



SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

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Understanding the Rapture: Hope and Readiness for Believers

OPENING & PRAYER:

Today's focus was on the rapture—what it is, why it matters, and how it shapes our hope as believers. The rapture is the moment when Jesus comes in the air for His church, and all believers, both those who have died and those still alive, are caught up to meet Him. This is distinct from the revelation, or the second coming, when Jesus returns to earth as King and Judge. The rapture is a promise of hope, not wrath, and it is imminent—meaning it could happen at any moment. There are no signs that must precede it, and every generation of Christians has lived with the expectation that Jesus could return in their lifetime.

"Father, I thank you for Your word and Your promises. We pray for direction and clarity as we dive into Your word. Please guide us as we strive to understand Your word and Your future for us. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."

SCRIPTURE:

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. **John 14:1-3**

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." **Jude 14-15**

looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. **Titus 2:13-14**

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. **Romans 5:9**

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. **1**

Thessalonians 4:13-16

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **1 Thessalonians 4:15-16**

Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. **1 Thessalonians 4:17-18**

Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught (harpazo) Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. **Acts 8:39**

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-2**

For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. **1 Thessalonians 5:3-4**

You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. **1 Thessalonians 5:5-7**

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **1 Thessalonians 5:8-9**

who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:10-11

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, "unless the falling away comes first" **2 Thessalonians 2:3**

who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **2 Thessalonians 2:4-5**

And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. **2 Thessalonians 2:6-7**

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, **2 Thessalonians 2:9**

and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**

knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." **2 Peter 3:3-4**

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. **2 Peter 3:5-7**

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. **2 Peter 3:8-9**

GO DEEPER:

Three main perspectives exist regarding the timing of the rapture: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, and post-tribulation. I stand firmly in the pre-tribulation view, believing that the church will be taken up before the period of God's judgment known as the tribulation. This conviction is rooted in Scripture and the understanding that God has not appointed His people to wrath, but to salvation through Jesus. The rapture is not about escaping hardship, but about God's faithfulness to His bride—the church—whom He has already redeemed.

We explored the biblical foundation for the rapture, looking at passages in John, Jude, Thessalonians, and others. The Greek word "harpazo" (caught up) and its Latin counterpart "raptus" give us the term "rapture." This event is not a new idea; God has demonstrated His power to "catch away" His people throughout Scripture, as seen with Enoch, Elijah, and even Jesus Himself.

As believers, our focus is not on the antichrist or the coming judgment, but on Jesus Himself—our blessed hope. The rapture is meant to comfort and encourage us, reminding us that our ultimate destiny is to be with the Lord forever. We are called to live in readiness, walking in the light, and encouraging one another with these truths. Even as scoffers arise and question the promise of His coming, we remember that God's patience is for the sake of salvation, not delay. The invitation remains open: receive Jesus, and be ready for the day when everything changes in the twinkling of an eye.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

The Rapture Is Distinct from the Second Coming

The rapture is when Jesus comes in the air for His church, and only believers are affected. In contrast, the revelation (second coming) is when Jesus returns to earth as King and Judge, and all humanity is impacted. Understanding this distinction helps us interpret Scripture accurately and keeps our hope anchored in Christ's promise to His people. **[08:43]**

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture Reflects God's Heart for His Church

God has not appointed His people to wrath but to salvation through Jesus. The pre-tribulation view honors the finished work of Christ, recognizing that judgment is not for those who are in Him. This perspective is not about escapism, but about trusting God's character and His faithfulness to His bride. **[16:37]**

Our Focus Is on Jesus, Not the Antichrist or Wrath

Scripture never instructs believers to look for the antichrist or to fear coming judgment. Instead, we are told to look for Jesus, our blessed hope, and to live with expectation and joy. This focus shapes our daily lives, keeping our eyes on the Savior rather than the chaos of the world. **[14:21]**

The "Departure" in 2 Thessalonians Is the Rapture, Not Apostasy

A careful look at the original language and context of 2 Thessalonians reveals that the "falling away" is better understood as a "departure"—the rapture of the church. This interpretation aligns with the flow of the passage and underscores the church's role as the restraining force against evil until it is taken out of the way. **[32:20]**

God's Patience Is Salvation, Not Delay

The reason Jesus has not yet returned is not slackness, but mercy. God desires that none should perish, and His patience is an invitation for more to come to repentance. This truth should stir us to gratitude and urgency, both in our own walk and in sharing the hope of Christ with others. **[40:23]**

LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, what happens to believers who have died and those who are still alive at the time of the rapture?
2. The sermon teaches that the rapture is a source of hope and comfort for believers. Why is this event meant to encourage us, and how does it contrast with the idea of God's wrath? **[[18:17]]**
3. The sermon says that God's patience in delaying Jesus' return is for the sake of salvation, not slackness. How should this shape our attitude toward those who have not yet believed? **[[40:23]]**
4. The message encourages us to focus on Jesus as our "blessed hope" instead of being preoccupied with the antichrist or world chaos. Are there things in your life or in the news that distract you from focusing on Jesus? What practical steps can you take to shift your focus? **[[14:21]]**
5. The rapture is meant to comfort and encourage us. When you face fear or uncertainty about the future, how can you remind yourself of the hope you have in Christ? **[[18:17]]**

CLOSING PRAYER:

"Father, thank you for the opportunities to grow in our faith. As we read through what is to come, we put our faith and trust in You. There may be questions, but when we lean on You, those questions seem small and insignificant. Thank you for guiding us through this world and guiding us to You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."