

## WHERE IS THE RAPTURE?

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As Christians, we believe our being is made up of a spirit, soul, and body. Many believe there must be a resurrection (body change) if there is pre-tribulation rapture. Is that logical and biblical? What happens when a Christian dies before the pre-tribulation rapture? Are they not in heaven today with a heavenly body (2 Cor 5:1-6, 2 Cor 15:40)? Do Christians leave their flesh on earth when the mortal body dies? Is it possible Jesus is only taking our soul and spirit to heaven in the Luke 17:22-37 event? Is there only one resurrection of the righteous (John 6:39-54, 11:24, Rev 20:4-6)? Below are charts with two sets of verses that are commonly debated concerning the timing of the rapture event. The Pre-freak (Jesus takes the church before the wicked freak out) eschatological view has a pre-tribulation rapture of the church without a resurrection while those in the world are living in relative prosperity (Matt 24:39).

Timing	Luke 17:22-37	1 Thes. 4:14-17
Dispensational	Post-Trib	Pre-Trib
Non-dispensational	Pre-Trib	Pre-Trib
Pre-freak	Pre-Trib	Post-Trib

Resurrection?	Luke 17:22-37	1 Thes. 4:14-17
Dispensational	NO	YES
Non-dispensational	YES	YES
Pre-freak	NO	YES

Event Attributes	Luke 17:22-37	1 Thes. 4:14-17
Prosperity	YES	?
Lightning Flash	YES	?
Loud, Trumpet	?	YES
Saints following	?	YES
Fear	NO	YES
Resurrection	NO	YES

### 1 Thessalonians 4

**14** For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.** **15** By the word of the Lord, we declare to you that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a **loud command**, with the voice of an archangel, and with the **trumpet of God**, and the **dead in Christ will be the first to rise.** **17** After that, we who are alive and remain will be **caught up together** with them in the clouds to **meet** the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

Those who teach the pre-tribulation rapture usually start with 1 Thessalonians 4. In verse 14 we see saints that have departed earth before the rapture are following Jesus back to earth. Their destination is the earth's atmosphere (in the air) from heaven. A resurrection is implied in the phrase "the dead in Christ will rise first." These verses do not have a timing clue about when it happens in or around the great tribulation. We are not explicitly told when this event will happen.

### 1 Corinthians 15

**50** Now this is what I am saying, brothers and sisters: *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.* **51** Listen, I will tell you a mystery: *We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – 52 in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, at the **last trumpet**. For the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable**, and we will be changed.*

1 Thes. 4:16 is commonly tied to 1 Cor. 15:52 because a resurrection is implied in the "dead in Christ will be the first to rise" phrase. There is a timing clue in verse 52 with the phrase "at the **last trumpet**" which states it is a singular one-time event. Non-dispensationalists claim there are a series of resurrections in the last days. Some say, at a minimum, there is a resurrection before the great tribulation starts, and another at the second coming. But, if another trumpet sounds after the "last" trumpet, how can it be the "last" trumpet?

In another timing contention, dispensationalists and non-dispensationalists teach the "mystery" in verse 51 about the event's timing. I would say in context, the mystery is about how our body will change, not the timing of the event.

### Luke 17

**24** For as the **lightning flashes** and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. **26** Just as it was in the days of **Noah**, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. **27** They were **eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage**, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and **destroyed** them all. **28** Likewise, just as it was in the days of **Lot**—they were **eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building**, **29** but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— **30** so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. **34** I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. **One will be taken and the other left.** **35** There will be two women grinding together. One will be **taken** and the other left." **37** And they said to him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "**Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.**"

The Luke 17:22-37 event happens before the second coming because our Lord mentioned eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, and getting married. These are activities that occur in prosperous times. If times are relatively good then this event cannot possibly be the second coming. Jesus told us events leading up to His return will be the most troublesome time in human history (Matthew 24:21). At the end of the age, everybody is well aware of what is happening and is hiding in a cave or in the rocks of a mountain (Revelation

6:15-17) and freaking out (Luke 21:26). If they are hiding in a cave and freaking out, I doubt anyone will be doing a lot of eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building and getting married. Instead of eating and drinking, famine and drought are common throughout the world (Rev 6:6, Rev 8:10-11). Hyperinflation causes a loaf of bread to cost a day's wage will diminish buying and selling (Rev 6:5-6). Planting and building will be next to impossible if the sun does not shine and earthquakes are leveling mountains and moving islands (Rev 6:12-14). Marriages will be rare if love will grow cold (Matt 24:12).

Those who don't believe a pre-tribulation rapture is in Luke 17 sometimes claim Jesus is talking about sin, not prosperous times. Men were evil during the times of Lot and Noah. In 2 Peter 3:3, we are told sin will be prevalent in the last days. However, Jesus is not talking about sin because he didn't use words like gluttony, drunkenness, stealing, laziness, and sexual immorality. Instead, He spoke of eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, and marriage which are all acceptable behaviors for a Christian.

Another reason some claim Luke 17 is the second coming is because of the dead bodies in verse 37. On the surface, that does not sound like the blessed hope! That sounds like a judgment and not a rescue. Therefore, they conclude, the dead bodies must belong to the wicked. The problem with that interpretation is that the Luke 17 event happens before the tribulation begins, not at the end. If the wicked are judged and taken away at the beginning of the tribulation, only the righteous would have to endure the great tribulation. They ignore, twist the meaning, or diminish the eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, and getting married timing implication. Or they say Luke 17 is a parable and cannot be taken literally.

Some teach Luke 17 is the judgment of the wicked at the end of the age and the second coming. The confusion starts over the verb definition of **take**. Some believe the wicked are *taken* away for punishment and the righteous are left in place. Several English translations write "the flood came and **took** them all away" in Matthew 24:39. Their logic interprets the words **taken** and **took** as having the same action. Therefore, the reader should conclude that those that "will be taken" are taken away for punishment. However, the Greek verb paralambanó (Strong's 3880) for "taken" in verses 34 and 35 are defined as to take and receive, not to take and destroy.

1417 [e]	229 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	3458 [e]	1520 [e]	3880 [e]	2532 [e]	1520 [e]	863 [e]
dyo	alēthousai	en	tō	mylō	mia	paralambanetai	kai	mia	aphietai
<b>41</b> δύο	ἀλήθουςαι	ἐν	τῷ	μύλῳ	μία	παραλαμβάνεται			
Two [women]	will be grinding	at	the	mill	one	is taken	and	one	is left
Adj-NFP	V-PPA-NFP	Prep	Art-DMS	N-DMS	Adj-NFS	V-PIM/P-3S	Conj	Adj-NFS	V-PIM/P-3S

paralambanetai; From para and lambano; to receive near,

**Matthew 24:39**

*ESV and they were **unaware** until the flood came and **swept** them all away*

*NIV and they **knew nothing** about what would happen until the flood came and **took** them all away.*

*KJV and **did not know** until the flood came and **took** them all away*

*BSB And they were **oblivious**, until the flood came and swept them all away*

Luke 17 has related verses in Matthew 24 with the addition of verse 39. Jesus tells us the wicked will not foresee the tribulation that is coming until after the one-taken event occurs. Just as Noah was taken to safety first, and THEN the flood came and destroyed the wicked, Jesus said the same will happen again in the future. Of course, in the future, there will not be a global flood, but there will be tribulations described in Matthew 24:4-26.

## **Revelation 6**

15 Then the kings of the earth, the nobles, the commanders, the rich, the mighty, and **every slave and free man hid in the caves** and among the rocks of the mountains. 16 And they said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne, and from the **wrath of the Lamb**. 17 For the great day of Their wrath has come, and who is able to withstand it?"

Everybody knows when the end is near. Eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, and getting married will greatly diminish as the last days progress. These activities will be almost non-existent in the last days before Jesus returns in great power and glory to rule and reign on earth. It will be hell on earth and everybody is fearing for their life (Luke 21:26).

## **John 14 ESV**

**2** In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and **will take you** to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.

*KJV* And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and **receive** you unto myself

*ASV* And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will **receive** you unto myself

*NIV* And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and **take** you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 14:3 is commonly used to demonstrate a pre-tribulation rapture. The direction we are taken is to heaven because that is where the Father's house resides. However, it does not have any timing clues. Those who don't believe there is a pre-tribulation rapture claim Jesus is talking about what happens to us at death. However, it does use the same root Greek verb for **taken** (paralambanó, παραλαμβάνω) as used in Luke's and Matthew's **taken** verses. Most English translations use the word **receive** instead of **take**.

## **Matthew 24**

**30** And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. **31** And He will send forth His angels with A **GREAT TRUMPET BLAST**, and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Most believe Matthew 24:30-31 is the second coming. Note that 1 Thes 4 and these verses have a loud trumpet blast and Christ is visible in the clouds which leads one to believe they are the same event.

## **RESURRECTION**

### **John 6**

**39** And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of those He has given Me, but raise them up at the **last day**. **40** For it is My Father's will that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the **last day**." **44** "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the **last day**. **54** Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the **last day**.

Jesus said four times the resurrection is on the last day (singular), not in the last days (plural).

## John 11

**23** *“Your brother will rise again,” Jesus told her. 24 Martha replied, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the **last day**.”*

Jesus does not correct Martha. There is one resurrection for the righteous and it is on the last day (singular, not plural); i.e., the second coming.

## 2 Corinthians 5

**2** *For indeed, in this body we groan, **longing to be clothed with our body from heaven**, 3 since in fact after putting it on, we will not be found naked. 8 but we are of good courage and **prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.***

Paul tells us we will have a heavenly body in heaven because our spirit and soul will not be naked. We will have a body that fits the environment in which our spirit and soul will reside.

## 1 Corinthians 15

**35** *But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” 40 There are **heavenly bodies and earthly bodies**. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is of one degree, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is of another.*

What is the heavenly body like? Is it made out of carbon, water, and salts like our corruptible material body? I doubt it. The resurrection involves a transformation of our outer body. When we die before the pre-tribulation rapture, we leave our flesh on earth. I would say the same process happens at the pre-tribulation rapture. Our soul and spirit are taken to heaven, we leave our flesh on earth, and we receive a heavenly body in heaven. Heaven cannot be seen with a telescope or any other man-made device. I doubt it is made of material that is in our chemical chart of elements.

In the “one will be taken” event there is a flash of light and we leave our material, corruptible body on earth. At the second coming, when the saints are following Jesus back to earth, the saints will exchange their heavenly body for an incorruptible glorified earthly body as told in Revelation 20. I suspect the glorified earthly body will be carbon-based but will also have God-given energy that our mortal bodies do not have. Our new body will be just like the one Jesus had after his resurrection on earth.

I see one major problem with making 1 Thessalonians 4 a pre-tribulation rapture. Why would the saints following Jesus experience a resurrection and then return to heaven? Wasn't the body they had in heaven sufficient? It makes greater sense to have the resurrection at the end of the age when we rule and reign with Jesus on earth thru the millennium. The saints would exchange their heavenly body for a glorified, earthly body.

## Matthew 24

**42** *“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the **thief** was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 For this reason you must be ready as well; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.*

A good thief does not announce when they will strike. The pre-tribulation rapture and the following tribulation will take many by surprise. The second coming will be well announced and will not be a surprise (Rev 6:15-17).

## **Revelation 19**

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him the glory. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.*

At the end of the tribulation, we have the wedding in heaven, and then the second coming with a resurrection for the battle on earth (Rev 19:11-21). Then the millennium starts with “they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” in Revelation 20:4.

## **Revelation 20**

*4 Then I saw the thrones, and those seated on them had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image, and had not received its mark on their foreheads or hands. And they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years were complete. This is the **first resurrection**. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the **first resurrection**! The **second death** has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

Here we have more confusion over the meaning of words. We see the words “first” and “second” which could define a chronological order. However, you won’t find the words “**second resurrection**” in the chapter. You will only find a “**second death**.” Yet, it is written in Acts 24:15 “that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” A resurrection is implied in verse 5, “*The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.*” Why didn’t John say a second resurrection? Although we are not told, I would speculate those brought to life at the great white throne judgment are NOT given the same body as the righteous are given. Their future is one of torment and horror. They will not experience joy unending. There will be nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth for the unbelievers.

## **Matthew 24**

*27 For as the **lightning** comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the **corpse** is, there the vultures will gather.... 36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were **unaware** until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. 42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

The Luke 17 verses can also be found in Matthew 24 but in a different order.