Revelation Chapter 4:1-2 - Rapture Issues

Rapture

Revelation 4:1-2

There is a creator God in heaven. There is an adversary – The Devil. This cosmic warfare (Gen. 3:15) is reaching a conclusion. We knew it had to, why not now. Remember your REAL enemy s Satan. What language are you speaking – what language are your children and family speaking?

Daniel 8:26-27 – Daniel 10:14, 19 – Daniel 12:1-4 –

Progressive Revelation: Peter, Paul and Jesus all said so. God is intimate with those who diligently seek Him.

1 Peter 1:10-13 – Even the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, carefully researched and investigated this salvation. They tried to find out what era or specific time the Spirit of the Messiah in them kept referring to when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah <u>and the glories that would follow</u>. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves <u>but you</u> (last days) in regard to the things that have now been announced to you by those who brought you the good news through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. These are things that even the angels desire to look into. <u>Therefore</u>, prepare your minds for action, keep a clear head, and set your hope completely on the grace to be given you when Jesus, the Messiah, is revealed. Rev. 22:10 - Do Not seal up

Distinctions

Israel: Gifts and calling of God are without repentance

The Church: Gates of hell shall not overcome (Matt. 16:18), never pictured on Earth after Chapter three.

Tribulation Saints: Satan DOES overcome them (Daniel 7:21, 25; Rev. 13:7), beheaded, no flesh would survive (Matthew 24:21-22)

The 'Earth-dwellers: Never repent

No word 'rapture' in your American Bible: It comes from the Latin Vulgate translation: 'rapiemur' is the proper tense of rapio: our English words "rapt" and "rapture" come from the past participle "rapio".

The Greek text uses (Harpazo): Greek verb: to seize, carry off by force, claim for one's self eagerly . . .

Thyatira: promised to go into Great Tribulation (2:22) Unless they repent: implies they can avoid it

Sardis: "I will come like a thief unless you 'wake up' (repent)

Philadelphia: Tribulation on the "Earth-dwellers"

From this point in Revelation until the end of the worldwide judgments on the Earth the church is never pictured on the Earth – but in heaven. If that's true, then how (and more importantly why) did we get there. Admittedly, if one only used Revelation 4:1-2 to construct a 'Rapture Theory' it would be done on very shaky ground. That's why we must examine and consider the whole counsel of God in this – and in any matter.

The first point I want to express very clearly is that there are differing beliefs regarding this topic. Mainline denominations such as Catholic or Lutheran do not believe there is such a thing as the removal of the church before a 7-year tribulation on the Earth. Many 'born-again' believer's either do not believe in a 'rapture' of the church or if they do may differ on the timing of such an event.

The critical point I want you to consider is that the rapture doctrine is not a salvation issue. You may hold differing beliefs concerning it but be very careful about breaking fellowship with other believer's over it. We face such a thing in our own Body at Christ The Rock. In matters of salvation, such as the pure gospel, it is acceptable to break fellowship because after all – if someone believes a "different gospel" than what is Biblical then you are truly not in fellowship with that person to begin with.

If it's so divisive, why study prophecy at all . . .

Why Study Prophecy?

• Old Testament: 1,845 references to Christ's rule on the earth; 17 OT books detail His Millennial rule.

• New Testament: Of the 216 chapters, there are 318 references to the Second Coming; mentioned in 23 of the 27 books.

• For every prophecy relating to His First Coming, there are eight regarding His Second Coming

The text before us

Rev 4:1-2 – "After this <u>I looked</u>, and behold, a <u>door standing open in heaven</u>! And the first voice, which I had heard <u>speaking to me like a trumpet</u>, said, "<u>Come up here</u>, and I will show you what must take place after these things (meta tauta)." At once I was <u>in the Spirit</u> (see below), and behold, a throne stood <u>in heaven</u>, with one seated on the throne."

Chapter 1:19 – the things you see "after these things" (Meta tauta: 7:1, 9; 15:5, 17:1; 19:1; 20:3)

John 12:41 – Isaiah said these things because <u>he saw</u> (literally, not allegorically) his glory and spoke of him.

2 Cor. 12:1-4 – Paul was *caught up and "heard*" things inexpressible (literally)

- Apostle John: "I was in the spirit..."
 - On the "day of the Lord" (at Patmos) Ch. 1:10
 - To the throne in heaven Ch. 4:2
 - Carried away in the wilderness Ch. 17:3
 - Carried to a mountain Ch. 21:10

When describing heavenly things John uses symbols, **however**, not *everything* is symbolic. As in the parables of Jesus, many of the details are merely descriptive. Remember the nature of symbolism: the symbol is always *less* than the *reality*. The reality of heaven is greater than any description we could ever have of it.

John actually saw, heard and experienced these things

- "I will show thee" Rev 4:1; 21:10
- "I looked" 70 times in Revelation
- "I saw" 35 times
- "I beheld" 7 times
- "I heard" 23 times

Eschatology

Amillennial		Post millennial	Premillennial
Post-tribulation	onal	Mid-tribulational	Pre-tribulational
Allegorical			- Literal

Hermeneutics

Amillennial Problems

- Messianic Promises throughout the Old Testament (are they literal or allegorical).
- Destiny of Israel in God's Covenants.
- Promise given to Mary by Angel Gabriel.
- Numerous reconfirmations in the New Testament.

Vs. 1 - Important differences between the rapture and second coming:

1) At the rapture, believers meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). At the second coming, believers return with the Lord to the earth (Revelation 19:14).

2) The second coming occurs after the great and terrible tribulation (Revelation chapters 6–19). The rapture occurs before the tribulation (1 Thess 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

3) The rapture is the removal of believers from the earth as an act of deliverance (1 Thess 4:13-17; 5:9). The second coming includes the removal of unbelievers as an act of judgment (Matthew 24:40-41).

4) The rapture will be secret and instant (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). The second coming will be visible to all (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:29-30).

5) The second coming of Christ will not occur until after certain other end-times events take place (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Matthew 24:15-30; Revelation chapters 6–18). The rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

Why is it important to keep the rapture and the second coming distinct?

1) If the rapture and the second coming are the same event, believers will have to go through the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

2) If the rapture and the second coming are the same event, the return of Christ is not imminent—there are many things which must occur before He can return (Matthew 24:4-30).

3) In describing the tribulation period, Revelation chapters 6–19 nowhere mentions the church. During the tribulation—also called "the time of trouble for Jacob" (Jeremiah 30:7)—God will again turn His primary attention to Israel (Romans 11:17-31).

The rapture and second coming are similar but separate events. Both involve Jesus returning. Both are end-times events. However, it is crucially important to recognize the differences. In summary, <u>the rapture</u> is the return of Christ in the clouds to remove all believers from the earth before the time of God's wrath. The <u>second coming</u> is the return of Christ to the earth to bring the tribulation to an end and to defeat the Antichrist and his evil world empire.

Some Rapture texts

John 14:1-3 (a picture of the Jewish wedding) – "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. "In <u>My Father's house</u> are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for <u>I go to prepare a place for you</u>. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will <u>come again</u> and <u>receive you to Myself</u>, that where <u>I am, there you may be also</u>.

The Jewish Wedding

• The *Ketubah*, Espousal (<u>2 Corinthians 11:2</u>; Isa 61:10; Judges 14:10-11; Jer 2:32; Isa 49:18; Ps 45:8-15):

Payment of the purchase price; set apart (Ephesians 5:25-27 - sanctification).

• Bridegroom departs to Father's House: Prepares room addition; bride prepares for his imminent return.

• *Huppah*, Wedding: Surprise gathering (<u>1 Thess 4:16-17</u>; Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Ps 45:8-15; Mt 25:1-13).

• Seven-day Marriage supper (Judg 14:12; Mt 9:15; 22:11-14; Jn 2:1).

<u>Revelation 19:6-8</u> – The wedding announcement will be made (v. 6), and the Bride will finally be made ready (v. 7). The reason the Bride will now be fully ready for the marriage ceremony is because she will have on her entire bridal gown (v. 8). This bridal gown is said to be the righteous acts of the saints. This teaches us two things. First, it shows that the process of sanctification will indeed be completed, for all that will be showing on the Bride will be her righteous acts. Secondly, this also shows that the marriage ceremony takes place after the Judgement Seat of the Messiah when the saints are rewarded for their deeds on earth (1 Cor. 3:10-15). All the wood, hay, and stubble will have been burned away and all the gold, silver, and precious stones will have been purified.

Revelation 19:9 – Since many are bidden or invited to come to the marriage feast, this passage indicates that the marriage supper or feast will be at a different place than the marriage ceremony. We know from the Word of God that the Old Testament saints are not resurrected with the Church before the Tribulation, but at the end of the Tribulation (Dan. 12:2). John the Baptist, who was the last of the Old Testament prophets, called himself a friend of the bridegroom and did not consider himself to be a member of the Bride of the Messiah, the Church (Jn. 3:27–30). Hence, the "many" who are bidden [to attend] the marriage supper on earth are all the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation saints resurrected after the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah.

How the Bride is collected: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (Paul wrote Galatians, then 1 Thessalonians)

Why it happens: to present us a dwelling (oiketerion): house fit for eternity

Deliverance from The Wrath to come: (1) Deliverance from <u>The</u> Wrath to Come:

Revelation Chapter 4:1-2 – Rapture Issues

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 – For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you <u>turned</u> to God from idols to serve a <u>living and true God</u>, and <u>to wait</u> for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from <u>the</u> <u>wrath</u> to come.

Paul had instructed them on the 'Day of the Lord' (Isa. 13:6,9; Zephaniah 1:2, 7, 12, 14-18; Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 2:1, 11, 31; Mal. 4:5; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:17)

The <u>Day of the Lord</u> is a specific designation referring to a time of <u>wrath</u> poured out on the kingdom of the Evil One and those who rejected Christ.

Time of Jacob's Trouble: Jeremiah 30:7 Great Tribulation: Matthew 24:21-22 (elect: Israel: Is. 65:8-9, 22; Romans 11:5-7, 28) Upon 'his people' (Israel): Daniel 12:1

1 Corinthians 15:50-53 – Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you <u>a mystery</u>; 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 – 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. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Mystery (musterion): a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding . . .
a. hidden purpose or counsel, something deliberately veiled by God only to be revealed by Him
b. the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly.

(3) Another purpose, The Pre-Tribulation rapture is NOT a "great escape" for the church, it is a necessary evacuation of the Holy Spirit's restraining influence and allowing Satan to have full sway of men and women upon the earth to deceive and destroy them.

Problem for pre-tribulationists, or is it?

2 Thessalonians 2:1-11 – Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless *the apostasy* comes first, *and the man of lawlessness is revealed*, the son of destruction,

All of 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 is an expansion, or commentary on chapter 1:9-10,

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 – For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you <u>turned</u> to God from idols to serve a <u>living and true God</u>, and <u>to wait</u> for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from <u>the wrath</u> to come.

Paul had instructed them on the 'Day of the Lord' (Isa. 13:6,9; Zephaniah 1:14-16; Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 2:1, 11, 31; Mal. 4:5; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:17)

The Day of the Lord is a specific end times designation referring to a time of judgment on the people of the Earth direct and drastic then at any other time in human history.

Time of Jacob's Trouble: Jeremiah 30:7 Great Tribulation: Matthew 24:21-22 (elect: Israel: Is. 65:8-9, 22; Romans 11:5-7, 28) Upon 'his people' (Israel): Daniel 12:1

In Paul's first letter (1 Thess. 5:2) Paul taught them that Jesus would come like a thief in the night. This raised the question in their minds as to whether the Lord had already come.

The Issues

How could Paul speak of the Lord's return as 'preceding" the Day of the Lord (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). What about the promises that they would not see God's wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9)? They were confused because they couldn't distinguish their present troubles with the Day of God's wrath.

Paul writes back in 2 Thessalonians and details 3 events which must happen before The Day of the Lord takes place.

1) the falling away (Gr. 'he apostasia'): meaning ' a revolt', a departure, an abandonment of a position long held.

Is Paul referencing the rapture here (the departure)? I don't believe so. There has always been apostasy in the church (true, but . . .)

Paul here is referencing a specific distinguishable apostasy that is in the future (1 Tim 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; James 5:1-8; 2 Peter 2:1-10).

Having said that, you should know that there is a growing movement which seeking to translate "apostasy" as the meaning the rapture. The argument is this.

Apostasia as a verb is used fifteen times in the New Testament. Of these fifteen, only three have anything to do with a departure from the faith (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb 3:12). The word is used for departing from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19), from ungodly men (1 Tim. 6:5), from the temple

(Luke 2:27), from the body (2 Cor. 12:8), and from persons (Acts 12:10; Luke 4:13). The most comprehensive Greek lexicon, Liddell and Scott, defines apostasia first as "defection, revolt;" then secondly as "<u>departure, disappearance</u>."

Paul Lee Tan notes, "The definite article 'the' denotes that this will be a definite event, . . . Paul refers here to a definite event which he calls 'the departure,' and which will occur just before the start of the tribulation. This is the rapture of the church."

The use of the article in this context is meant to denote a one-time event, which the rapture fits into. It is hard to think of how the process of apostasy at the end of the church age could be viewed by believers around the world as an identifiable, one-time event. However, this would not be a problem if that event were the rapture. Further, how could an apostasy be a sign to the church since many New Testament Epistles warn about apostasy in the first century and Jude said it has arrived in his day (Jude 3–4). Apostasy is a moving target while the Rapture will be a clear event.

Textual Transmission - Translation History of Apostasia

The first seven English translations of apostasia all rendered the noun as either "departure" or "departing." They are as follows: Wycliffe Bible (1384); Tyndale Bible (1526); Coverdale Bible (1535); Cranmer Bible (1539); Breeches Bible (1576); Beza Bible (1583); Geneva Bible (1608). This supports the notion that the word truly means "departure." In fact, Jerome's Latin translation known as the Vulgate from around the time of A.D. 400 renders apostasia with the "word discessio (Latin), meaning 'departure." Why was the King James Version the first to depart from the established translation of "departure"?

Most scholars say that no one knows the reason for the translation shift. However, a plausible theory has been put forth by Martin Butalla in his Master of Theology thesis produced at Dallas Theology Seminary in 1998. It appears that the Catholic translation into English from Jerome's Latin Vulgate known as the Rheims Bible (1576) was the first to break the translation trend. "Apostasia was revised from 'the departure' to 'the Protestant Revolt,'" explains Butalla. "Revolution is the terminology still in use today when Catholicism teaches the history of the Protestant Reformation. Under this guise, apostasia would refer to a departure of Protestants from the Catholic Church. (Perseus Database from U. Chicago) Liddell and Scott, Greek New Testament

Seven "Rapture Types in scripture"

- Enoch Gen 5:42; Heb 11:5 (delivered prior to the judgment of the flood)
- Elijah 2 Kgs 2:1, 11 (caught up only to return one day?)
- Jesus Mk 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rev 12:5 (bodily resurrection prior to removal)
- Philip Acts 8:39 (Greek word 'harpazo' used here)
- Paul 2 Cor 12:2-4 (caught up into the throne room, saw and heard just like Isaiah and John)

- Body of Christ 1 Thess. 4:17 (delivered from "the wrath" to come)
- John Rev 4:1-2 (literally and bodily caught up)

Doctrine of Imminency

• Imminent: Next expectation; not be confused with "immanent," that God is not only transcendent, or far above us, but that He is always with us and active on our behalf. Nor should it be confused with "eminent," which is a title of honor reserved for persons of out standing distinction.

- Believers are taught to expect the Savior from heaven at any moment (Phil 3:20; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:18; 5:6; Rev 22:20).
- Expresses hope and a spirit of expectancy (1 Thess 1:10).
- Should result in us consciously living a righteous and holy life (1 John 3:2,3).
- Paul included himself among those looking for Christ's return (1 Thess 4:15,17; 2 Thess 2:1).
- Timothy was admonished to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim 6:14).
- Jewish converts were reminded that "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb 10:37). "Occupy til I come" (Lk 19:13).
- The expectation of some were so strong that they had stopped work and had to be exhorted: to return to their jobs (2 Thess 3:10-12); and have patience (James 5:8).

How can I leave Israel behind? We're not, Israel does not belong to us, they are God's. The trib is a unique time when God will judge the 'Earth—dwellers' (Rev. 6:10, 15-17) but also to call Israel to repentance. (Ezekiel 20:33-44)

<u>1 Corinthians 10:32</u> - Give no occasion of stumbling, either to <u>Jews</u>, or to <u>Greeks</u>, or to <u>the church of</u> <u>God</u>: (*Paul makes a distinction between groups*)

We are all one in Christ *but only after* we entrust ourselves to Christ for salvation.

Problem for mid-tribulationalists:

- 1) If rapture is mid-trib we will know the exact day (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-16)...Daniel set the day of Jesus' return as being exactly 1,290 days after the abomination of desolation (Dan 12:11).
- 2) We're told we will not know: (Matt 24:44) Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

Rapture & Second Coming Passages

Rapture

Jn 14:1-3 Rom 8:19 1 Cor 1:7-8 1 Cor 15:1-53 1 Cor 16:22 Phil 3:20-21 Col 3:4 1 Thess 1:10 1 Thess 2:19 1 Thess 4:13-18 1 Thess 5:9 1 Thess 5:23 2 Thess 2:1 (3?) 1 Tim 6:14 2 Tim 4:1 Titus 2:13 Heb 9:28 Jas 5:7-9 1 Pet 1:7, 13 1 Jn 2:28-3:2 Jude 21 Rev 2:25 Rev 3:10

Second Coming Dan 2:44-45 Dan 7:9-14 Dan 12:1-3 Zech 14:1-15 Mt 13:41 Mt 24:15-31 Mt 26:64 Mk 13:14-27 Mk 14:62 Lk 21:25-28 Acts 1:9-11 Acts 3:19-21 1 Thess 3:13 2 Thess 1:6-10 2 Thess 2:8 2 Pet 3:1-14 Jude 14-15 Rev 1:7 Rev 19:11-20:6 Rev 22:7, 12, 20

The Rapture and the Second Coming are Two Separate Events

Rapture

Translation of all believers. Translated saints go to heaven. Earth not judged. Imminent, any-moment, signless. Not in the Old Testament. Believers only. Before the day of wrath. No reference to Satan. Christ comes *for* His own. He comes in the *air*. He claims His bride. Only His own see. Tribulation begins Church believers only?

Second Coming

No translation at all. Translated saints return to earth. Earth judged; righteousness established. Follows definite predicted signs, including tribulation. Predicted often in Old Testament. Affects all men on the earth. Concluding the day of wrath. Satan is bound. Christ comes *with* His own. He comes to the *earth*. He comes with His bride. Every eye shall see Him. Millennial Kingdom begins. OT saved raised later?

Mid and Post Trib Arguments against pre-tribulation rapture believer's

 The ideology of the rapture is a 19th century invention by a Jesuit Priest named LaCunza, Margret MacDonald, C.I. Schofield, and most prominently, John Nelson Darby. <u>Answer</u>: The Apostles and first century church believed in the doctrine of immanence and the sudden return of Christ in their own day. The Early Church Fathers (those disciples and commissioned directly by the Apostles) believed and taught in a pre-tribulation rapture.

2) true the doctrine of the rapture had been largely expanded upon since the mid1800's (there is a reason for that):

- a. 2nd Century church focused on doctrine of scripture
- b. 4th Century doctrine of the Trinity
- c. 5th Century the Doctrine of Christ
- d. 15th-17th Century Soteriology (salvation elements, the gospel)
- e. 19th Century Eschatology

Answer: The accusation is a false-flag:

- a. our measure of doctrine is not church tradition nor anything man says
- b. our standard is what the Bible says and the validates a removal of Christ's Bride prior to His wrath being poured out on the Earth.
- 3) Most Christians throughout the centuries have been post or Amillennial
 - a. Most have also being infant baptism saves, Mary is and was always sinless, you must belong to the church to be saved, etc. Just because something is or was the majority opinion does not validate it as truth. Again, what is the Biblical standard?
- 4) Pre-trib rapture just promotes escapism: 'why should we not have to suffer'
 - a. the church has suffered
 - b. we are promised to escape suffering
 - 1. 1 Thess. 5:9 (have already passed from death to life)
 - 2. Luke 21:36 "you can escape"
 - 3. Rev. 3:10 you shall escape that hour . . . upon the whole Earth

5. Pre-trib teaching is a deception used by Antichrist. Many Christians will fall away due to discouragement.

- a. Same could be said of all Rapture theories because they assert Jesus cannot come today nor anytime in the immediate future.
- 6. The Church would be 'abandoning Israel'
 - a. Israel is not "ours" to abandon she is the "Wife of Jehovah"
 - b. God has a purpose/plan repentance, restored witness
- 1 Ezekiel 22:33-44
- 2 Romans 11:1, 25 (but really all of chapter 9-11)
 - 3) Revelation chaps. 7& 14
 - c. O.T. Pattern of Judgment (Judges, Kings, Prophets)

Don't inherit your eschatology - develop it!

2 Peter 2:1-10 - Now there were false prophets among the people, just as there also will be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many people will follow their immoral ways, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned. In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. The ancient verdict against them is still in force, and their destruction is not delayed. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but threw them into the lowest hell and imprisoned them in chains of deepest darkness, holding them for judgment; and if he did not spare the ancient world but protected Noah, a righteous preacher, along with seven others when he brought the flood on the world of ungodly people; and if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed them by burning them to ashes, making them an example to ungodly people of what is going to happen to them; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man who was greatly distressed by the immoral conduct of lawless people- for as long as that righteous man lived among them, day after day he was being tortured in his righteous soul by what he saw and heard in their lawless actions— then the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials and to hold unrighteous people for punishment on the day of judgment, especially those who satisfy their flesh by indulging in its passions and who despise authority. Being bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to slander glorious beings.