

A quick Google search reveals a plethora of “Rapture Merch” available online. Items range from a survival book for those left behind, to bumper stickers warning of driverless vehicles, to t-shirts offering themselves up post-rapture spoils, “*In Case Of Rapture You Can Have This Shirt.*” Much of the religious world is caught up in what is typically called a pre-tribulation rapture. We might be tempted to ignore the rapture as fanciful, fictional thinking of the *Left Behind* books or an end-times prophecy predicting preacher. While much of their teachings are based on conjecture, while ignoring the context of their proof-text, the rapture itself is a biblical concept – just not in the way it’s often portrayed. Today, let’s delve into the true meaning of the rapture, understand its significance, and most importantly, prepare our hearts to be rapture ready.

1. Some Incorrectly Say the Bible Doesn’t Teach a Rapture:
 - a. Based on the way it’s taught by premillennialists as...
 - i. A secret, snatching away of believers from the earth (think *Left Behind*). They appropriate the idea of the rapture from 1 Ths 4:13-18 while ignoring the details. And by interpreting Matthew 24 (see vv. 40-41) as something way off in the future but ignoring the context of the passage going back to vv. 1-3.
 - ii. Just because some teach the rapture incorrectly doesn’t mean we can’t teach the truth on the matter.
 - b. Based on the fact the word *rapture* doesn’t appear in the English language Bible.
 - i. Etymology: The English word *rapture* is derived from the Latin term, *rapio*.
 1. Its cognate *rapimur* translates “will be caught up” (1 Ths 4:17) in the Vulgate – the Western World’s Bible for over 1,000 years.
 2. Modern Italian (*rapiti*) and Romanian (*răpiți*) echo the Latin (literally *kidnap*).
 - ii. *Rapture* is simply a nonbiblical word (in English at least) used to describe a biblical concept. Other examples include: the Trinity, Worship Service, the Plan of Salvation.
 - iii. English is not the official language of heaven, and we should not treat it as such.
2. The Rapture According to the Scriptures (1 Ths 4:13-18):
 - a. Paul clarifies that those who have died in the Lord will return with Him | vv. 13-15
 - b. Jesus’ second coming will be visible, with much fanfare. | v. 16a; Act 1:11; 2 Ths 1:7
 - c. When Jesus comes, the dead will be resurrected. | v. 16b; Jhn 5:28-29; 1 Cor 15:1-49, 54-57
 - d. Those still alive will be raptured or “will be caught up” and transformed to be with the Lord and the resurrected saints. | v. 17; 1 Cor 15:50-57
 - e. “Encourage one another with these words.” | v. 18; 1 Cor 15:58; Php 3:20-4:1
3. Are you rapture ready?
 - a. Because Jesus will come at any time. | 2 Pet 3:1-13
 - b. Be rapture ready by living for Him. | Tit 2:11-14

In the last couple of years, Shelly and I believe we’ve personally known 15 people who have died. Of those, only one died suddenly in the prime of life; everyone else knew their time was limited and quickly coming to an end. Because of the gradual nature of aging and dying we see around us, too often we’re lulled into thinking we have enough time to “*get our life right*” before we die. But we fail to account on the return of

Jesus – He could come at any moment. Therefore, we must live lives prepared to meet our Lord and His saints in the rapture. Because when He comes, time is up there will be no second chances.