very same day Lot left Sodom and entered Zoar destruction rained down upon the people. The same day Jesus returns, and resurrects/catches away the Righteous, sudden destruction will once again fall upon mankind. This is the point Jesus was trying to get across. *Same day; sudden destruction.* (Emphasis mine.)

Shifting the focus away from this is a necessary distraction because the concept of 'sudden destruction immediately following the catching away' does not fit the framework of the rapture fable. They teach the righteous are raptured away 7 years before Jesus returns and administers God's wrath. These allegorical passages about Noah and Lot are actually a rebuke to the rapture theory, and must be edited and then misapplied to protect their doctrine.

Stolen Snippet:

'of that day and hour knoweth no man,'

How many times have you heard the words 'of that day and hour knows no man' spoken in connection with the rapture theory? Unless you are living under a rock or on a remote deserted island your answer would be, "More times than I can remember." It is one of the most common phrases used to promote that doctrine.

Frequently cited as 'absolute proof' the rapture and the Second Coming are two separate events is a portrayal of 'Two Days' called the 'known day' and the 'unknown day'. Their story usually sounds something like this: There is a day which is absolutely known and a day which cannot be known; two separate days that cannot be the same day. The first is the day of the rapture of which (they claim) Jesus said 'no man knows the day or hour'; this is the 'unknown day'. The second is the day of the Second Coming which (they claim) the Bible says will be 1260 days after the Antichrist begins to rule;

therefor if we can figure the day of Christ's Coming by the 1260 day countdown it is a 'known day'.

Conclusion: since an unknown day and a known day cannot be the same day; and the day of the Second Coming is known whereas the day of the rapture is unknown they cannot be the same day. End of story. Or is it?

For many this sounds like a solid open and shut case. But is it really; or has some deception taken place here? Having had for many years a deep interest in Bible prophecy the time-spans of 3 ½ years, forty two months, 1260 days, 1290 days, and 1335 days found through out the Scriptures have always caught my attention. There is no doubt they are given to us as a framework in which end-time events are to transpire. But as to this 'known day' and 'unknown day' theory there is a serious flaw in the reasoning of those touting this 'proof' of two separate comings of Christ.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only. 37 **But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** Matthew 24:36-37

The problem with this 'absolute proof' they're asking us to ingest is the phrase 'of that day and hour knoweth no man' is a snippet stolen from a passage we have already proven earlier is definitely referring to the Second Coming. Again I urge you to read the chapter and see the context. Jesus clearly labeled the day of his Return as an 'unknown day'! And that makes all the wrangling and fussing over counting 1260 (or is it 1290? or 1335?) days a moot point. I've seen some pretty *'fancy footwork' dancing around this problem with their theory, but nothing that stays on its feet after close scrutiny. Once again the context of the verse rebukes their usage of that verse. Also who knows when the 1260 days start for sure; the day he takes control, the day he announces his control, the day the abomination is set up, or maybe the day it's revealed to the world? Or maybe the day people are required to begin worship of him? A claim to know that exact day is quite presumptuous.

I don't care how rock solid their assumptions seem about reckoning the days from Antichrist's arrival to Jesus' Coming; we see Jesus was absolutely not referring to a prior event, but to his Return. The day of Christ's Return is an unknown day; and this makes their 'proof' go 'poof'! Calling the day of his Return a 'known day', and saying Jesus was speaking of the rapture when he said 'of that day and hour knoweth no man' are both a lie. The context in which this phrase belongs clearly makes that accusation.

* (I am referring here to a notion some put forth of a systematic 'dual reference' in Matthew 24 pointing to two comings of Christ in the end-times. I have read page after page of theological ramblings on this subject but nothing that is anything more than supposition forced by the rapture theory position. What amazes me is they ignore the fact that even if Matthew 24:36 was a dual reference (and it's not) it would still be declaring the Second Coming as an unknown day! More of their 'proof' that proves nothing at all!)

HEEDING THE WARNING

One of the claims made by the rapture theorists is that the impending rapture keeps Christians on their toes and living right; whereas a belief the catching away doesn't happen until after the tribulation leads to complacency. I think just the opposite may very well be true. Knowing the time of great tribulation could nearly be upon us, and watching world events unfolding, doesn't exactly make me feel like slouching and slacking. I know a good many Christians who have a mindset of seeking to be prepared spiritually for the dark days ahead; and are crying out to God for the 'gold tried in the fire' and the 'eye salve so you might see' that Jesus counseled about (Rev. 3:18). This is wise counsel for all of us.

Asking God to purify your faith is basically asking for endurance fostering trials and challenges to come your way; but a heart that longs to be close to Jesus and stay faithful no matter what will cry out for things which would make the compromised and lukewarm shudder and cringe. Seeking a purified faith and the endurance to carry you through the coming persecution and affliction doesn't seem to be on the agenda of those I know who are waiting for their 'any minute now' escape. Why bother getting gold tried in the fire if you won't be here to need it? I think that view could lead to complacency, and not somebody sensing a rough pitch-dark road ahead and seeking to prepare for that journey. A long dark night takes a lot of oil to keep the lamp ablaze. The foolish virgins had not prepared for the long dark night, and it cost them the loss of everything they were waiting for! Buy all the oil you can get while it is still light; it is hard to find in the dark.

Although the words of warning that 'of that day and hour knoweth no man' may have been lifted from their true context they remain a valid admonishment that is to be heeded by us all.

And **take heed** to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and **so that day come upon you unawares**. Luke 21:34

Many suppose those who don't hold to the rapture theory completely disregard Jesus' warnings of the unexpected nature of His arrival, and the danger of it catching you unprepared. I firmly believe in being ready to meet Jesus at any time. I kind of sense in his parables and warnings not just an admonition of the suddenness of his arrival but also something that speaks warning of the often unexpected end of a life. Those believers who die not ready to meet him are just as foolish as those poor virgins. WAKE UP!