

Thoughts on the “Rapture”

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A bumper sticker reads: “In case of the Rapture, this car will be driverless.” *The Rapture* in the foregoing statement refers to an event that will **allegedly** occur at the “**first second coming**” of Christ (this doctrine requires two returns). Its basic claimed features are as follows:

- Jesus will initially return secretly and hover above the earth, seen only by the faithful.
- At this appearance, only the righteous dead will be raised.
- He will immediately take up (i.e., “rapture”) the raised saints with the living ones (e.g., those piloting airplanes, those driving 18 wheelers, military commanders, et al.) into the clouds to be with Him for a period of seven years; all others will be “left behind.”
- Afterward, Jesus will descend (with His saints and establish His mythical 1,000-year 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 so-called “Rapture” Biblical fact or theological fiction?

- **First**, the Bible conveys nothing about 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 their “secret coming” theory. It declares that the Lord’s coming will be accompanied with “a shout, with the voice of the archangel, 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 the saved ones entering Heaven for eternity, not floating in the clouds for seven years (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22–24).
- **Fifth**, the Bible says nothing of an earthly kingdom of Christ; rather the opposite (John 18:36).
- **Sixth**, the Bible does not contain either the word *Rapture* or the concept of that theological scheme.

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