

THE “RAPTURE”

A bumper sticker reads: “In case of the rapture, this car will be driverless.”

Rapture refers to an event that will allegedly occur at the “**first second coming**” of Christ. Its basic features are as follows:

- Jesus will initially return **secretly** (except to His people) and hover above the earth.
- At this appearance (which sinners will not see), **only the righteous** dead will be raised.
- The resurrected saints, along with those who are living (people driving their cars, pilots, secretaries, doctors, et al.), will be suddenly snatched into the clouds to be with the Lord for a period of **seven years**.
- Afterward, Jesus will descend with His saints and establish His **earthly kingdom** in Jerusalem.

To those enthralled by dispensational premillennialism (perhaps 95% of Protestantism), the Rapture is the next pivotal event on God’s prophetic calendar. Is the Rapture Biblical fact or theological fiction?

The Bible knows nothing of more than one return of Jesus Christ or of various “phases” of His return. It is a one-time “coming again” (John 14:3), at which time all of the material universe will disintegrate (2 Pet. 3:4–10) and the universal resurrection and Judgment will occur (John 5:28–29; 1 Cor. 15:22–23; Mat. 25:31–46; 2 The. 1:7–10).

The Bible says nothing of a “secret coming,” known only to the righteous. Rather, one of the passages the Rapture advocates like to claim declares that the Lord’s coming will be accompanied with “a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the

trump of God” (1 The. 4:16). When He comes in the clouds, “every eye shall see him” (Rev. 1:7).

The Bible no more speaks of a two-phased resurrection than it does of a two-phased second coming. He will raise the dead “at his coming” (1 Cor. 15:22–23; 1 The. 4:16). This resurrection will include both good and evil **at the same hour** (time) (John 5:28–29).

The Bible mentions nothing of a seven-year “holding pattern” of the righteous in the clouds with Jesus. Again, the very verse the Rapture advocates like to claim (1 The. 4:16) refutes their doctrine. The righteous will not go to be with the Lord seven years, but to “ever be with the Lord.” This passage speaks of our going to Heaven, the eternal home of the Lord’s faithful people (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22–24).

The Bible reveals nothing of an earthly kingdom of Christ. Rather, Jesus denies that He is or will be a king over such a kingdom (John 18:36). The Bible contains neither the word *rapture* nor the doctrine for which it stands.

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