

A dramatic landscape featuring a bright sunburst breaking through a sea of clouds. The sun is positioned in the upper left, casting a warm glow over the scene. The clouds are thick and layered, with colors ranging from soft pinks and purples to deep blues and greys. In the background, a mountain range is visible, with a prominent peak on the right side. The overall atmosphere is one of awe and divine presence.

HE'S COMING

Rapture of the Church and Return of Jesus

Maranatha

Aramaic word that means
“the Lord is coming” or “come, O Lord.”

What is Prophecy?

Biblical prophecy plays two roles:

1. It foretells the future.
2. It explains what the positive or negative results of future events will be.

What is Eschatology?

a term not found in scripture meaning ideas about the 'end' or 'last' (Greek *eschatos*) period of history or existence.

Source: Harper's Bible Dictionary

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What is the Rapture?

- Latin term *rapio*, which means to “snatch away” or “carry off,” is the source of the English word Rapture
- Greek *harpadzo* ἄρπάζω
- Hebrew *lakakh* לקַח
- English word “rapture” is not found in your Bible
- The rapture event is God’s taking the Church out of the world instantaneously.
- The main biblical passage for the rapture of the church is 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17. Other texts used to support the doctrine of the rapture are John 14:1–3 and 1 Corinthians 15:51–52.

How does Rapture work?

- Rapture is not a hidden idea in scripture.
- “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8
- We can learn about the future Rapture by studying past Raptures.

8 Examples of rapture in the Bible

1. Enoch
2. Moses
3. Elijah
4. Jesus
5. Philip
6. Old Testament saints
7. The Church
8. The Two Witnesses

3 Comings of Jesus Christ – 1 Past, 2 Future

Past

1. Jesus came the first time – born as the Christ child

Future

2. Jesus will come to get His bride, the Church (Rapture)

3. Jesus will come with His bride (Second Coming)

8 Examples of rapture in the Bible

6 in the past, 2 in the future

1. Enoch (past)
2. Moses (past)
3. Elijah (past)
4. Jesus (past)
5. Philip (past)
6. Old Testament saints (past)
7. The Church (future)
8. The Two Witnesses (future)

Raptures in the Bible - Enoch

Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch. Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died. Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. **Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.** Genesis 5:18-24

*Like the living believers at the Rapture of the Church, Enoch did not die and will never die

Raptures in the Bible - Moses

Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, and the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” **So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He (God) buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.** Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated.

Deuteronomy 34:1-8

Raptures in the Bible - Moses

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Jude 9

*Michael is known from the book of Daniel (10:13, 21; 12:1) and Revelation 12:7 as the leader of the heavenly host. The archangel Michael was sent to bury Moses’ body, but according to Jewish tradition (the pseudepigraphical book, The Assumption of Moses), the devil argued with the angel about the body, apparently claiming the right to dispose of it.

(Bible Knowledge Commentary & New Bible Commentary)

*Like the believers who died before the Rapture of the Church, Moses’ body went to be with the Lord after he died

Raptures in the Bible - Elijah

And it came about when the Lord was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here please, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he said, “Yes, I know; be still.” Elijah said to him, “Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be still.” Then Elijah said to him, “Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” And he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. 2 Kings 2:1-6

Raptures in the Bible - Elijah

Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." He said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

2 Kings 2:7-10

Raptures in the Bible - Elijah

As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. **And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.** Elisha saw it and cried out, “My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

2 Kings 2:11-15

Raptures in the Bible – Moses and Elijah

Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Matthew 17:1-3

Raptures in the Bible - Jesus

And after He had said these things, **He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.** And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:9-11

Mount of Olives



Raptures in the Bible - Philip

But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, “Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.) So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.” Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: “He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.” Acts 8:26-33

Raptures in the Bible - Philip

The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. **When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him,** but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea. Acts 8:34-40

Raptures in the Bible – Old Testament saints

Q: What happened to Old Testament believers when they died?

A: They went to a place called by Jesus “Abraham’s (side) bosom.” This was a place of paradise for Old Testament believers at the time of death (cf. Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:3). Paradise was the place where the righteous awaited the arrival and finished work of the Messiah.

Q: What happened to Old Testament non-believers when they died?

A: They went to Hades (the Greek word for “hell” which is synonymous with Hebrew “sheol”) ... a place of conscious torment.

Q: What happened to the OT believers when Jesus was resurrected?

A: They were raptured and went to heaven with Jesus.

Raptures in the Bible – Old Testament saints

One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” But the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” And He said to him, **“Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”**

Luke 23:39-43

Raptures in the Bible – Old Testament saints

Jesus said, “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now **the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom** and the rich man also died and was buried. **In Hades** he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. “And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’ ”

Luke 16:22-26

Raptures in the Bible – Old Testament saints

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and **many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised**; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew 27:50-53

Raptures in the Bible – Old Testament saints

Paul the Apostle wrote, “Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.’ (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)”

Ephesians 4:8-10

Raptures in the Bible – The Church

Next week we will discuss...

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Raptures in the Bible – Two Witnesses

Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. **And I will grant authority to my two witnesses**, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

Revelation 11:1-6

Raptures in the Bible – Two Witnesses

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. **And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.** And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 11:7-13

Next Sunday...

The Rapture of the Church

Now what?

- God's character and nature are consistent
- We can learn about the future rapture by studying past raptures
- The Messiah was promised to come the first time and He came
- The Messiah has been promised to come again
- We can know and believe in a trustworthy God who tells us that "He's Coming"

God's word for you today...

- Trust me for the future
- Live for me now

Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."
Luke 9:23-24