

Thoughts on the “Rapture”

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A bumper sticker reads: “In case of the rapture, this car will be driverless.” *The Rapture* refers to an event that will allegedly occur at the “**first second coming**” of Christ. Its basic features are as follows:

- Jesus will initially return **secretly** and hover above the earth.
- At this appearance, **only** the righteous dead will be raised.
- He will take up the raised saints with the living ones (drivers, pilots, secretaries, etc.) into the clouds to be with Him for a period of **seven years**.
- Afterward, Jesus will descend with His saints and establish His **earthly kingdom** in Jerusalem.

To those enthralled by dispensational premillennialism (perhaps 98% of Protestantism), the Rapture is the next pivotal event on God’s prophetic calendar. Is the Rapture Biblical fact or theological fiction?

First, the Bible knows nothing of more than one return of Jesus Christ or of various “phases” of His return. It is a one-time “coming again” (John 14:3), at which time all of the material universe will disintegrate (2 Pet. 3:4–10) and the universal Resurrection and Judgment will occur (John 5:28–29; 1 Cor. 15:22–23; Mat. 25:31–46; 2 The. 1:7–10).

Second, the Bible says nothing of a “secret coming,” known only to the righteous. Rather, one of the passages the Rapture advocates try to claim refutes the “secret coming” theory. It declares that the Lord’s coming will be accompanied with “a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God” (1 The. 4:16). When He comes in the clouds, “every eye shall see him” (Rev. 1:7). These words describe anything but a “secret” coming.

Third, the Bible speaks no more of a two-phased resurrection than it does of a two-phased second coming. Jesus will raise the dead “at his coming” (1 Cor. 15:22–23; 1 The. 4:16). This resurrection will include both good and evil **at the same hour** (time) (John 5:28–29).

Fourth, the Bible mentions nothing of a seven-year “holding pattern” of the righteous with Jesus in the clouds. Again, the very verse the Rapture advocates try to claim (1 The. 4:16) refutes their doctrine. The righteous will not go to be with the Lord seven years, but to “**ever** be with the Lord” (emph. DM). This passage speaks of our going to Heaven for eternity, not floating in the clouds for seven years (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22–24).

Fifth, the Bible knows nothing of an earthly kingdom of Christ (John 18:36).

Sixth, the Bible does not contain either the word *Rapture* or the concept of that theological scheme.

[**Note:** This article was written for and published in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, Denton, TX, January 26, 2007.]

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