

When Will Jesus Return in the Rapture?— Part II

- I. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture View (The correct, Biblical view)
 - A. Summary of the Teaching
 1. Christ will return in the atmosphere to resurrect dead church age saints and to translate living saints prior to the tribulation period (Daniel's 70th week).
 2. Therefore, the rapture of the church is the next event on God's prophetic calendar. There is no prophecy of Scripture that need be fulfilled before Jesus can return in the rapture.
 3. Since no prophecy stands between the present moment and the rapture of the church, the pre-tribulation rapture is said to be "imminent," meaning Jesus could come at any time.
 4. Jesus' return in the rapture accomplished the resurrection of church age saints and the translation of living believers prior to the tribulation period. In the rapture Jesus does NOT set foot upon the earth to establish His kingdom. Such comes later, after the seven year tribulation period.
 - B. Scriptural Support
 1. John 14:1-6—The night before His crucifixion, Jesus promised He would one day return for His own and that He would take them to the "Father's house." Remember, in the post-tribulation scheme believers meet the Lord in the air at the end of the tribulation period and then immediately return with Him to the earth—making the promise of the "Father's house" a falsehood.
 2. I Thessalonians 4:13-18—Paul presents several events surrounding the return of Christ:
 - a. The resurrection of the dead
 - b. The rapture of the living
 - c. The reunion with the Lord and our loved ones in the air
 - d. The reassurance that we shall "ever be with the Lord."
- II. In Defense of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture View
 - A. I Thessalonians 5:1-11—speaks of the "day of the Lord." Several observations should direct our thinking concerning the timing of the rapture:
 1. The "day of the Lord" comes as a "thief in the night," in other words, unexpectedly with no prior warning, sign, or prophecy (2).
 2. Rightly understood, the "day of the Lord" begins at the tribulation period and continues through the Millennial Kingdom.

3. The day of the Lord will come at a time when men feel peaceful and secure (2).
4. The day of the Lord will not “overtake” Christians as a “thief.” Christians are children of “light” and of the “day,” not of the darkness, nor of the night (5). Why will Christians not be overtaken in the “day of the Lord?”—Because believers will have been taken out in the rapture!
5. Christians are commanded to “watch and be sober” (6). We are not “watching” for wrath, but rather for salvation in Christ’s deliverance in the rapture (9),
6. Christians are not appointed to “wrath” but rather to obtain salvation (9).
7. The whole point of the passage is to “comfort” believers. What comfort could be found in the concept that the believers would have to face all or part of the wrath of the “day of the Lord?” Such would not be comforting news (11).

B. The Elders of Revelation 4-5

1. The 24 elders are described as arrayed in white linen robes, seated upon thrones, and adorned with crowns on their heads.
2. The elders are representatives of New Testament saints:
 - a. They are wearing crowns, and crowns are given out after the rapture at the judgment seat of Christ (I Thess. 2:19; II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4).
 - b. They are clothed in “white,” described later as the “righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:7), indicating they have already passed through judgment.
 - c. They are seated on thrones surrounding God’s throne. Only New Testament saints are invited to sit with Christ on His throne (Rev. 3:21). Of course, this indicates that these New Testament saints have already been judged and rewarded.

C. The Distinct Differences between the Rapture and the Revelation (2nd Coming)

	<u>The Rapture</u> (I Th. 4)	<u>The 2nd Coming</u> (Zech. 14)
PLACE	“in the air”	on the earth
PURPOSE	to take believers to heaven	to judge the nation and est. the kingdom
OBJECT	the N.T. saints	Israel
CHARACTER	comfort	judgment
SIDE EFFECTS	no change on earth	topographical changes
THE SAINTS	<i>for</i> His saints	<i>with</i> His saints