



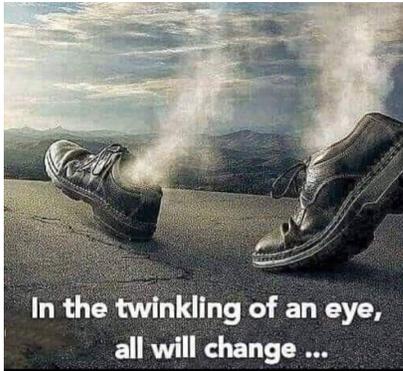
HIGHER GROUND
CALVARY CHAPEL

SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

END TIMES PROPHECY

Class 03

The Rapture



Yes, this is the topic we have
all been waiting for
So let's dig in and get ready for
Rapture Practice

What is Rapture Practice?
We all go outside and on the
count of "Three!" we all jump
up
How do we know it's just a
practice?
You come back down

If you keep on going, then it's
the real thing
We used to always joke that
someone [mentioning the
person by name] had just won
a roundtrip ticket to the
Rapture

They would think about it and
ask,
"What do you mean, 'Round
Trip'?"
"You go right up and then get
sent right back"

There are all kinds of jokes
about the Rapture
But not all of them are
Scripturally sound
“Get right or get left” is one of
those

The Rapture is like salvation
Either you are going or you are
not
You don't earn your Rapture
Reservation any more than
you can earn your salvation

You cannot lose your Rapture
Reservation any more than
you can lose your salvation
Both are given by God and
one is connected to the other
As long as you have God's
grace you always have it

So once you have accepted and accessed God's grace for your salvation, you have also accepted and accessed God's grace for the Rapture
You are going to go in the Rapture

So where does this concept of being left when the Rapture takes place come from?
It comes from the Second and Third Chapters of Revelation
These are the Letters to the Seven Churches

In addition to these 7 Churches being physical and historical Churches
They also represent seven ages or periods of time for the Church
They also represent kinds of Churches and believers

Ephesus was the “works”
Church and lasted during the
1st Century

Smyrna was the
“persecuted” Church and
lasted until Rome accepted
Christianity

Pergamos was the “married” Church
During this age the Church was
married to the Roman Empire
Thyatira was the “Dark Ages”
Church

This is when the Church ruled all of
Europe and was at the height of
corruption

Sardis was the “Protestant”
Church

This created the Protestant
Reformation

We then have Philadelphia,
the Church of Brotherly Love

This is the “revival” Church

Laodicea is the "Cult" Church
This Church does not have
Jesus in it
It is still considered a Church
because there are believers
who were deceived into joining
this Church
They are still saved

With the introduction of
Thyatira, these last four
Churches will continue side-
by-side until the Rapture
There is only one of these
Churches which will be taken
in the Rapture
That is Philadelphia

Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea
are given warnings to "get right
or get left."
That is the warning given to
these three Church Ages
It is given to Churches
It is not given to individual
believers

These three Churches/Ages
have many who belong to the
Church, but have never
accepted Jesus as their Savior
These are the ones that are
going to be left behind
Believers in these Churches
will still go in the Rapture.

There is only one way that you
can miss the Rapture as a
believer...
God calls you home before the
Rapture

J. Vernon McGee had an
expression
“You can go by the airway or
the subway...”
Either you die and go to
Heaven – which is the subway
Or the airway – the Rapture

We used to have an expression back in the 60's and 70's:

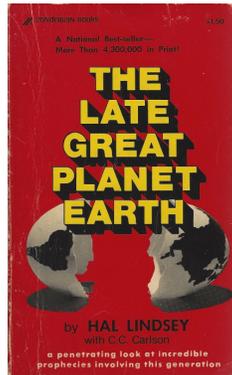
"I'll see you again... Here, there or in the air."

The Rapture permeates our Christian world

The first time I heard of the Rapture was from my father
I was in Junior High School
He had just surrendered to the ministry
And was teaching the youth group

I suspect that it was the first time most of us heard about the Rapture
Several of the students were freaked
And my father wasn't allowed to continue teaching on it

The next time we heard about the Rapture came in the form of a book by Hal Lindsey

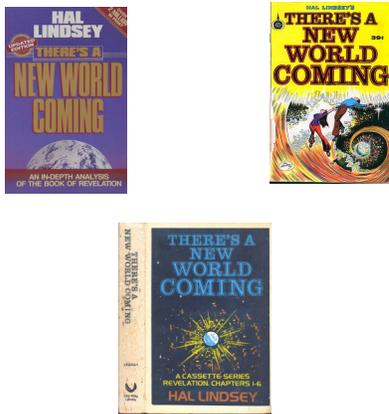


Our Sunday School College and Career Group used this book as our lessons for a few months

After graduation and before entering the job market, my friend and I decided to check out certain doctrine for ourselves
We raided every personal library in the Church for books on the Rapture and Gifts of the Spirit

His father's house was bare
Not a piece of furniture in it
after the divorce
We rolled out sleeping bags
and spent three weeks reading
and studying
We barely slept and rarely ate

I wrote a skit for our Sunday
evening service on the
Rapture
Hal Lindsey came out with an
other book on the Rapture and
Revelation
It was even turned into a tape
set and a Christian comic book

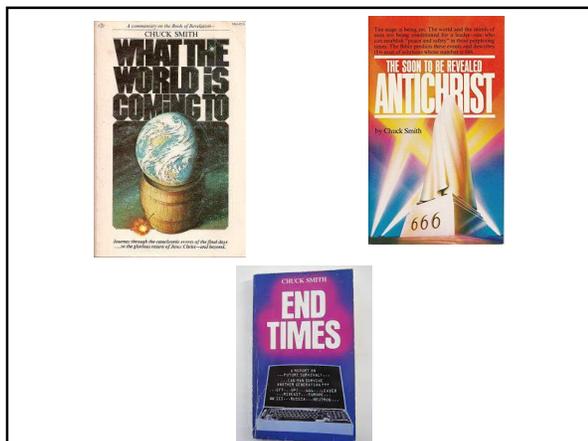


About that time I was off to college and attended Calvary Chapel Riverside [now Harvest]

Greg Laurie was constantly teaching on the Rapture and End Times...

Especially at New Years

He learned if from Chuck Smith
And Chuck Smith taught on it all the time and he, too, wrote books



Even yours truly wrote a book...



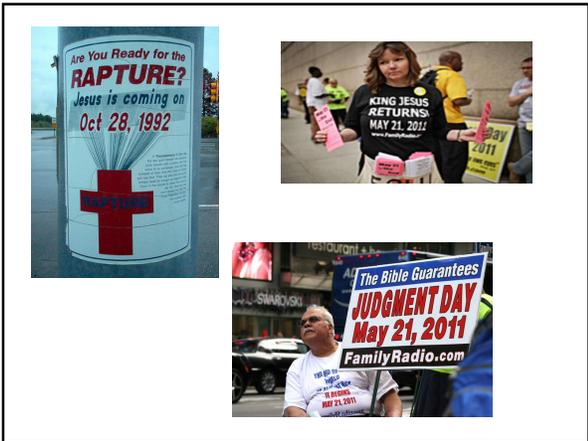
Sorry for the
shameless
self-plug

We were introduced to the *Thief in the Night* movie series

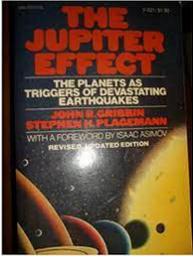


In short, I grew up with the Rapture always on everyone's mind...

Unfortunately, some people began to set dates



Back in 1972, John Gribbin and Stephen Plagemann wrote *The Jupiter Effect* which predicted a massive earthquake in 1982 when all the planets lined up



Believers in my office saw this as the Great Earthquake in Revelation
They told co-workers they would all disappear on this date
There was just one problem...

This happened every 200 years
So why was this alignment different?
It wasn't
I did not endorse their teaching
The believers were angry with me

But I walked into the office the next day and no one laughed at me
The believers were not so lucky
We have been entrusted with the truth of the Bible

As such, we must treat the truth with respect
And maintain our credibility so that when we speak or teach on the subject, we will have credibility
And people will listen to us and believe



I need to burst your bubbles
The word, "*Rapture*" is not in
the Bible
I will pause a moment so you
can pass out from the shock
And wait until you recover
once more...

I Thessalonians 4:17:
"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 so shall we ever be
with the Lord."

The word for “*caught up*” in the Greek is “*harpazo*”

It is used four times in the New Testament

In II Corinthians 12 it is used twice to speak of Paul being caught up into the 3rd Heaven

It is used here in Thessalonians

It is used once in Revelation to speak of the child the woman gave birth to in Revelation 12

The child [Jesus] was caught up into Heaven [the Ascension] after His mission was complete

It is in the Latin texts that the word “*harpazo*” was converted into “*Rapiemur*” in the Latin Vulgate

But while the actual word is not in the Greek or English Bibles

The concept is clearly taught

The only person who teaches specifically about the Rapture is the Apostle Paul

There is a verse in Revelation by John that we assume is the Rapture

But no one else mentions it

Again this does not invalidate the teaching...

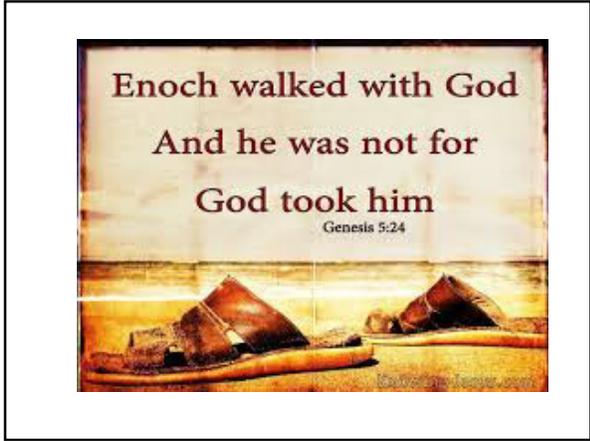
With regard to the Old Testament we need to reference Hosea 12:10:

“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”

A *similitude* is using something that is similar to the point you want to make

The Old Testament does not specifically speak of the Rapture, but God gives us similitudes in place of the Rapture

There are three similitudes for the Rapture in the Old Testament
The most obvious one is Enoch



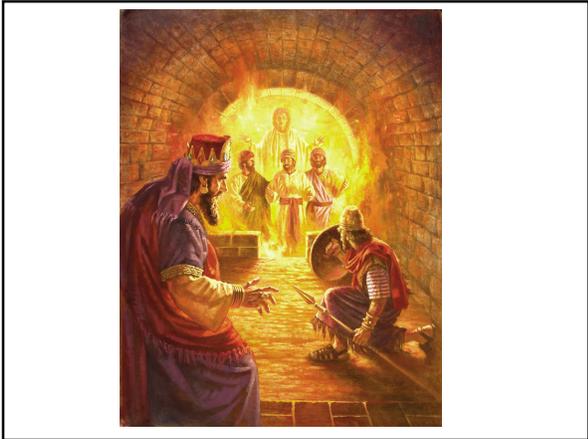
We then have the account of Elijah who was taken bodily into Heaven by a whirlwind
[Sorry, the fiery chariot did NOT take him
It separated him from Elisha]



This is why I believe Elijah and Enoch will be the Two Witnesses
Based on the description of their miracles, tradition identifies them as Moses and Elijah

But Moses died and God buried him
Neither Elijah nor Enoch died
“It is appointed unto man once to die...”
So I vote for Enoch and Elijah

The third similitude of the Rapture from the Old Testament is the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the fiery furnace...



The teaching is that Daniel was missing when this trial came down
He is a picture of the Church removed from the Tribulation
And his friends are the Jews protected during the Tribulation

Jesus teaches and hints at the Rapture

But he never refers to it by name or as an event

Jesus does teach of His return, but this seems to refer to the Second Coming

Although the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Slothful Servant suggests a possible connection with the Rapture

It is Paul who comes out and specifically teaches the concept of the Rapture.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17



Believe it or not, the Jewish Wedding is a picture of the Rapture

The Jewish Wedding begins with the betrothal – the marriage contract

“...I go to prepare a place for you

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

That where I am, there you may be also...”

(John 14:2 – 3)

This is the Betrothal Contract
The groom declares this to his
bride
Jesus declared it to His
followers the night He was
arrested

To seal the contract, the
parties drink wine to “seal the
deal”
Jesus and His followers drank
wine at the Last Supper after
He made this promise to them

The groom then pays the price
for His Bride
The next day Jesus died on
the cross to purchase His
Bride – the Church
He gave His life to purchase
her

The groom then returns to his father's house to prepare a place for Him and His Bride to live

He does not return for His Bride until the Father decides that the place is ready and allows the groom to go

No one knows when the groom will come

The bride is to prepare herself for her groom

When all is ready, the groom will come with his people

It will be a surprise procession

The Bride will not know until there is a shout

The groom will then present Himself and take His Bride

He will take her to the place He has prepared for her

There will be the Wedding Supper

The Wedding Supper will normally last for seven days
The Groom and Bride will exchange their vows and be husband and wife
And they will now live together in the place He has prepared for her

At the same time as the Rapture, there will be the First Resurrection
“The dead in Christ will rise first”
Our original bodies will be restored

Job 19:25:
“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter days upon the earth...”
Job knew that Jesus would physically return to the earth in the latter days – Last Days

Job 19:26:

“And though [my body has been destroyed by worms] yet in my flesh I shall see God.”

This is a physical resurrection of his original body

It is not a new or different body

Job 19:27:

“Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another, though my [internal organs have been] consumed within me.”

It must be our original body brought back to life

This is part of God’s first revelation

It was made in the oldest book of the Bible

The Book of Job was written four hundred years before Moses was even born

But this is just the first step...

I Thessalonians 4:16:

“For the Lord Himself will descend with a shout with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

But then these resurrected bodies will undergo a transformation and become like the resurrected body of Jesus

They will become spiritual bodies

I John 3:2”

“Behold, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”

We know that these physical bodies must undergo a transformation

I Corinthians 15:50:

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption...”

Our physical bodies are made up of flesh and blood

In our physical bodies, the life is in the blood

Remove the blood and we die

These physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God

But notice Luke 24:39:

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have.”

Jesus' spiritual body is made up of flesh and bones
It is not made up of flesh and blood
The spiritual body can inherit the Kingdom of God
So our physical bodies must change

I Corinthians 15:51 – 54:
“Behold, I show you a mystery:
‘We shall not all sleep [die],
but we shall all be changed,
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound...

“...then the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
For this corruptible must put on incorruptible, and this mortal shall put on immortality...”

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptible 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.’”

I Thessalonians 4:13 – 18:
“But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep [dead], that you sorrow not as others which have no hope...”

“...For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those also who sleep [are dead] in Jesus will God bring with Him...”

“...For this I say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not [come before] those who are asleep [dead]...

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first...

“...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 so shall we ever be with the Lord.
Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.”

It seems that the moment before the Rapture, all those who have died trusting in Jesus to save them shall have their physical bodies restored [resurrected]

These resurrected bodies will ascend in the air



If the physical bodies are not resurrected, then why do the graves open up?

Then at the exact same moment, Jesus will transform these resurrected bodies and the bodies of all living believers into their spiritual bodies

What will that look like?

One moment our physical
body will be here on the earth
among other people

In the next microsecond, the
body will become a spiritual
body – it will be on a different
plane of existence

For one second we are a line on
a square

And the next, we become more
We become cubes

We are now at a higher level of
existence

Anything not part of this
transformation into a higher
dimensional being will fall to
the floor

All clothes, fillings, implants,
etc will fall to the floor

For those “left behind” we will
be there one second
And gone the next
They lack the ability to see our
higher dimensional bodies –
spiritual bodies
We are still there, but they can
no longer see us.

Now we need to understand
that this event is separate and
different from the Second
Coming
This is the Rapture – Jesus
coming to take His Church out
of the world

The Second Coming is seven
years later with Jesus coming
WITH His Church to take
possession of the world
We will discuss the Second
Coming in a future session

Let me discuss one last topic:

Pre-Tribulation

Mid-Tribulation

Post-Tribulation

What does that mean?

When does the Rapture take place?

Depending upon your view and understanding of End Times, you will believe that the Rapture will take place just before the Tribulation [Pre-Trib] or in the middle of the Tribulation [Mid-Trib] or at the end of the Tribulation [Post-Trib]

You can make an argument for any one of these depending upon what you believe concerning the Tribulation
I believe in the Pre-Trib for the following reasons...

The seven-year Tribulation Period is the final week of Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks

God has promised to use the Jews for a period of seven more years

God cannot take His spirit from the Church and place it on the Jews while the Church is still here

God cannot use both the Church and the Jews

By contract, He must use one or the other

The Jews are God's Chosen People

That, by definition, places them above all others

So God must remove the Church – complete His work with them – in order to return to the Jews

Right now the Jews are unaware that Jesus is the Messiah they are waiting for That is because of a spiritual blindness Jesus placed upon them on Psalm Sunday when they rejected His claim to be the Messiah

Luke 19:42:
“[Jesus] saying, ‘If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace, but now they are [hidden] from your eyes.’”

This spiritual blindness will continue until Zechariah 12:10:
“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications...”

“and they will look upon ME
whom they have pierced, and
they will mourn for HIM as one
mourns for his only son...”
They will realize that Jesus is
God
He is their Messiah

Zechariah 13:6:
“And one shall say unto Him,
‘What are these wounds in
your hands?’ Then He shall
answer, ‘Those with which I
was wounded in the house of
my friends.’”

We see in the Ezekiel 38
Invasion that it will take the
Jews seven years to burn all
the weapons
It seems the Ezekiel 38
invasion will take place right
before or at the beginning of
the Tribulation Period

And in Revelation 1 – 3 we see the Church Age presented. Jesus is presenting His messages to each of the seven Churches

We see Jesus walking in the midst of the lampstands
We are told that the lampstands represent the Church
Then in Revelation 4:1 we see a change

Revelation 4:1 – 2:
“After this I looked and behold a door was opened in Heaven, and the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me, which said, ‘Come up here’ and I will show you things which must be hereafter.’

“And immediately I was in the spirit. And behold a throne was set in Heaven, and one sat upon the throne.”

It is believed that this is the Rapture shown to John at the end of the Church Age

With Revelation 4:1 his point of view changes.

He is no longer on earth

He is now seeing everything from the perspective of Heaven

The lampstands [Church] are also in Heaven with him.

Finally, there is a scroll in Heaven

It is written within and without

It is sealed with seven seals

Not just anyone can open this book

Why?

There are those who teach that
this scroll is the title deed of
the earth

They are mistaken

They do not understand the
Law of Moses

Leviticus 25:25 identifies a
person who is called the
Kinsman Redeemer

This is a relative by birth who
is qualified and willing to
redeem the relative who has
fallen into debt.

When Jesus was born into the
human race, He became our
blood relative – a relative
related to us by birth

This gave Him the right to be
our Kinsman Redeemer

This Kinsman Redeemer serves three functions
The first is the Kinsman Redeemer, He buys us out of debt
In this case we are in debt to sin

The price to buy us out of debt to sin is death
The wages of sin is death [Romans 6:23]
On the cross, Jesus declared, "It is finished"
Or in the Greek, "Paid in Full!"

That completed the first obligation of the Kinsman Redeemer
But there are two more functions He must perform
The next is the Avenger of Blood

He must avenge every murder and persecution performed upon His relatives

That would be both Jews and the Church

This scroll contains a complete account of every atrocity performed upon Jew/Christian

The entire seven-year period of the Tribulation Period is Jesus avenging crimes against Jews and Christians

He would not be avenging these crimes upon Jews or believers

That makes no sense

This is why believers are protected until they are removed by being martyred

The Jews are also protected from these judgments

I Thessalonians 5:9:

“For God has not appointed us to wrath [judgment] but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

These are the main reasons why I believe the Rapture will take place before the Tribulation

You are free to believe what you want, but do consider these points in your decision-making process

Before closing, let me mention the third function of the Kinsman Redeemer...

He must marry the widow of a deceased brother

The Leverite Marriage is illustrated in the Book of Ruth

Although there is no deceased brother in this case
Jesus does take the Church to be His Bride
He then makes a third declaration that "It is finished"
His work is finally done

Next week:
Events leading up to the Rapture and Tribulation Period

QUESTIONS