

Why Will It Be a Post-Tribulation Resurrection/Rapture?

by Raymond C. Faircloth

In contrast to the theory of a Pre-Tribulation Resurrection/Rapture which originated in 1830 A.D., the biblical data posits a Post-Tribulation Rapture. This can be seen to have been the belief system followed by Christians for the first several hundred years until the introduction of the allegorical method of interpretation. Furthermore, the Pre-Tribulation Rapture scenario can be seen to contradict the biblical sequencing of events.

The Great Tribulation Occurs Before the First Resurrection

THE MATTHEW 24 SEQUENCE

1. "Therefore when you see **the Abomination of Desolation**...standing in the holy place...(verse 15 NASB).
2. Warning: "those in Judea must flee to the mountains" (verses 16-20).
3. "For then there will be **Great Tribulation**..." (verse 21).
4. "But immediately **after the tribulation** of those days...they will **see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory" (verse 29).
5. "He will send his angels with a **great trumpet** and they **will gather together** His elect from the four winds..." (verse 31).

This is the great gathering 'in the air' to Christ. It would be illogical to state that this gathering refers to the gathering of individuals into an organization. If such were the case then their conversion would have to occur after the Great Tribulation.

THE GATHERING TO CHRIST WITH A TRUMPET SOUND INVOLVES THE RESURRECTION

1 Thessalonians 4:16 - 5:6 gives nine details of the end-time. Eight of the details of Matthew 24:30-42 are the same as the details of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 to 5:6 indicating that the ninth detail in Matthew 24:31, namely, "**will gather**," must be the same event as the being "**caught away**" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. These details are:

1. Son of man (24:30) / Lord himself (4:16).
2. Clouds in heaven (24:30) / air (4:17).
3. **great trumpet** sound (24:31) / with *God's trumpet* (4:16).
4. **gather** His chosen *together* (24:31) / **together caught away** (4:17).
5. Know that summer is near (24:32) / times and seasons (5:1).
6. Marrying, then flood came (24:38) / safety then destruction (5:3).
7. Coming of the Son of man (24:39) / day of the Lord (5:2)
8. Watch (24:42) / stay awake and keep senses (5:6).
9. Know in what watch the thief was coming (24:43) / thief in the night (5:4).

Evidently Paul was writing about the same subject in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5 as Jesus had earlier spoken of in Matthew 24, namely the end-times that culminate in the resurrection/rapture when Christians are gathered together by the angels to meet the returning Jesus:

- ❖ "...and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a **loud trumpet** call, and they **will gather** His elect from the four winds..."
(*Matt. 24: 30, 31 ESV*).
- ❖ "The Lord himself will **descend** from heaven...with the voice of an archangel, and with the **sound of the trumpet of God**...the dead in Christ **will rise** first. Then, we who are **alive**, who are left will be **caught up together with them** in clouds to **meet** (Lit. "for a meeting with" Gk. *apantesis*) **the Lord** in the air"
(*1 Thess. 4:16-17 ESV*).

So the Matthew 24 sequence can clearly be seen to demonstrate a post-tribulation rapture.

JESUS COMES RIGHT BACK TO EARTH

The descent of Jesus described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 is shown to be a descent that is all the way to earth because the Greek noun *apantesis* used in verse 17 refers to a meeting for the purpose of being escorted. This is shown by the way the word is used in its two only other occurrences in the New Testament:

- When the wise virgins went out to meet the bridegroom (Matt. 25:1, 6) and, following the custom, escorted him by torchlight to the house for the wedding feast.

- When the brothers in Rome travelled down to “the Forum of Apius” to escort Paul back to Rome (Acts 27:15, 16).

So 1Thessalonians 4:16:15-17 is not referring to a meeting with Jesus in the air so that he can take them to heaven; but rather so that they can escort him to earth to take up his rulership of earth.

The Resurrection Is at the 7th [The Last] Trumpet

- ❖ “...we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last trumpet**. For the trumpet will sound, and **the dead** will be **raised** imperishable...” (1 Cor. 15:52 ESV).
- ❖ “Then the **seventh** angel blew his **trumpet**, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: ‘The Kingdom of this world has **become the Kingdom** of our Lord and of his Christ’...The nations raged, and your wrath came ... time for **the dead to be judged**, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints” (Rev. 11:15, 18 ESV).

The First Resurrection Occurs at the Return/Parousia of Jesus

- ❖ “I will **come again** and will **take you to myself**” (John 14:3 ESV).
- ❖ “...**resurrection** of the dead ... at his coming (**parousia**) those *who belong to Christ*” (1 Cor. 15:21, 23 ESV). Concerning the word *parousia* Adolph Deissmann states:

From the Ptolemaic period down to the 2nd century A.D. we are able to trace the word in the East as a *technical expression for the arrival or visit of the King... (or other person in authority)... Adventus coins were struck... Epiphany nearly always means the future parousia of Christ.*

The lexicons of Bauer, Thayer, Moulton and Milligan, Liddle and Scott, Abbot-Smith give *coming* or *arrival* as the definition of *parousia* with reference to Christ.

AFTER THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- ❖ “...concerning the coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being **gathered together** to him, we ask you not to be quickly shaken...to the effect that **the day of the Lord** has come ... For that day will not come, unless **the rebellion** (as described in Matt. 24:10-12) comes **first**, and **the man of lawlessness** (*who causes the tribulation*) is revealed...” (2 Thess. 2:1-3 ESV).

As proved from Joel 2:32 and Matthew 24:29 “the day of the Lord” follows after the Great Tribulation. Because the gathering to Christ at the rapture will be during “the day of the Lord” it must logically be after the Great Tribulation.

AFTER THE ANTICHRIST ARRIVES

Similarly, 2 Thessalonians 2 shows that the ‘rebellion’ and the antichrist must be on the scene before the rapture can occur. This fact also contradicts the idea of a pre-tribulation rapture.

LOOKING AGAIN AT THE MATTHEW 24 SEQUENCE

1. “When you see the **Abomination of Desolation...standing in the holy place** (verse 15).
2. Warning to flee from Judea (verse 16-20),
3. Then the **Great Tribulation** (v.21),
4. “Immediately after **the Tribulation** of those days...they will see **the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of heaven.”
5. “He will send his angels with a *great trumpet*, and they will **gather** together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other” i.e. harvest/resurrection/rapture as in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 23, 52 and John 1:3 and 11:24.

NOTE: Mark 13:14 says: “standing where **he** should not” NAB, REB. So the Abomination is here seen as the personalized **Antichrist** i.e. an individual (see STUDY 7).

This sequence clearly presents a post-tribulation resurrection/rapture scenario because the *gathering* includes the resurrection and rapture as shown above. So the moment Jesus arrives “*in the air*” the resurrection of the dead Christians occurs and both they and living Christians are “gathered together to him” as he descends
(1 Thess. 4:16-18).

The Resurrection Is At the End of the Age Harvest-Time

In The Scriptures harvesting is often used figuratively of judgment for either condemnation or acquittal. It also, logically, means a gathering in as in the case with Jesus’ admonition to “beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers” in Luke 10:2. However, in the following Scriptures the harvest/gathering cannot refer to any extended time for the conversion of individuals but is the gathering to Jesus by means of rapture at the very end of the age—on the last day: “**The harvest is the end (syntelia) of the age**” (Matt. 13:39).

Syntelia = a point of time marking completion of a duration, according to Bauer, also Thayer. It is synonymous with ‘telos’ (“end” in v 14). It is not a period of time otherwise it would become an extra age. Jesus gave two parables to emphasize the timing of the harvest gathering of Christians:

- ❖ “...the dragnet **gathered** fish of every kind ... the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away...so it will be at the **syntelia of the age**” (Matt. 13:47-49).
- ❖ “Allow both [*wheat and tares*] to grow together until **the harvest**” (Matt. 13:30).
- ❖ “I am **with you** always, even to the end (**syntelia) of the age**” (Matt. 28:20 ESV).

Therefore the church will have Jesus with it in spirit until the completion of this age and so must exist on earth until that time i.e. Christ’s advent in glory (Matt 24:3). Jesus also gave some sequencing details in Revelation:

- ❖ “...upon the cloud...son of man ... another angel...crying with a **loud voice**...‘Put in your sickle, and **reap**, for **the harvest** of the earth is...fully ripe” (Rev. 14:14-15 ESV).

So this gathering occurs after the holy ones have ‘endured’ (verse 12) during the time of the worship of the Beast (verse 9) and “the dead who die in the Lord from now on” rest (verse 13).

RESURRECTION IS ON THE LAST DAY

- ❖ “I will raise him up on the **last day**...he [*Lazarus*] will rise again in *the resurrection* on the **last day**”
(John 6:40, 44, 54, 11:24 ESV).

The Greek word for ‘last’ is *eschatos* which also means ‘last’ or ‘final.’ So this presumably means the final day of the present age:

- ❖ “...he will receive...**in the age to come**, eternal life” (Mark 10:30).
- ❖ “...those who are considered worthy to attain to **that age** and to *the resurrection*” (Luke 20:35).

Hence, the last day of the present age is the first day of the age to come (the Millennium), making the theory of the resurrection/rapture as occurring many years before the tribulation impossible.

Summary of When the Resurrection/Rapture Occurs

- 1) After the Antichrist appears.
 - 2) After the Tribulation.
 - 3) At the 7th and last trumpet.
 - 4) At “the end of the age.”
 - 5) On “the Last Day.”
 - 6) At “the descending” and *Parousia* of the Lord.
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All Living Christians Will Be On Earth at the Time of Jesus’ Return

All living Christians must demonstrate their faith right through the Great Tribulation which occurs immediately before Jesus’ *apokalipsis* and *epiphania*. So they are:

STILL ON EARTH UNTIL THE PAROUSIA

- ❖ "...may your spirit, soul and body be **preserved** at the **parousia** of our Lord Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:23).
- ❖ "...be **patient**, brothers, **until** the **parousia** of our Lord" (James 5:7).

STILL ON EARTH AT THE APOKALYPSIS

- ❖ "...to repay with affliction those who afflict you, to give **relief** to you who are afflicted and to us *when* the Lord Jesus will be revealed (**apokalipsei**) from heaven with His mighty angels...*when he comes (elthe)* to be glorified in His saints **on that Day**" (2 Thess. 1:7-10).
- ❖ "...so that the **proof of your faith**,...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor **at** the revelation (**apokalipsei**) of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7).
- ❖ "Prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** completely *on the grace to be* brought to you **at** the (**apokalipsei**) of Jesus..." (1 Pet. 1:13).
- ❖ "...**awaiting eagerly** the revelation (**apokalipsin**) of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will *confirm you to the end (of the age)* **blameless in** the Day of our Lord Jesus..." (1 Cor. 1:7, 8).
"The end (telos) of the age, not the end of one's life." Bauer's Greek/English Lexicon.

STILL ON EARTH UNTIL THE EPIPHANIA

- ❖ "...that you **keep the commandment**...**until** the appearing (**epiphania**) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:14).

Why would they be awaiting the revelation of Jesus if he had already revealed himself to them in an earlier invisible *parousia* and taken them to heaven? It is therefore necessary for all living Christians to *prove their faith, set their hope, be made firm as blameless, be keeping the commandment*, and waiting to receive *"the undeserved kindness to be brought to you at the revelation (apokalipsei) of Jesus."* So no Christian can be separately alive in heaven during the Great tribulation, that is before *the epiphania of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

ON EARTH DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- ❖ "Then if anyone says **to you**, Look here is the Christ, or, There! Do not believe it. For false Christs..."
(Matt. 24:23).

This warning will apply during the Tribulation as noted in verse 15. Why give this warning if Christians are already safely in heaven?

- ❖ "It was given to him [*the beast*] to make **war with the saints** and to overcome them" (Rev. 13:7).

Therefore the *holy ones* are shown to have endured the 42 month (verse 6) Great Tribulation. So they cannot be in heaven during the Great Tribulation.

Christians Are to Be on Earth until "The Day of Christ"

- ❖ "He who began a good work in you **will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus** ... in order to be sincere and **blameless until the day of Christ**" (Phil. 1:6, 10).
- ❖ "He is able to guard **what I have entrusted to Him until that day**" (2 Tim. 1:12).
- ❖ "The crown of righteousness, which the Lord...will **award me on that day**" (2 Tim. 4:8).
- ❖ "...each man's **work will become evident**, for **the day** will show it up because it is to be revealed with fire"
(1 Cor. 3:13).

REWARDS ARE GIVEN AT THE TIME OF THE RESURRECTION

- ❖ "...you will be **repaid** at **the resurrection** of the righteous" (Luke 14:14).

The Rapture

A BIBLE TEACHING

Because of the teachings of early Roman Catholicism this biblical teaching had been lost for over 1,000 years. Nevertheless, in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 the word *harpazo* means 'snatched up' or 'caught up.' It is the same as in:

- Revelation 12:5 where: "her child was caught away to God."
- Acts 8:39, 40 where: "the spirit of the Lord snatched away Philip ... to Ashdod."
- Similar events happened to Enoch (Gen. 5:24, Heb. 11:5, 13), Elijah (2 Kings 2:11)
- and for Jesus in Acts 1:9.

This Greek term was translated into Latin as *rapere* from which we get the English word 'rapture.' This snatching up (away) is **in the air**, (Greek *aera*). *Bauer's Greek lexicon informs us that it is: "the atmosphere immediately above earth's surface."*

There is no thought of going to heaven in this verse. The expression "*Thus we shall always be with the Lord*" is because raptured Christians accompany Jesus as he continues his descent to earth (1 Thess. 4:16).

- ❖ "The Lord will descend ... **the dead**...will rise **first**. Then, we **the living** who are surviving will, together with them, be **caught away** in clouds to **meet the Lord in the air**" (1 Thess. 4:16-18).

Therefore, the descent of Jesus, the resurrection and the rapture are all in close proximity of time. This *is the only time for the resurrection of believers*.

The Two Witnesses Are Killed during the Tribulation then They Are Resurrected/Raptured

- ❖ "...spirit of life from God entered into them, and they **stood upon their feet**...And they heard a loud voice out of heaven say to them: '**come on up here**.' And they went up into heaven in the *cloud* and their enemies beheld them" (Rev. 11:12).

This occurs immediately prior to the Revelation 16:15 'Day of the Lord' destruction of the wicked.

- ❖ "...to you who suffer *tribulation*, **relief** along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels" (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

Hence, the relief is not earlier than the Great Tribulation but only when Jesus returns at his revelation.