

The Rapture of the Church

Intro

We have looked at the church's identity
purpose
leadership
ordinances
stewardship
unity
mission
authority
discipline

now, its end.

The "harpazo" or "plucking up" or "rapture"

An ending of an age that will usher in the beginning of "The Day of The Lord" . . . a 7 year judgment or Tribulation, "the like of which has not occurred since the creation of the world."

One of the greatest errors of a secular "closed system" world view is that there is no finale to history.

But the Bible sees a Grand Finale, Recompense and Restoration. One prefaced by an age of mercy that ends suddenly in the "rapture" or "removal" of the prophets and priests of the age – the church – then followed by a Great Tribulation of punishment...

punishment upon Israel who has trusted the Gentile
and the world who has rejected the offer of reconciliation.

Three questions must be answered.

What is the rapture?

Why a rapture?

When in the sequence of events will it occur?

What? I Thess. 4:13-18
I Cor. 15:50 – 53
John 14:1-3

Why? It ends the age of grace and begins the day of judgment.

1. It delivers us from the wrath to come: (I Thess. 1:9-10)
2. It allows for the punishment of a rebellious world.
c.f. Lot, Noah, Rahab

2 Thess. 2:1-7 . . .

- the "Apostasy" must come
 - anti-Christ then revealed
 - a judicial darkening of man
- but first ...
- the removal of "the restrainer"
i.e. "taken out"

When?

1. The Tribulation is a judgment upon Israel for its rejection
and judgment upon the world for its rejection.

But . . . the Church is neither a rebellious Israel nor a rebellious world.

2. The Church's time of trial has been the last 2000 years of testing where we have served God in believing, preserving, preaching and obeying.

Thus . . . the rapture only makes sense as occurring to remove the true saint from punishment.

Revelation 1

2 – 3

4 – 5

6 – 18

19

20

Conclusion