

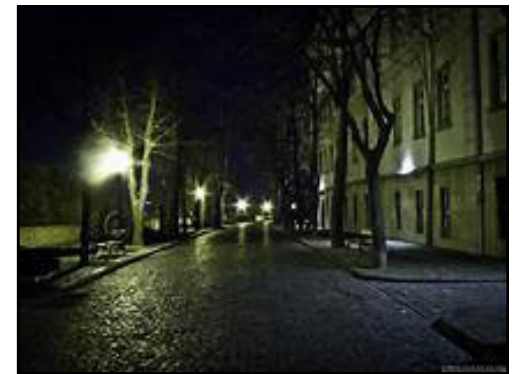
These words are confirmed by Paul in **I Thessalonians 5:2-10** *"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."* In **I Corinthians 15:51-52** Paul says *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* Again in **I Thessalonians 4:13** Paul states *"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."* In **Matthew 24:36-42** *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."*

To me the most compelling evidence of the Rapture is the absence of the church of the new testament after Revelations Chapter 3. The church has vanished completely, why, because they are gone. Don't just take my word for it. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you, and study the words of God for yourself. **II Timothy 2:15** *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* **II Timothy 3:14** *"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;"*

God be with you in all things, Amen.



Everybody's Gone



The question that one day many will be asking.

“where did they all go?”

The Rapture of the Church is the belief that Jesus Christ will return for His followers (those who believe in Him for their salvation, also referred to as born again believers) just before a time known as the Tribulation that will be inflicted on all the earth. This belief has been quite a controversy among the Christian community for many years. At some points the debate rivals only our political campaigns of today. One side slinging untruths at the other so as to disprove the others beliefs with cleverly crafted half-truths made to make something wrong seem or sound right. Sometimes I am surprised that some of these people even refer to themselves as followers of Christ.

A good example is when I was once listening to a popular secular call-in talk show that had to do with religious beliefs. I was curious to hear what nonbelievers had to say on the subject. One caller asked the host, did Jesus say that He was the only way to go to heaven? After a short time of silence, the host stated no he did not. I was stunned at the hosts response, but the more I thought about what was said, I realized that this was one of those half truth responses to avoid telling the whole truth. You see the host of the show was correct in his answer. Jesus did not say what the caller asked, but what Jesus did say was **John 14:6** "I am the way the truth, and the life: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME". Even though the caller's question, and what Jesus said mean the same thing, the host of the show was able to get away with saying no without actually telling a lie, because the caller did not quote the words of Christ exactly.

This is the same type of deception that many so called "followers of Christ" use to try to disprove the Rapture. The most famous deception is the statement the word Rapture is not in the Bible." Well guess what, they are absolutely right. The word Rapture itself is not anywhere in the Bible. What they are not telling you, just like the secular radio host, is that what the word represents or means is in the Bible. The word Rapture comes from the Latin word rapio which means "a snatching away." The English translation of rapio is Rapture. We can find this snatching away of the believers in Christ in **I Thessalonians 4:17** "Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." **Matthew 24:36-42** "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,

*until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one **shall be taken**, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; **the one shall be taken**, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."*

Another way some try to discredit the Rapture is a story continuously heard about the Pre-Rapture interpretation first being taught by a man named John Darby who lived during the early 1800s. The story goes on to say Darby got his belief after his introduction to the visions of a woman named Margaret Macdonald. The above information about the Pre-Tribulation Rapture first being introduced through John Darby's teachings is not true. There have been many other people who have taught the Pre-Rapture including a man by the name of Pseudo-Ephraem between A.D. 374-627. A Benjamin Keach also taught the Pre-tribulation Rapture around 150 years before Margaret Macdonald. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the church is not a new understanding of the Bible, but by not telling you about these other teachers of the Rapture, they are able to tell you a partial truth without actually lying to you.

One way that some like to disprove the Rapture is by putting verses together that just confuse people, An example of this is that we are told that Jesus will return like a thief in the night. No one will know when He comes, we will be gone in a twinkling of an eye (**I Corinthians 15:51-52** and **I Thessalonians 5:2**). Then what they will do is try and add **Revelation 1:7** where John states "**Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.**" Plain thinking shows that putting these verses together makes little sense at all. My favorite way of explaining the difference is by role playing the verse. I play the thief who sneaks into someones house and then knocks on the walls, then with a loud voice hollers to the occupants of the house Hello is anybody home, I have come to rob your house! I know this seems kind of corny, but so does the idea that you can put a time when Christ returns as a thief in the night and another time when he returns and every eye will see Him. Some even go as far as to divide the first half of the Tribulation that is known as the Wrath of the Lamb, and the second half that is called the Wrath of God. By doing this they make a case that the believers go through the first half of the Tribulation,

because God only protects us from Gods wrath. At first look this could make sense, but take a closer look. In the first part of the Tribulation, the Wrath of the Lamb, ask yourself who is the Lamb? That's right, the Lamb is Jesus Christ. So then the first part of the Tribulation is really the Wrath of Jesus. OK now ask yourself, who is Jesus? Yep you guessed it, Jesus is God. That means that both the first and second half of the Tribulation are in fact the Wrath of God. The terminology of Wrath of the Lamb for the first part only means that it is less severe than the second half. The second half of the Tribulation is when God says enough is enough and full justice is poured out onto the world.

If God protects his people from His Wrath, why the Tribulation and why are followers of Christ killed during this time? This is a really good question, and the answer is very simple, the Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation is the cut-off point. God says its time to bring all those who have trusted in Jesus Christ for their salvation home to be with Him. The believers of the Tribulation become believers after the Rapture happened and after the Tribulation started. The best way I have ever heard it explained is that before the Tribulation, Christ gave His blood for those who believed in Him, but after the Tribulation begins those who now understand the truth and trust in Christ must give their blood for God. As harsh as this may sound, we must remember that God is not responsible for man's sins, man is responsible for man's sins. God has warned us right from the start. He even waited for us 2000 years. All he ever asked of us is that we trust, and believe in Him.

So why believe in the Pre-Rapture of Gods people? The first thing we see in the Bible is that God has always protected or removed His people from His wrath. Noah and the ark (**Genesis chapters 6 through 9**) is one time where God protected his people. In Sodom and Gomorra, God (**Gen 18: 17-29**) removed His people before destroying the city. In **Exodus chapters 11 through 13**, God protected the first born son's of his people from the same death of the Egyptians first born. In **Joshua Chapters 2 and 6**, a woman named Rahab and her family were protected from harm for helping Gods People. Then there are the words of Christ. **Luke 21:36** "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Jesus again tells us in **Revelation 3:10** "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."