

The Rapture Part 1
A simple look at the Rapture
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In this video I'm going to look at the Rapture in the simplest way I know. Understanding end time events is very, very important because all end time scripture passages contain serious warnings for believers and Jesus said that *"at that time many will turn away from the faith"* (Matt. 24:10). Now, because many believers will turn from the faith during the end times, we can be VERY sure that these events are not great Bible mysteries, requiring years of study to figure out. Surely, God wants us to know so that we can be prepared. So, let's examine some end time passages with an open, childlike mind, noting that 2 Cor. 1:13 tells us, *"we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand"* and, above all, let's take the Bible at face value and *"not go beyond what is written"* (1 Cor. 4:6).

Let's start in 1 Thess. 4&5 with the well known Rapture passage which says that Jesus will come with the voice of an archangel and the trumpet call of God and believers will be caught up with Him in the clouds. When we compare this passage with Matt. 24 we will see that there are so many common points that they can only be talking about the same event. Please look at these common points closely as it is important to understand that Matt. 24 is also describing the Rapture.

When we compare these two passages we see that they both talk about -

1) Firstly Angels & a trumpet

1 Thess. 4:16 says, *"the Lord himself will come ... with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God"*, while Matt. 24:31 says, *"he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call"*.

2) Then both talk about gathering believers

1 Thess. 4:17 says, *"we ... will be caught up to meet the Lord"*, while Matt. 24:31 says, *"he will send his angels ... and they will gather his elect"*.

3) Both have clouds

1 Thess. 4:17 says, *"we who are still alive ... will be caught up ... in the clouds"*, and Matt. 24:30 says, *"They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds"*.

4) Both say the time is unknown

1 Thess. 5:2 says, *"the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night"*, while Matt. 24:36 says, *"No one knows about that day or hour"*.

5) Both talk of a thief

1 Thess. 5:2 says, *"the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night"*, and Matt. 24:43 says, *"If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming ..."*.

6) Then both say that the unsaved will be surprised

1 Thess. 5:3 says, *"destruction will come on them suddenly"*, and Matt. 24:39 says it will be just like Noah's day when *"they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came"*.

7) And finally both have a warning for believers

1 Thess. 5:6 says, *"let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled"*, while in Matt. 24:42,25, Jesus said, *"See, I have told you ahead of time ... therefore keep watch"*.

These common points make it quite obvious that 1 Thess. and Matt. 24 are both describing the Rapture. You may say, "Well, so what! What does all this mean?" Well, the importance of knowing this cannot be stressed enough because Matt. 24 gives us additional information such as the time

period in which the Rapture will occur and about the events leading up to it. A few verses back, in Matt. 24:15-22, before He spoke about the Rapture, Jesus said that the Antichrist will come first and he will put the church through the Great Tribulation. This means that today's believers need to be prepared for the possibility of facing very severe persecution. In these verses, Jesus said, *“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ ... then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now [this is the Great Tribulation] ... If those days had not been cut short [by the Rapture], no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened”*.

So, from Matt. 24 we see that:

- 1) in v.15, the Antichrist appears then,
- 2) in v. 21, the Great Tribulation begins then,
- 3) in v.22, the Great Tribulation is cut short when,
- 4) in vs. 30-31, Jesus raptures His elect.

This flow of events is very clear and the fact that believers will not be raptured until after the Antichrist appears is confirmed in 2 Thess. 2:1,3 where it says, *“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him [in the Rapture] ... Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness [that is, the Antichrist] is revealed”*. So, it is plain to see that believers will not be raptured until after the Antichrist is revealed and puts the church through the Great Tribulation.

So, when we take Matt. 24 literally, we see that the church will endure terrible persecution after the Antichrist reveals himself. The only way a believer will be able to get through it, without departing the faith, will be to have a very close relationship with Jesus, fully relying on Him for strength. In Romans 8:35-39 we are told, *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”*. These verses tells us that God will keep us through all troubles provided we remain IN Christ Jesus. If we don't remain in Jesus but *“abandon the faith”*, like those in 1 Tim. 4:1, then we will be amongst the many who *“at that time ... turn away from the faith”* and will be lost (Matt. 24:10). In Daniel, God protected the three men through the fire and shut the mouths of lions to protect Daniel and history show us that God was also with Christians as they were burnt at the stake and with others who were fed to the lions. So, if we enter the Tribulation, we can be sure that as we call upon Jesus we will also be strengthened to endure, whatever the circumstances.

For a chart which shows sixteen similarities between 1 Thess. 4&5 and Matt. 24, plus a second chart comparing Matt. 24 and Revelation, go to the link at the end of this video and click on the yellow 'End Time Chart' button. Link www.christianissues.biz/endtimeprophecy.html

In the next video I would like to show that the Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord are separate events, occurring during different time periods.

The Calvary Road is a wonderful little book which shows, in simple terms, how to have a close walk with Jesus. It is free to download from www.christianissues.biz/revival.html

May the Lord bless you.

The Rapture

Part 2

The difference between the Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord.

In the last video we saw that the church will go through the Great Tribulation. Many say that this can't happen because 1 Thess. 5:9 says that *"God did not appoint us to suffer wrath"*. The fact is, the Great Tribulation is not God's wrath at all, but Satan's wrath against believers while God's wrath is reserved for sinners during the Day Of The Lord. To verify this I would first like to show that the Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord are two separate events, occurring during separate periods of time and this can be seen from the following:

Matt 24:29 tells us, *"Immediately after the distress of those days [that is, after the Great Tribulation] the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light"*. From this verse we can see that the Great Tribulation is followed by a sign in the sun and the moon and this sign itself is before the Day Of The Lord as Acts 2:20 shows, *"The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord"*.

When we combine these two verses then we see that -

- 1) The Great Tribulation comes first, followed by
- 2) the sign in the sun and the moon which is followed by
- 3) the Day Of The Lord.

So, it's clear that the Great Tribulation and the Day Of The Lord are two distinct events, separated in time by the sun and moon sign.

Now, to see the difference between these two events, let's first look at the Great Tribulation. In Matt. 24:15-21, Jesus said, *"when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' [the Antichrist] ... then let those who are in Judea [Jews] flee to the mountains ... For then there will be great distress [this is where the term 'Great Tribulation' comes from]"*. So, when the Antichrist appears in the Temple, the Jews are told to flee because the Great Tribulation has begun. However, it is not only the Jews who will be persecuted but Christians also as Rev. 13:7 tells us, *"He [the Antichrist] was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them [the Christians]"*. So, during the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist will be given power to kill both Jews and Christians, but where does this power come from? Rev. 13:2 gives us the answer where it says, *"The dragon [Satan] gave the beast [the Antichrist] his power and his throne and great authority"*. So, when the Antichrist appears, Satan will empower him to destroy Jews and Christians. This is verified in Rev. 12:7-17 where we are told that Satan will war with Michael and when he loses and is hurled to the earth, *"He is filled with fury [the King James says great wrath] ... he pursued the woman [the Jews] ... and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring - those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus [the Christians]"*. When we put all this together, we see that Satan will be full of wrath after being thrown out of heaven and will empower the Antichrist to persecute God's people. From this we can see that the Great Tribulation has nothing to do with God's wrath but is Satan's wrath against God's people.

If we now look at the Day Of The Lord, we will see that **it** is the time of God's wrath and, as we saw earlier on, the Day Of The Lord comes after the Great Tribulation. Isa. 13:9 tells us clearly that the Day Of The Lord is when God pours out His wrath against sinners. It says, *"See, the day of the LORD is coming - a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger - to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it"*. Clearly, God's wrath will be against sinners during the Day Of The Lord and it will begin after Jesus raptures believers out of the Great Tribulation. This is shown in Matt. 24:30-31 which says, *"At that time [the time of the Great Tribulation] the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn [because they know that God's wrath has come]. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory [to destroy sinners]. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other [this is the Rapture]"*.

So we can see that the Day Of The Lord begins when Jesus gathers His elect out of the Tribulation and God's wrath is then poured out on the Antichrist and sinners, while believers are safely with Jesus in the clouds. The Day Of The Lord will be God's answer to the Fifth Seal martyrs who will ask, "*How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?*" (Rev. 6:10).

Summing this up, we see that the Great Tribulation is the period during which Satan empowers the Antichrist to persecute both the Jews and the church. Then, "*Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light*", (Matt. 24:29), and Jesus will return to rapture believers. God will then pour out His wrath on the Antichrist and sinners during a period of time known as the Day Of The Lord.

Finally, nowhere in the Bible does it say that the Great Tribulation is a seven year period. Daniel's seventieth week is, of course, for seven years and it is from the signing of the peace covenant until all Israel is saved (Dan. 9:27, Rom. 11:26). However, as already shown, the Great Tribulation is only a part of this seven year period and will not start until the Antichrist appears in the Temple at the mid-point of Daniel's 70th week and Jesus said that He will cut the Tribulation short, so the Great Tribulation is for a period of less than three and a half years (see Matt. 24:15,21-22). As I said in the last video, believers who enter the Great Tribulation will need to have a strong relationship with Jesus to overcome to the end. Such a relationship can only come through a close walk with the Lord. A free, little book about walking closely with Jesus, called *The Calvary Road*, can be downloaded from the link at the end of this video.

In the next video I will look at the PreTrib doctrine of imminence, which says that the Rapture can occur at any moment.

May the Lord bless you.

Amen.

<http://www.christianissues.biz/revival.html>

The Rapture Part 3

Will Jesus come at any moment, like a thief, and surprise believers?

What does it mean to watch?

In the previous videos we saw that the Rapture will not occur until after the Antichrist puts the church through the Great Tribulation. However, many people believe that the Bible teaches us that the Rapture is and always has been imminent, that is, it could occur at any moment. John 21:18-19 make it very clear that the disciples did not believe in an imminent Rapture because Jesus said to Peter, *"I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God"*. Clearly, the disciples knew that there could be no Rapture until after Peter's death. It's also said that Paul's letters of 1 & 2 Thess. and 1 Cor. support an any moment Rapture but this becomes entirely illogical when it is realised that these letters were written before Peter died. The Holy Spirit would not have inspired Paul to write about an imminent rapture because Peter was still alive. So, we can see that the early church would not have believed in an any moment rapture.

The belief that Jesus can return at any moment comes from verses like 1 Thess. 5:2-3 which say, *"the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying 'peace and safety', destruction will come on them suddenly"*. The popular interpretation of these verses is that Jesus can surprise Christians at any moment by returning to rapture them and this belief comes from failing to read on. The very next verse says, *"But you brothers [Christians], are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief"* (1 Thess. 5:4). It's very plain to see that these verses are not speaking about surprising Christians at all but about surprising those who are in darkness (the unsaved) and Jesus' letter to the Sardis church confirms this in Rev. 3:1-3 where it says, *"you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead [dead in sin]. Wake up! ... But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief and you will not know at what time I will come"*. Clearly, this confirms that it is the unsaved who will be surprised by Jesus' return while they are living in the darkness of their sin. They will be stunned when they see that the Christians have been raptured out of the Great Tribulation while they are left behind, knowing that they now face God's wrath (during the Day Of The Lord).

Even though Christians will not be surprised by His return, Jesus still warns us to watch. Why is this? Well, firstly, we will need to be alert so that we won't be deceived and turn from the faith. When the disciples asked Jesus about His second coming, the first thing He said, in Matt. 24:4-5, was, *"Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many"*. Now, regarding this deception, 2 Thess. 2:9 says, *"The coming of the lawless one [the Antichrist] will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders"* and Rev. 13:12-14 tell us that the False Prophet *"made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast [the Antichrist] ... And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he ... deceived the inhabitants of the earth"*. So we can see that there will be very miraculous signs and wonders done to deceive people into worshiping the Antichrist. It's quite clear that these signs are going to be so enormously powerful that many will be convinced that they are from God and this will cause them to turn away from the faith and to worship the Antichrist. Jesus warns believers about this saying, *"At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect - if that were possible ... So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it"* (Matt. 24:23-24,26). Because these signs will be so miraculously deceptive Jesus warns us not to respond to reports of His return in any way but to wait for His special sign, which is: *"the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly*

bodies will be shaken.' At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky ... as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt 24:29-30,27). So, the sign of Jesus' return will be unmistakable, filling the heavens and the earth, and we must totally ignore all the other false signs. So, the first reason we will need to watch is so that we steadfastly wait for Jesus' return and are not deceived into going after false prophets and false Christs and turning to a false God. You and I may say, "Ah, that couldn't happen to me", but the Great Tribulation is going to be a period of such intense persecution and great deception that Jesus warns us in Matt. 24:10, "*at that time many will turn away from the faith*". So, when the Antichrist appears, believers must carefully heed the Lord's many warnings and call upon Him for strength to remain in the faith and overcome to the end.

Another reason why we will need to watch comes from Mark 13:36-37 where it says, "*If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'*". Obviously we have to sleep so what does Jesus mean about watching and not being found sleeping? The meaning of sleeping is found in 1 Thess. 5:4-6 which says, "*But you, brothers, are not in darkness [the darkness of sin] so that this day [Jesus' return] should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others [that is, sinners], who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled*". In these verses, believers are warned to watch and be self-controlled so that they won't fall into sin and be caught 'sleeping' because during the end times sin will be very prominent. In 2 Tim. 3:1 we are told that "*there will be terrible times in the last days*" and in Matt. 24:12-13 Jesus said, "*because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved*". So, sin will be overpowering in the last days and Christians must stand firm to the end to be saved. As we go through the Bible we find that wherever it talks about the last days there are strong warnings to be self-controlled and to live a righteous life. One of the clearest end time warnings is given in Luke 12:42-46 in which a faithful servant, a Christian, is waiting for the Master, Jesus, to return. Vs.43-44 tells us that this servant will be rewarded if Jesus returns to find him faithful, however, regarding the SAME servant, vs.45-46 say, "*But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers*". From this parable we can see the great need we have to be living righteous lives and not to be found 'sleeping' when the Lord returns otherwise we will end up with the unbelievers, in hell.

Finally, it's obvious that the Tribulation is going to be a time of great wickedness, intense persecution and enormous deception. In Matt. 24, Jesus warns us many times and says in Matt. 24:25,42, "*See, I have told you ahead of time ... therefore keep watch*". As we have seen in this video, the reasons Jesus commands us to watch is to prevent us from losing our salvation through either being deceived into worshiping the Antichrist or falling into sin. 1 Cor. 10:12 warns us, "*if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall*". Only the Lord can keep us from falling and carry us through persecution and possible martyrdom so we have an enormous need to abide in Him and call upon Him for the strength to overcome to the end. As Eph. 6:10 says, "*be strong in the Lord and his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes*". Once again, I recommend The Calvary Road to anyone who wants to know how to come into a close relationship with Jesus. It's free to download from the link at the end of this video.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Amen.

The Calvary Road is free to download from: <http://www.christianissues.biz/revival.html>

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