

## The Rapture Teaching, Is It True?

The doctrine of the “rapture” is a teaching that claims all or most of the saved Christians will be caught up into the heavens with Jesus Christ, while the world continues to exist in some form. Everyone else will be left on Earth to suffer during a period of time called the “tribulation”.

But what does the Bible have to say about this teaching called the “rapture”?

Will you read with me the full context of scripture to understand if the teaching known as “the rapture” is even in the Bible? You might say to yourself: “Of course it is in the Bible. I have been taught the rapture for years. It must be in the Bible!” Again I ask: will you read the scriptures with me, and look into it yourself? Rather than just taking someone else’s word for it?

There are lots of scriptures that speak about tribulation and the second coming of Christ when the saved will be caught up to heaven. Those who teach “the rapture” have built their whole teaching based principally on three very short scripture references. But all three of these references have been taken completely out of their original scriptural context.

Anyone can take a few scriptures here and there and build any doctrine they want to teach. But why would we be so shallow in our scriptural study as to believe them? Let us be wiser than that!

People who teach the rapture doctrine, will mainly reference three sentences out of 1st Thessalonians the fourth chapter. Two sentences out of 1st Corinthians the 15th chapter. Three sentences out of Matthew the 24th chapter (*note: Luke also has many of the same scriptures as those in Matthew 24*). And five short sentences out of Luke the 17th chapter (*note: there are similar ones also in Matthew to these in Luke*). In all four cases they totally ignore the full context of the scripture by only quoting a tiny few sentences out of context. So let’s read

these scriptures, and then again read them within their full context. And then also consider the context of the whole Bible surrounding these scriptures.

So here first are these four scriptures:

No 1 – the first scripture is found in 1st Thessalonians.

*“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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: 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.” ~ 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17*

No 2 – the second scripture is found in 1st Corinthians.

*“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” ~ 1 Corinthians 15:51-52*

No 3 – The third one is in Matthew (and also referenced in Luke).

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” ~ Matthew 24:29-31*

No 4 – the fourth one is found in Luke (and also referenced in Matthew).

*“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they*

*answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” ~ Luke 17:34-37*

Just reading these scriptures alone, even outside of their full context, still makes the whole notion of a “rapture and tribulation” a stretch of the imagination. But we are going to settle it for good, and prove that there is no such thing as the modern day rapture teaching. We will be reading these same scriptures completely within their original context.

The full context of the first scripture is in 1st Thessalonians and goes from chapter 4 verse 13 through chapter 5 and verse 11 – covering 17 verses (not just 3 verses, as rapture teachers quote). These 17 scriptures are actually dealing with the final day, when all the righteous will be with the Lord forever. Other scriptures describe this as: the last trumpet sound, and a great noise proclaiming the final judgement and the complete destruction of all things.

Peter also spoke of this day.

*“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*

These 17 scriptures in 1st Thessalonians go into even more detail, describing this final day event. The discussion starts out about those Christians who have already died. Paul explains that there is a resurrection, and therefore to not be sorrowful over those who have died before. Because you will see them again in the final resurrection: where they shall all come forth to the Lord. And those of us who are still yet alive at that time, shall also go up together with them to be with the Lord forever.

The whole discussion of these 17 scriptures is about the resurrection. Therefore the discussion ends with an exhortation to be true, and to comfort one another with the hope we have of the resurrection. So instead of only 3, let us read the

complete narrative of the whole 17 scriptures. Just as it was originally written, not split up into verses and chapters.

*“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” ~ 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11*

The whole purpose of this writing, (mentioned two times by Paul), is to give the true Christians a hope beyond this life: the hope of the resurrection. A hope that they could comfort one another with during their difficult times. But because we don't know when that day will be, he also warns them (and us) to not get spiritually lax and fall back into the spiritual darkness of sin. No one knows that final day, nor when our individual final day on Earth is. Therefore we must stay spiritually ready for it to come upon any one of us, at any time.

So now let's talk about the second main scripture that I mentioned. Another one that rapture teachers heavily rely upon to justify their doctrine.

*“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” ~ 1 Corinthians 15:51-52*

The main subject of the whole chapter of 1st Corinthians 15 is the resurrection. This chapter is 58 scriptures long making it one of the longer chapters that we have in the Bible. So why pick out only two scriptures out of 58 to justify a “rapture and tribulation” doctrine, when all 58 are talking about the same main subject: the resurrection? Let us not be so shallow in our study of the scriptures that someone could tell us anything, and we simply believe it.

You can read the whole 1st Corinthians the 15th chapter on your own (and you should), but for the sake of brevity I am going to summarize it here next.

The Apostle Paul starts the 15th chapter expressing a concern to the brethren in Corinth that they shouldn't be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. So he takes some time to identify all the brothers, who themselves saw Jesus Christ, after that Jesus had resurrected. Now he does this because in verses 12 through 19 he is giving them a serious warning against others who are teaching against the hope of the resurrection. So the whole discussion from that point on, is the Apostle Paul proving the resurrection is true. And one of his final proofs is that in the resurrection we will not have a mortal body anymore, but a spiritual body. A new immortal spirit that is completely different from the corruption of a human fleshly body. Therefore he states:

*“[49] And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. [50] Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. [51] Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. [54] So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. [55] O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” ~ 1 Corinthians 15:49-55*

I left the numbers in the scriptural passage, so that you could reread the scriptures that the rapture teachers claim: 51 and 52. But this time you can read them in their original context, and you will clearly see that it has nothing to do with a rapture and tribulation doctrine. Go ahead and read it again, especially noting the context of verses 51 and 52.

As I stated earlier, this whole chapter is instructing the Corinthian brethren to not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel: which is the fulfillment of the resurrection. So it only makes sense that the last scripture of this chapter summarizes again the hope of the Gospel: The resurrection is not a vain hope!

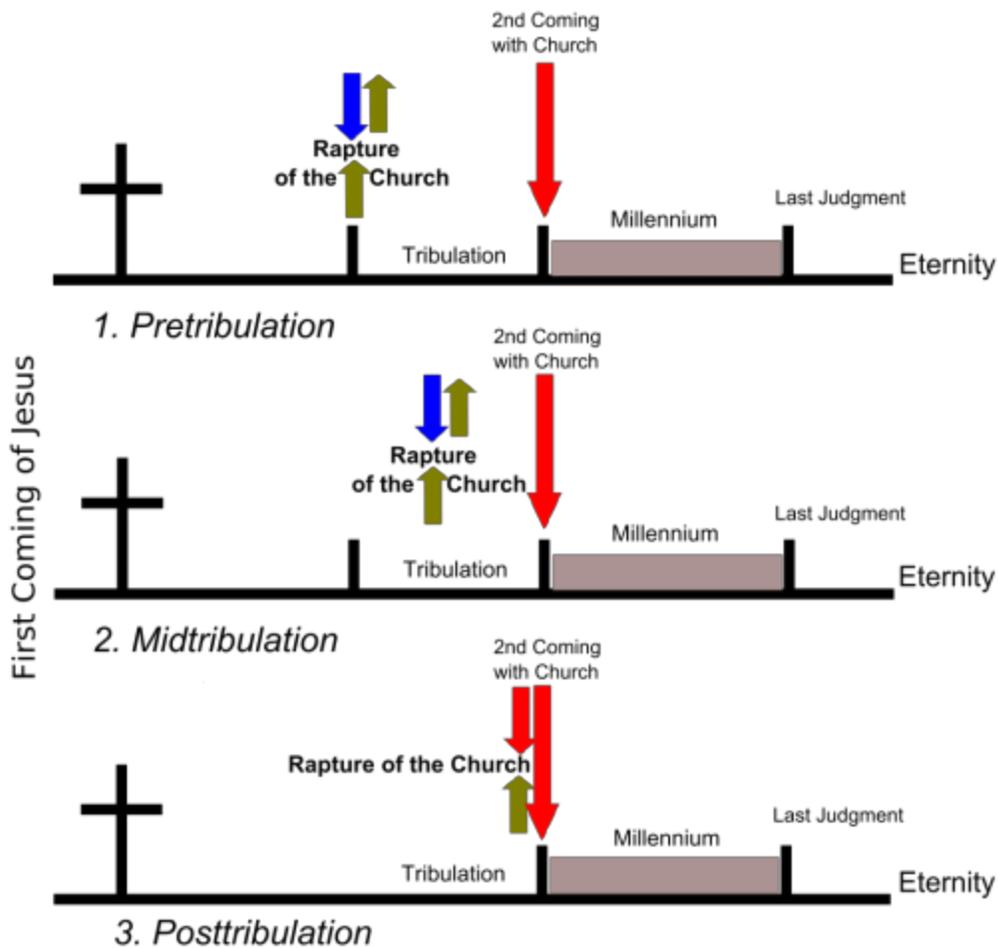
*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” ~ 1 Corinthians 15:58*

So let us now talk about the third scripture Matthew the 24th chapter, which is another long chapter of 51 scriptures. (*It is a complex prophetic chapter covering two questions that the apostles had asked Jesus: when Jerusalem would be destroyed, “and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world”.*) This chapter contains the third scripture reference (three sentences) that rapture-tribulation teachers especially like to use. Here they are again:

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” ~ Matthew 24:29-31*

There we are, we have the tribulation – right? The “tribulation” is a teaching that some claim of a future time of great suffering on the Earth. In Matthew 24, Jesus actually did (at that time) teach of a future time to come of great tribulation. But when did it come, or when will it come?

## Comparison of Christian Tribulation Views



Most all rapture teachers place the rapture prior to the “tribulation” or in the middle of the tribulation. And all rapture teaching, teaches that the “tribulation” is yet to come. Some have even went so far as to try to predict when the tribulation would come. But it never came when they said it would, so they are still waiting. But they don’t want you to read the rest of the scriptures, because Jesus actually did say when the tribulation would happen. And based on what Jesus said, it happened a long long time ago! Long before these rapture teachers were ever born.

So above we read Matthew 24:29-31. So now let’s start reading further, starting at the next verse 32.

*“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it*

*is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” ~ Matthew 24:32-34*

Everything Jesus just spoke about, including the tribulation, happened in the days of the Apostles and disciples of the Lord. History has thoroughly recorded it. It happened when the Roman armies surrounded the then existing city of Jerusalem, around AD 70.



They starved the city, brutally killed everyone who tried to escape, and then thoroughly destroyed the city and most everyone who remained. It was the most brutal and terrible tribulation that has ever happened on the face of the Earth. The historian Josephus thoroughly described this horrific event. Research it yourself and you will see that what I'm telling you is true. And by the way, this is the way Jesus described it also.

*“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” ~ Matthew 24:21*

Jesus spoke about the same things in the Gospel of Luke, in the 21st chapter. And there he also said that it would all happen in the same generation of the Apostles and disciples.

*“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.” ~ Luke 21:32*

But then one might ask, why did Jesus say at this same time that he would come in the clouds of heaven with power and great Glory?

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” ~ Matthew 24:29-31*

This is symbolic language, similar to what the prophets would use, and to what Jesus would use in the Book of Revelation. When he speaks of the clouds of heaven, he is speaking about the spiritual cloud of witnesses: the gathering of the true Christian people who witness for Jesus Christ. There has always been a cloud of witnesses throughout history.

*“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” ~ Hebrews 12:1-2*

When there is a true cloud of witnesses, people see Jesus on the throne. When this cloud forms, conviction falls on the hearts of sinners and they start laying aside their sins and forsaking them. This true cloud of believers is because Jesus is on the throne of their hearts. Because his kingdom, is a kingdom within the hearts of his people.

*“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” ~ Luke 17:20-21*

Jesus also told the High Priest that he also would see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven. And the High Priest did see that cloud in his own day, after the day of Pentecost: when Jesus was mightily ruling in the hearts of those who loved him in Jerusalem.

*“But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” ~ Matthew 26:63-64*

Finally the fourth scripture is actually talking about something very sobering to happen, especially in the last days. And it has actually been happening for some time now.

*“I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” ~ Luke 17:34-37*

Again, let us understand the full context of when this scripture was spoken. Jesus was commenting actually in general about the whole of the “gospel day”, after he would be taken up from the earth and from his disciples. He warns them to not be deceived. And he explains that the gospel light of Jesus Christ will cover the whole earth. But yet, most will continue in their own sinful ways as if to ignore the light, so that day will pass by them, until the day they face their judgement. Just like many others who neglected their salvation, so shall it be during the “gospel day”: many will neglect their soul need like in the days of Noe and Lot.

*“And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one*

*part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 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. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” ~ Luke 17:22-37*

And so Christ continues his narrative explaining “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Giving human analogies, he warns that when you see the true spiritual light, take heed and don't waste time. No not even to go back into your house, nor to return from the field. He gives the example of Lot's wife, who when warned to flee from the sinful city, she looked back. Don't try to preserve your old life. You must let your old ways die, to seek a new life in Christ Jesus. And then he explains how that often when serving Christ, two people that were close, will be separated by the full gospel light. One who holds to the truth, shall be preserved. The other who does not, shall be taken. And Jesus is asked by his disciples “where will they be taken?” Where ever the body (original word is “carcass” or a dead body), there shall the eagles (original word is “vultures”) be gathered. Those who are spiritually dead in their soul, will be gathered together to be eaten by spiritual vultures – false prophets. (In Revelation 18:2, the spiritual unfaithful condition of spiritual Babylon is described as a “hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”)

This type of judgement upon people who do not love the full truth, is spoken of over and over many times in the Bible. Even in the Old Testament, Ezekiel the prophet spoke of the vision where the Lord's servant with the ink-horn would

mark those who are true to the Lord, to distinguish them from those that were unfaithful. And the unfaithful were then systematically slaughtered. (Read Ezekiel the whole 9th chapter.) Also in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul plainly stated that the Lord would send strong delusion upon those “who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (Read 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12.) Showing that their souls would be given over to a final spiritual death by deception. And then again in two places within Revelation we are shown where souls are sacrificed to false prophets and false doctrines. (Read Revelation chapter 9 versus 13 through 21, and chapter 19 versus 17 through 21.) Particularly in Revelation chapter 19 it states:

*“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great... ..And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” ~ Revelation 19:17-18 & 21*

To be even clearer concerning the scripture in Luke chapter 17, let’s examine the same discussion as it is recorded in Matthew the 24th chapter. Remember as stated earlier in this article, in the first part of Matthew chapter 24, the Apostles had asked Jesus two questions because he had just told them that the Temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed. So the two questions in verse 3 were:

1. Tell us, when shall these things be?
2. and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?  
*(This was actually a duplicate question. The first part refers to his “coming in the clouds” which has actually happened many times within the “cloud of witnesses” – people who witness of his resurrection within their hearts.)*

The next 11 verses of Matthew 24 (verses 4 through 14) are a very summarized answer to the two questions. Then he goes into detail to answer the first question

about the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in verses 15 through 35 (as I already covered earlier in this article). Then starting in verse 36 Jesus begins his more detailed answer to the second question.

Note: he up front tells them that no one (even him) knows the time of the end of the world, so he addresses what he knows: “the coming of the Son of man.” So what he is talking about is spiritual, speaking about the light of his gospel going throughout the world, even until the end of time. (Remember in Luke 17:24 Jesus said “For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in his day.”

*“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” ~ Matthew 24:36-39*

And then he begins to bring the same analogy that is told in Luke the 17th chapter:

*“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” ~ Matthew 24:40-41*

And so he gives another analogy that goes with this warning. Note that there is punishment and reward shown here, but the reward is not a “final heaven” reward, but rather that greater authority and responsibility would be given to the faithful:

*“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in*

*his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ~ Matthew 24:42-51*

Again, the reward of the unfaithful would be to be gathered with the hypocrites. A spiritual sacrifice of the soul – which will lead to eternal damnation. So again the warning:

*“...Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light...” ~ John 12:35-36*

So none of these scriptures that we have studied support the rapture-tribulation teaching of people being caught up to the heavens, prior to or during a worldwide tribulation. Additionally, rapture-tribulation teachers also teach that the tribulation will be followed by a millennial reign. But could their teaching on the millennial reign be inaccurate also? To find out, read [“The Millennial Reign in Revelation Chapter 20”](#).

To summarize this article on the rapture, this is what the scriptures teach:

1. The true people of God being caught up to heaven will happen at the end of time, when everyone will be resurrected.
2. The great tribulation happened when Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Roman armies, around the year AD 70.
3. If you don't stay with the full truth and light of Jesus Christ, you will be sacrificed to deception.

*“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” ~ John 5:28-29*

And so it is important that today we have our hearts right with God. There will be no second chances after we die.

*“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” ~ Hebrews 9:27-28*

So the real question for each one of us is: have we been forgiven and delivered from our sins? And have we continued to walk faithful and true to his Word? Because in the resurrection, we want to appear before Jesus Christ “without sin”. Sin can never enter heaven!

*“Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.” ~ John 8:21*