

Its the Rapture Biblical

Matthew 24:37–42 (NKJV)

³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Orthodox Christian teaching has always asserted that Jesus will one day visibly return as Judge and King of creation. The ecumenical creeds of the early church all affirm that Jesus will “come again to judge the living and the dead,” and the Reformed confessions that have followed them also endorse this understanding. Though there has been unanimity among believers that Jesus will personally and physically return, there has

been some debate about the precise timing of this event. Questions of the nature of the millennial reign of Christ continue to be debated among faithful Christians. The identity of the antichrist is another topic over which there has been much disagreement.

In the past one-hundred and fifty years or so, some Christians have argued that there will actually be two comings of Christ. Believers from the dispensational tradition have said that there will be a “secret rapture” of Christ a few years before His visible return. While even those who confess a secret rapture disagree about its timing, the idea basically says that at some point, the church will be removed from the world by Jesus in order that it might escape an ensuing tribulation. Jesus will then make His physical return some time later, usually three and one-half to seven years after the rapture.

The problem with this idea is that there are no passages of Scripture that clearly teach this view. In fact, the idea that believers are guaranteed a safe haven is hard to find in the pages of Scripture. From the faithful remnant that went into exile with the nation of Israel to Jesus’ promise that the days of suffering will be shortened for the sake of the elect (**Matt. 24:22**), Scripture makes it clear that believers can and will face tribulation.

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So far, we have seen that Dispensationalism is a lens through which Scripture can be interpreted. It is a framework of Biblical interpretation, a way to bring all of Scripture together as a unit. This is not unlike Covenant Theology where the covenant theologian views Scripture through the lens of that particular framework. In a sense, we could say that Dispensationalism, like Covenant Theology, functions largely as a presupposition. We discussed the importance of ensuring that these presuppositions come from Scripture itself and not from external theological constructs. We briefly discussed the success Covenant Theology has in this regard.

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This past weekend the eschatological thriller *Left Behind* opened in theaters. It joins a flood of Christian movies this year including *Exodus*, *Son of God*, *God's Not Dead*, *Heaven Is for Real*, and *Noah*. Okay, let's not count *Noah*.

Yet *Left Behind* stands out among this surge of Christian films, not just because it stars Nicholas Cage, and not just because it's based on the wildly successful *Left Behind* novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. Perhaps more than the other films, *Left Behind*

captures believers' imagination because it portrays a future, world-changing event: the secret rapture, that moment Jesus suddenly snatches up all Christians to himself years prior to his visible second coming.

As producer and writer Paul LaLonde put it, "It's a Bible-based movie, it's a biblical story, it's a true story—it just hasn't happened yet." As a result, it can cause us to wonder, *What will it be like when all the Christians suddenly disappear? How close are we to the rapture? Will I be taken or left behind?*

But there's another question we should ask, one that may surprise you: "Is the rapture taught in the Bible?" It may come as a shock to learn that many Bible-believing Christians today doubt the rapture, and that most Christians throughout history had never even heard of it.

Brief History of the Secret Rapture

The doctrine of the secret rapture emerged during the early 19th century through the teachings of John Nelson Darby (1800–1882). Darby was one of the early leaders of the Plymouth Brethren movement, and his teachings became known as "dispensationalism."

Darby's dispensationalism distinguished sharply between Israel and the church. The former was earthly, he believed, and the latter heavenly. God had two distinct peoples and separate plans for each....

Again, part of what drives the doctrine of the secret rapture is the function it serves in classic dispensationalism to separate God's current workings in Israel and in the church.

So in order for God to resume these plans for Israel, Darby believed, God would first need to remove the church from the world. Hence arose the need for the secret rapture. Darby had in effect proposed something new: a two-stage return of Jesus. Jesus would first come to "rapture" the church, and then return again in visible glory.¹

Darby's views spread rapidly, especially in the United States. The dispensational system, including the secret rapture, was disseminated through prophecy conferences and received support from evangelists like D. L. Moody and Billy Sunday. By far the most important boost for Darby's teaching, however, came from the *Scofield Reference Bible*. Scofield's work became the English standard for fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians in the early 20th century, and in the process exposed thousands of readers to the secret rapture through his dispensational-informed study notes.

The secret rapture doctrine continued to gain steam... Books like Hal Lindsay's *The Late Great Planet Earth* and movies like *A Thief in the Night* further popularized

dispensational teaching. And then there are the *Left Behind* novels, which have sold millions of copies and captured the imagination of a new generation.

The rise and spread of the secret rapture teaching is a remarkable story. In just a century and a half, a previously unknown doctrine has become a central eschatological hope for millions.

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Further, the Old Testament analogy of Noah and the flood suggests that those “taken” are actually the ones swept away in judgment (24:39)!

Reformed position

So much for now on the rapture of the Church. Books and books have been written on this subject. But if you want to know what the Reformed Church believes concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, look at article 37 of the Belgic Confession of Faith . You can find it in Liturgy and Psalms, pg. 457, 458.). And once again, for Ontario people, if you are interested, come to Camp Shalom Friday evening, October 17.

ARTICLE XXXVII

BELGIC CONFESSION

The Last Judgment

Finally, we believe, according to the Word of God, when the time appointed by the Lord (which is unknown to all

creatures) is come and the number of the elect complete, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, corporally and visibly, as He ascended, with great glory and majesty to declare Himself Judge of the living and the dead, burning this old world with fire and flame to cleanse it.

Then all men will personally appear before this great Judge, both men and women and children, that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being summoned by the voice of the archangel, and by the sound of the trumpet of God. For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies in which they formerly lived. A.; for those who shall then be living, they shall not die as the others, but be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and from corruptible become incorruptible. Then the books (that is to say, the consciences) shall be penned, and the dead judged according to what they shall have done in this world, whether it be good or vil. Nay, all men shall give account of every idle word they have spoken, which the world only counts amusement and jest, and then the secrets and hypocrisy of men shall be disclosed and laid open before all.

And therefore the consideration of this judgment is justly terrible and dreadful to the wicked and ungodly, but most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and elect; because then their full deliverance shall be perfected, and there they shall receive the fruits of their labor and trouble which they have borne. Their innocence shall be known to all, and the

shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world, and who shall be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences, and shall become immortal, but only to be tormented in the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

But on the contrary, the faithful and elect shall be crowned with glory and honor; and the Son of God will confess their names before God His Father and His elect angels; all tears shall be wiped from their eyes; and their cause which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates as heretical and impious will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God. And for a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory as never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Therefore we expect that great day with a most ardent desire, to the end that we may fully enjoy the promises of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN.

Amen, come, Lord Jesus.-Rev. 22:20.

Spurgeon (age 43) — There is moreover to be a reign of Christ. I cannot read the Scriptures without perceiving that there is to be a pre-millennial reign, as I believe, upon

the earth *and* that there shall be new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness...

Spurgeon (age 49) — Then all His people who are alive at the time of His coming shall be suddenly transformed, so as to be delivered from all the frailties and imperfections of their mortal bodies: *The dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed*. Then we shall be presented spirit, soul, and body without *spot*, or *wrinkle*, or *any such thing*; in the clear and absolute perfection of our sanctified manhood, presented unto Christ Himself.

Spurgeon (age 50) — When the Lord comes there will be no more death; we who are alive and remain (as some of us may be — we cannot tell) will undergo a sudden transformation — for flesh and blood, as they are, cannot inherit the kingdom of God — and by that transformation our bodies shall be made meet to be *partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*.

Spurgeon (age 52) — His coming will cause great sorrow. What does the text say about his coming? *All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him*. Then this sorrow will be very general.

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- I. The Term Rapture
- II. The Timing of the Rapture
- III. The Teaching of the Rapture.

I. The Term Rapture

I Thess 4:13-18

13 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. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 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.

16 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. 17 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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

A. I Thess. 4:13-18

Caught up

harpazó: to seize, catch up, snatch away**Original Word:** ἁρπάζω**Part of Speech:** Verb**Transliteration:** harpazó**Phonetic Spelling:** (har-pad'-zo)**Short Definition:** I seize, snatch, obtain by robbery**Definition:** I seize, snatch, obtain by robbery.**HELPS Word-studies**

726 *harpázō* – properly, seize by force; *snatch* up, suddenly and decisively – like someone seizing bounty (spoil, a prize); to take by an *open display* of force (i.e. *not* covertly or secretly).

Shall Be Caught up (726) (**harpazo** from **haireō** = take, in NT only in **middle voice** = **haireomai** = to take for oneself, to choose; akin to **airo** = to raise up) means to snatch up or way, to seize or seize upon, to steal (see comparison to *klepto* below), to catch away or up, to pluck, to pull.

Harpazo means to take suddenly and vehemently, often with violence and speed or quickly and without warning. The idea is to take by force with a sudden swoop and usually indicates a force which cannot be resisted. In eschatological terms (future events, prophetically related) as in the present verse, **harpazo** refers to what is often known as the "rapture" (Latin = *raptura* = seizing or Latin = *rapio* = seize, snatch)

Harpazo thus can be translated by the verb to **rapture** which describes the act of conveying or transporting a person from one place to another or from one sphere of existence to another. The English word **rapture** can also convey the idea of ecstasy as with one who is "carried out of" oneself with joy, but that is not the primary sense conveyed by the NT usage here in 1 Thessalonians.

Harpazo is future **passive** (so called "divine passive" in this context - the action is exerted by outside divine force) **indicative** (this is the mood of certainty which describes a real event, stating that this is a future fact which we can count on!) first person plural

(implying in context not just individuals but many individuals, specifically the true church composed of all the believers of the church age).

The picture of individuals being snatched up and away is seen in four NT uses (see the verses below)...

- (1) Of the act of the Spirit of the Lord snatching Phillip away ([Acts 8:39](#))
- (2) Of Paul being caught up to the third heaven (Paradise) ([2Corinthians 12:2,4](#))
- (3) Of believers being caught up to be with the Lord ([1Th 4:17](#)-note)
- (4) Of the "child" (Jesus) being caught up to God ([Re 12:5](#)-note)

Harpazo conveys the idea of force suddenly exercised, and also well rendered by the English verb to **snatch** (to seize, take or grasp something {someone} abruptly or hastily with emphasis on the idea of suddenness or quickness)

The related word **harpagē** (724) refers to robbery, plunder or seizing of one's possessions ([Mt 23:25](#) = describing scribes and Pharisees who were "full of robbery" {greediness}, [Lk 11:39](#), [Heb 10:34](#)). The adjective **harpax** (727) is used 6 times in the NT ([Mt 7:15](#) = "ravenous {rapacious} wolves"; [Lk 18:11](#) = "swindlers", "extortionists", "embezzlers"; [1Cor 5:10](#); [5:11](#); [6:10](#) = same meaning as in [Lk 18:11](#))

The uses of **harpazo** in the Gospels refer to robbery or the unlawful snatching away of something or someone (see below - [Jn 10:12](#), [28](#), [29](#); [Mt 11:12](#); [12:29](#); [13:19](#)).

Harpazo was used of rescuing one from a situation of threatening danger as in "snatching them out of the fire" (see [Jude 1:23](#) below)

Harpazo in secular Greek was used to describe the action of a wolf which entered a flock of sheep and suddenly *snatched up* (harpazo) a lamb. (see [John 10:12](#) below)

Moulton and Milligan note that **harpazo** was often found in secular Greek in petitions complaining of robbery.

Harpazo as noted can convey the sense of "to steal" but it differs from another Greek word **klepto** (English = kleptomania {from kleptes = thief} refers to a strong impulse to steal) referring to stealing secretly or with stealth whereas **harpazo** denotes robbing with a more violent action.

Harpazo is also used to mean forcibly to seize upon, snatch away, or take to oneself (see below [Mt 11:12](#), [John 6:15](#), [Acts 23:10](#))

Harpazo is used 13 times in the NT...

[Matthew 11:12](#) And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men **take it by force** (grasping in the sense of either resisting or laying claim to the Kingdom as their own - see comment).

Comment: This is a difficult verse to interpret and can mean that evil forces from without sought to violently seize and destroy the kingdom of God or that persons who were ready for the advent of the King responded vigorously to His announcement, "violently" seeking to enter the kingdom of God,. The latter interpretation implies the difficulty with which one enters His kingdom {cp the related passage [Luke 16:16](#) which has the second meaning.} Both interpretations indicate that John the Baptist's initial announcement of the coming King and Kingdom met with a "violent reaction" either by evil opponents or by enthusiastic supporters.

[Matthew 13:19](#) When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and **snatches away** (robs, plunders, swoops in and steals away) what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

John 6:15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and **take Him by force**, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Comment: This use of harpazo illustrates the violent nature of the seizing - here is a forcibly taking of someone.

John 10:12 He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf **snatches** them, and scatters them.

John 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one **shall snatch** them out of My hand. **10:29** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to **snatch** them out of the Father's hand.

Comment: Here harpazo underscores the believer's security in Christ, speaking of the impossibility of anyone snatching a believer out of the hands of Jesus or His Father.

Acts 8:39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord **snatched** Philip **away** (from the presence of the Ethiopian eunuch and drag off to a different place); and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing.

Comment: This "rapture" entails the movement from one place on earth to another, in contrast to the "rapture" in [2Cor 12:2,4](#), [1Thes 4:17](#), [Rev 12:5](#), all of which refer to one being caught up to a supernatural world.

Acts 23:10 And as a great dissension was developing, the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them and ordered the troops to go down and **take him away from them by force**, and bring him into the barracks.

2 Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a man was **caught up** to the third heaven...4 was **caught up** into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (note) 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.

Jude 1:23 save others, **snatching** them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Revelation 12:5 (note) And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child **was caught up** (passive voice indicating God did the snatching) to God and to His throne. (**Comment:** This event is described in Acts 1:9-11 {these verses do not use harpazo} where Jesus was taken up into the cloud).

Harpazo is used 34 times in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) (Ge 37:33; Lev. 6:4; 19:13; Deut. 28:31; Jdg. 21:21, 23; 2 Sam. 23:21; Job 20:19; 24:2, 9, 19; Ps. 7:2; 10:9; 22:13; 50:22; 69:4; 104:21; Isa. 10:2; Ezek 18:7, 12, 16, 18; 19:3, 6; 22:25, 27; Hos. 5:14; 6:1; Amos 1:11; 3:4; Mic. 3:2; 5:8; Nah. 2:12) A number of the uses of **harpazo** in the LXX translate the Hebrew word meaning to tear (*taraph*; 2963) (as of beasts of prey, tear to pieces - Ge 37:33, Ps 7:2, 50:22, Hos 5:14, 6:1) which brings out the violent aspect of harpazo. None of the LXX uses of **harpazo** convey the same sense of rapture as found here in 1 Thessalonians, although there are **two OT "raptures"**, the first of **Enoch** who "walked with God and he was not for God took

him" ([Ge 5:24](#)) and the other of **Elijah** who "went up by a whirlwind to heaven" ([2Ki 2:11](#)).

Below are some representative uses of **harpazo** in the **LXX**...

Leviticus 6:4 then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he **took by robbery** (Hebrew = [gazel](#), 1497; Lxx = harpazo), or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him, or the lost thing which he found,

Job 20:19 "For he has oppressed and forsaken the poor; He has **seized** (Hebrew = [gazel](#), 1497; Lxx = harpazo) a house which he has not built.

Job 24:2 "Some remove the landmarks; They **seize** (Hebrew = [gazel](#), 1497; Lxx = harpazo) and devour flocks... 24:9 Others **snatch** (Hebrew = [gazel](#), 1497; Lxx = harpazo) the orphan from the breast, And against the poor they take a pledge.

Psalms 10:9 He (the wicked man) lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to **catch** (Hebrew = [chataph](#), 2414; Lxx = harpazo) the afflicted; He **catches** (Hebrew = [chataph](#), 2414; Lxx = harpazo) the afflicted when he draws him into his net.

To meet - This phrase indicates that the Lord will be coming from one direction and we shall be coming from another to meet together in the air! What a glorious day that will be!

Martin Luther said he only had two days on his calendar—today and "that day."

To meet the Lord - Literally reads "into a meeting with the Lord."

II. The Timing of the Rapture

This is determined by 3 Things

- 1.What is the Day of the Lord
- 2.When does the Day of the Lord Start
- 3.What is the Promise of Scripture Regarding Believers and the Day of the Lord.

1.What is the Day of the Lord

The Day of the Lord refers to God's special interventions into the course of world events to judge His enemies, accomplish His purpose for history, and thereby demonstrate who He is--the sovereign God of the universe. (Maranatha, Our Lord Come. Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995, 38)

WHAT WILL THE DAY OF THE LORD LOOK LIKE?

Summarizing some of the descriptions in the OT references, God describes the Day of the Lord as... "coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it" (Is 13:9), "a day of vengeance, so as to avenge Himself on His foes...a slaughter for the Lord GOD of hosts" (Je 46:10), "a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations" (Eze 30:3), "near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty" (Joel 1:15), "surely it is near" (Joel 2:1), "great and very awesome, and who

can endure it?" (Joel 2:11), "the great and awesome day" (Joel 2:31), "near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14), "It will be darkness and not light" (Amos 5:18), "even gloom with no brightness in it" (Am 5:20), "(a day when) your dealings will return on your own head" (Obadiah 1:15), "near and coming very quickly...in it the warrior cries out bitterly, a day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zeph 1:14,15), "the day of the LORD'S wrath and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth" (Zeph 1:18), "the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zeph 2:2), "His coming...is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap" (Mal 3:2), "the great and terrible day" (Mal 4:5), "will come just like a thief in the night" (1Th 5:2).

(Peter declares)

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (See note 2 Peter 3:10)

2. When does the Day of the Lord Start

It is preceded by birth pains , Revelation of Man of Sin, Great Tribulation, Cosmic Signs

1. Birth Pains

Matthew 24:4–8 (NKJV)

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you.

⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.

⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

2. Revelation of the Man of Sin AntiChrist

2 Thessalonians 2:1–4 (NKJV)

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

2 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.

3 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,

4 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.

Matthew 24:15 (NKJV)

15 “Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

3. The Great Tribulation

Matthew 24:9–13 (NKJV)

9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.

¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Matthew 24:21–22 (NKJV)

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

4. Cosmic Disturbance

Matthew 24:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Joel 2:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:

Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

Joel 3:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ The sun and moon will grow dark,
And the stars will diminish their brightness.

¹⁶ The Lord also will roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake;
But the Lord will be a shelter for His people,
And the strength of the children of Israel.

Isaiah 13:9–11 (NKJV)

⁹ Behold, the day of the Lord comes,
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate;
And He will destroy its sinners from it.

¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations
Will not give their light;
The sun will be darkened in its going forth,

And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

- ¹¹ “I will punish the world for *its* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Revelation 6:12–13 (NKJV)

¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

All of this occurs before the Day of the Lord

Then Christ Shows up

Revelation 6:14–17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Matthew 24:29–30 (NKJV)

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Luke 21:25–27 (NKJV)

²⁵ “And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;

²⁶ men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

3.What is the Promise of Scripture Regarding Believers and the Day of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–9 (NKJV)

⁵ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

³ 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.

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ 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.

⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Matthew 24:29–31 (NKJV)

²⁹ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Luke 21:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Mark 13:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

²⁷ And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Matthew 24:37–42 (NKJV)

³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

⁴¹ Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

III. The Teaching of the Rapture.

Not immanency but expectancy

1. Comfort
2. Concern
3. Continuance

1. Comfort

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (NKJV)

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:4–11 (NKJV)

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ 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. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

¹¹ Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

2. Concern

Matthew 24:32–33 (NKJV)

³² “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!

Matthew 24:42–44 (NKJV)

⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

3. Continuence

Matthew 24:45–51 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷ Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.