

Rapture Prequels

ENOCH

One criticism of the rapture is that the word does not occur in the Bible.

That is true but misleading. The word “rapture” comes from the Latin word *rapturo*. The Latin translators of the Bible used the word *rapturo*, the root of the English term "Rapture," which is a translation of the Greek verb "caught up" that's found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. In the Greek the word is *harpazo*, which means "to seize upon with force" or "to snatch up."

You can call it the “pre-trib rapture,” the pre-trib *harpazo*,” the “pre-trib *rapturo*,” or the “pre-trib caught up” - it's all the same thing.

I want to take a look at the rapture from a slightly different perspective. I want to look through the Bible and find out where the rapture is given to us in types or figures.

We can suggest, for example, at least six men in the Bible who were caught up to Heaven or caught away to another location.

1. Enoch (Genesis 5:24 & Hebrews 11:25).
2. Elijah (Second Kings 2:1&11).
3. Ezekiel (3:12-15).
4. Philip (Acts 8:39).
5. Paul (Second Corinthians 12:2-4).
6. John (The Revelation 4:1).

(Some might add Jesus to this list and, while I agree in principle, His ascension should be kept in its own unique category).

Prophets being raptured from one place to another was remarkably common. In Second Kings chapter two, a group of prophets supposed that Elijah had been transported by the Spirit to some remote location when, in fact, he had been taken to Heaven. They said to Elijah's successor, Elisha,

2 Kings 2:16 ... "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley..."

They didn't think it strange whatsoever that the Spirit of God might transport a prophet from one location to the next.

What I want to do is take a look at selected Old Testament passages to see where the rapture might be prefigured. I say "might be" because we understand that the rapture of the church is a mystery not revealed until the first century. Nevertheless we believe that with hindsight you can see it typified and prefigured in many persons and verses.

The place to begin is with Enoch.

Genesis 5:21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah.

Genesis 5:22 After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters.

Genesis 5:23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years.

Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

After a new birth, Enoch walked with God in the Last Days until he was taken bodily to heaven without ever dying. Hebrews 11:5 confirms this: "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him..."

He was raptured - caught-up or snatched away to Heaven prior to the judgment on the earth of the flood.

In the Last Days in which you and I live Christians will be caught up bodily to heaven prior to God's wrath being poured out in judgment:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 "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."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 "Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

- Enoch is a type of the Rapture of the Church prior to God's wrath being poured out from Heaven.
- Noah, safe in the Ark, is a type of those who God divinely seals and protects safe through the seven years of the Great Tribulation of His judgment.

What is interesting about Enoch is that more is said of him in the New Testament than in the Old! We read of him especially in Jude, verses 14 and 15,

"Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Enoch prophesied concerning the Second Coming of Jesus Christ! He was given unique insight into prophetic truths - insight into a glorious future beyond his own day and time. This is what occupied his mind and what characterized his walk with God among the ungodly in those wicked Last Days.

We need to be reminded of the unique insights into prophetic truths that our generation has been privileged to receive. It is our generation that has witnessed the most important prophetic event of the Last Days. The regathering of the Jews as a nation in their promised land is huge!

As if the regathering of Israel wasn't enough, we've seen or are seeing so much more:

- It is our generation that can begin to understand the universal mark that could make all of humanity subject to a single economic system!
- It is our generation that could witness simultaneously the events depicted in the Book of the Revelation as they occur!

This is why it is almost incredible to me that, rather than being characterized by insight into the soon coming of Jesus Christ, many sincere Christians are returning to positions that godly men held centuries ago when the Church was ignorant of these prophetic facts.

We cannot build our doctrines upon types, prefigures, metaphors, similes, or illustrations.

But if we have a solid doctrine, like the rapture, then it is extremely helpful to see it prefigured.

- In Romans 15:4 we are told “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”
- In Hosea 12:10 we read, “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”

Over the next several weeks we will try to see various other prequels to the rapture. In addition to the men we mentioned we’ll take a look at the following:

- Lot being delivered out of Sodom & Gomorrah prior to its destruction.
- Abraham & Isaac after the episode on Mount Moriah.
- Ruth & Boaz and what her position on the threshing floor might indicate.
- Daniel and his three friends during the incident involving the world leader and the fiery furnace.
- The Shulamite maiden being taken away by King Solomon in the Song of Solomon.
- The Jewish wedding customs.
- The Jewish calendar of feasts.

This is much more than academic or even merely interesting. The rapture of the church is our blessed hope. It purifies us as we focus our heart on seeing the Lord at any moment.

Let’s be rapture ready!

