

## The Rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ

### Topical

*“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. <sup>34</sup>It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. <sup>35</sup>Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. <sup>36</sup>If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup>What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’ ”*  
Mark 13:32-37 (NIV)

The Rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ are the two events that begin the End Times.

*And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died. <sup>15</sup>I can tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise to meet him ahead of those who are in their graves. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. <sup>17</sup>Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. <sup>18</sup>So comfort and encourage each other with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NLT)*

### ● THE FACTS OF THE RAPTURE

- Jesus Christ **will return to planet earth!** (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16)

*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back to take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. John 14:3 (NIV)*

*“They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’ ”*  
Acts 1:10-11 (NIV)

- When Christ returns, He will first **resurrect, gather, and take** the Church to heaven to be with Him. This is called the Rapture. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

### Two Events of the Rapture

- A **resurrection** from the dead

Resurrection = the transformation of our earthly bodies **to become like** Christ’s glorious resurrected body. (See 1 Corinthians 15)

- All the Christians who have died will be resurrected. (See 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23)
- All living Christians will be snatched away to be with Christ.

- The **gathering** of the church in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

“Caught up” = *harpazo* = “to snatch away” or “to seize” (See Acts 8:39)

The rapture will take place at the beginning of a time in history called the Tribulation.

### Three Reasons Why the Rapture will Occur Before the Tribulation

- In Revelation 3, Jesus told believers that He would keep them from the “hour of trial.”

*“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. <sup>11</sup>I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.” Revelation 3:10-11 (NIV)*

*For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NIV)*

*Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. <sup>16</sup>They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup>For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” Revelation 6:15-17 (NIV)*

- The New Testament Scriptures consistently fail to mention the presence of the church during the Tribulation. (Revelation 6-16)
- Only a “pre-Tribulation rapture” allows for the imminent and signless coming of Christ for His bride.

(See Mark 13:31-37; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; Jude 1:21)

## ● ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

- When does the judgment seat of Christ take place?

*Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.* 1 Corinthians 4:5 (NIV)

“Appointed time” = when “the Lord comes”

- What is the purpose of the judgment seat and who is involved?

- The Judgment Seat of Christ is the time when Christians will appear individually before God to receive rewards or loss of reward based on their lives, service and ministry for the Lord.

*So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.* 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 (NIV)

*For no one can lay any other foundation than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>Now anyone who builds on that foundation may use gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. <sup>13</sup>But there is going to come a time of testing at the judgment day to see what kind of work each builder has done. Everyone’s work will be put through the fire to see whether or not it keeps its value. <sup>14</sup>If the work survives the fire, that builder will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builders themselves will be saved, but like someone escaping through a wall of flames.* 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (NLT)

- See Psalm 58:11; Proverbs 11:18; Isaiah 40:10; Matthew 5:12; 6:1-2; 10:41-42; Luke 6:35; 1 Corinthians 3:8, 14; Ephesians 6:8; Hebrews 10:35-36; Revelation 2:23; 22:13)

## ● BELIEVERS NEED TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT OF THESE TWO EVENTS.

*Now, brothers and sisters, we do not need to write you about times and dates. <sup>2</sup>You know very well that the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief that comes in the night. <sup>3</sup>While people are saying, “We have peace and we are safe,” they will be destroyed quickly. It is like pains that come quickly to a woman having a baby. Those people will not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you, brothers and sisters, are not living in darkness, and so that day will not surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup>You are all people who belong to the light and to the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. <sup>6</sup>So we should not be like other people who are sleeping, but we should be alert and have self-control.* 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 (NCV)

“Alert” = spiritually alert

“Be self-controlled” = live balanced godly lives

### What in Our Lives Will be Tested?

- How we treat other believers (Hebrews 6:10; Matthew 10:41-42)
- How we employ our God-given talents and abilities (Matthew 25:14-29)
- How we use our money (Matthew 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)
- How well we accept mistreatment and injustice (Matthew 5:11-12; Mark 10:29-30; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17)
- How we endure suffering and trials (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
- How we spend our time (Psalm 90:9-12; Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5; 1 Peter 1:17).
- How effectively we control our fleshly appetites (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)
- How many people we witness to and win for Christ (Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)
- How faithful we are to God’s Word and to God’s people (Acts 20:26-28; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 13:17; James 3:1; 1 Peter 5:1-2; 2 John 1:7-8)
- How faithful we are in our vocation (Colossians 3:22-24)
- How we use our tongue (Matthew 12:36; James 3:1-12)
- How hospitable we are to strangers (Matthew 25:35-36; Luke 14:12-14)

This list adapted from Bible Prophecy by Mark Hitchcock