

About the Rapture

Discussing a topic such as the rapture can lead to misunderstandings and differences of opinion. Some people state that there will be a pre-tribulation rapture, while others say it will be post-tribulation. We can discuss it endlessly, but we are not meant to know certain things, and there is a purpose for it. No one knows the exact time of the Lord's return and the exact time of his own death. Why? Because we need to be always ready. What we need to do is go to the Word of God.

Some things need to be taken by faith. We mustn't try to be in control of everything all the time. Man, by nature, likes to control things and know everything, but that cannot always be the case, and does not always happen this way. If you inquire about what faith means, you will see that it doesn't have to do with knowing, seeing, and controlling. It is God who must be in control and govern our lives. If today we can know, see, and have things under control (under God's control), it is because we believe, not the other way around.

Just imagine how it would be if we knew everything, even the time of our own death, and also the time of His coming. What do you think we would do then? Most, if not all people will do whatever suits them and whatever they like with the thought that when the day comes, they will repent. Do you think that they will really repent on that day? I don't think so. Most of the hearts of those people will be so hardened that they probably won't do it.

God knows our hearts and wants to save us from that condition. He has perfectly established everything in our favor so that we can believe in a genuine way. While

we are here on Earth, we need this kind of faith: faith that trusts God, believes what He says, and remains patient when things don't occur as we expect. I am not saying that Christians believe blindly in God. They can see and experience certain promises in their hearts, but there are some things they simply need to believe and wait for.



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Yes, faith often involves patience. We typically desire everything at the moment. We say, "Where is the success that You promised me, Lord?" when maybe that success will come in a different way, or "Where is the wife You promised me?" when this could happen in His time, which is the right time, or "Where is the rapture that You promised will happen, Lord? Why is it not happening yet?" In general, we are always impatient, but faith sometimes means trusting and having patience. I am not referring to faith for salvation. The Bible says it can

happen anytime, and “now” is the day of salvation ([2 Corinthians 6:2](#)). Why does it say that? Because tomorrow can be late. We don’t know what will happen tomorrow. Our life is like a vapor ([James 4:14](#)). For some things, we are impatient, and we want them to happen right now, and for others, such as salvation, we wait, and that won’t be a problem for us. This is the nature of our hearts.

One of the passages in the Bible that speaks about the rapture is [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#).

Even though it doesn’t include the word rapture there, we see a clear description of what will happen. “[For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will 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 thus we shall always be with the Lord.](#)”

The word for “caught up” in the Greek Bible is ἀρπαγησόμεθα (harpagēsometha), which derives from the word αἰρέομαι and basically means “grab,” “grasp,” “seize,” “take up,” “pull,” or “take with force.” We can see the clear meaning of this word and say that even if we don’t find the exact word *rapture* in the Bible, this word describes exactly what a “rapture” is.

I can’t tell you if this occurrence will be before what the Bible calls “the great tribulation” or after it or in which way exactly it will happen, but from what we see in the Scriptures, something will happen.

Let’s look at another story related to this topic. We know that God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. They were destroyed by fire, the same way as some scriptures indicate that the world will end one day. There were not many righteous people in Sodom, only Abraham’s nephew Lot, who was

spared because of his righteousness and was *taken away* by the angels sent to destroy that city ([Genesis 19:15-17](#)).

There comes a time when God's patience runs out. I mean that even though He is a patient God, as we read in [2 Peter 3:9](#), He does have limits concerning His patience with sin. The only reason He exercises patience and endures is for the lost souls who still need to be saved. As long as there is a possibility for the gospel to spread and for people to have the opportunity to hear it, He remains patient with sin. He is a just God and cannot tolerate any sin, but out of love for those who still need salvation, He refrains from bringing about the end immediately and continues to be patient.

When that possibility is over, and the people have become so hardened that they won't heed the gospel, and darkness engulfs everything, signifying there will be no opportunity for the good news any longer, the end will arrive. At that moment, God will no longer be able to endure the sin.

Why do you think that Jesus bore all our sins on the cross and allowed Himself to suffer and be slain? Because He knew that His death and resurrection were for the salvation of the souls of the lost. This is His main purpose: salvation. He is not waiting only because sin hasn't yet escalated to its maximum, but also because there are still people who need to be saved.

The end will not come just because of sin itself. We know that God, in general, cannot tolerate sin. Still, at present, He endures it for love. The end will come because the gospel will be hindered, and due to the world's perspective on sin, and because of society's perception of it. When sin is regarded as completely normal, as it has already begun to be, and the gospel is only seen as negative, with obstacles hindering its spread, the time will be right for the end to occur.

Even in our personal lives, how we see sin and our attitudes toward it are important in God's eyes. The Bible speaks of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place where it is not supposed to be. This indicates that what is intended to be holy and honorable, such as God sitting on His throne, lifted up and exalted by the people, is replaced by something opposite that exalts what is wicked.

“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place . . .” (Matthew 24:15).

I know people have different points of view on this passage, but we need to see the meaning it carries. To me, its meaning has to do with today's intention to exalt what is wrong instead of God. We can say that this verse probably hasn't been entirely fulfilled yet, but we see the direction this world has taken.

If God has patience with us today, it is because of Jesus' sacrifice and the possibility it gives people to repent. Jesus represents the mercy and the patience of God.

“But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for the fire until the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:7).

Notice it says that the heavens and the earth are preserved by “the same Word,” the same Word through which everything was created. Jesus is the Word of God, as John 1:1-3 states. As Christians, we also need to bear with others and be patient with them, not to tolerate their sinful life, but to be patient, waiting for them to turn to God.

“And the Lord said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is *very grave*, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know” (Genesis 18:20-21).

Here, we see the reason the Lord reacted this way toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—because their sin was too grave. The unrighteousness was at its maximum. What comes to your mind when you think about this? Doesn’t this remind you of the times we are living in now?

We are certain that God can break any chain and any hardened heart, but looking at the Scriptures in general, we are warned not to harden our hearts.

“... Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7).

If people’s hearts are overly hardened, He cannot work there and save them by force. We are all warned not to get to that point. When the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was so great, and they were hardened, there wasn’t more to do.

We are not talking about someone who is just struggling with some issues and is worried about his condition and heart before God, but about someone who is not worried at all about his sin and, after hearing, keeps persevering stubbornly in his own direction. The Bible tells us in Romans 1:28, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting . . .” In this case, we see that there is a limit that has been surpassed. There is always a solution if we go before God and repent, but here we are talking about people who don’t want to depend on God and don’t want to seek a solution from Him and walk in His ways. The end and the tribulation will come when there isn’t much possibility for Him to work anymore because of this hardness.

Perhaps the final trials, which are part of the Great Tribulation, will serve as the ultimate way for God to awaken the people, reveal their condition and needs, and warn them. It is because He loves them so much that He cannot just leave them in their condition. Why can't He just touch them the way they are? Because it works this way: People need to realize something first. They cannot just repent without coming to this realization and acknowledging their sin. And He is the one who can bring them to this condition so they can acknowledge their sin. No one can do it alone. Only He can help people to realize their condition. The only thing they mustn't do is resist.

God wants to help everyone reach this realization. He loves us, and He died for us. In this, His love is shown. We need to approach Him as we are, but we must allow Him to work in our lives and change us by His power afterward. We need to go "as we are" to Him, but if we have truly gone to Him, we will not be "as we were" but different. We are not the same after a true encounter with Him.

We need to realize our need and trust in His power that can regenerate us and perform a miracle in us. We see in the book of Revelation that after going through some trials and tribulations that will take place at the end times, some people will still harden themselves even more ([Revelation 16:9](#)).

The world we live in is hardened as well. The unrighteousness and tolerance of sin are ever-increasing. "Free thinking" is in fashion now, and things that not even a long time ago were considered taboo are now seen as something almost normal. This is one of the reasons for which the Lord will return, but what else? For what other reason can He make His return and finish everything? It will be when the hardness of people's hearts is so great that they will no longer be able to receive the gospel. It will be a time when the gospel will no longer be preached and will

find no more good ground. Let us meditate on something. If the world still exists today, if the birds are still singing, and we can laugh and live today, it is because the gospel has been proclaimed. This is the reason God is patient. It is because He still wants and waits for people to be saved.

When there is almost no more possibility for the gospel to be preached and for people to receive it, the end will come, just as the end came to Sodom and Gomorrah. People don't know what they are doing when they prohibit and obstruct the spread of the gospel. In a way, we can say that they are accelerating the end, even though we know that God knows the exact time and He is in control.

We also know that the gospel has been attacked and hindered throughout time, but what we will probably see in the end times will be the opposite of what God wants, and the opposition to the gospel will be overwhelming.

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