

Rapture Prequel

According to *The Making of Star Trek*, creator Gene Roddenberry's original plan did not include transporters, instead calling for characters to land the starship itself.

However, this would have required unfeasible and unaffordable sets and model filming, as well as episode running time spent while landing, taking off, etc.

The shuttlecraft was the next idea, but when filming began, the full-sized shooting model was not ready.

Transporters were devised as a less expensive alternative, achieved by a simple fade-out/fade-in of the subject.

Long before James Kirk never said, "Beam me up, Scottie," **believers were being transported by God.**

In fact, being picked-up and transported from one place to another was apparently quite common in the Old Testament, at least among prophets.

In the Old Testament book of First Kings the prophet Elijah tells Obadiah to convey a message from him to wicked King Ahab. Obadiah protests on the basis that God might suddenly pick-up and transport Elijah away to another location leaving Ahab to think Obadiah had lied to him.

The encounter between Elijah and Ahab reads like this:

1 Kings 18:7 Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?"

1 Kings 18:8 And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.' "

1 Kings 18:9 So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?"

1 Kings 18:10 As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you.

1 Kings 18:11 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here" '!

1 Kings 18:12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth.

Obadiah feared that Elijah would be suddenly carried away by the Spirit of God.

This was so common that, 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.

God likes to transport his servants from one place to the next. Some of these transports are from one location on the earth to another. Some are from earth to Heaven.

I think we can call them 'raptures.' Just for fun, I want to look at the raptures, in which God miraculously transports His servants.

The first rapture, from earth to Heaven, is that of Enoch.

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

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

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

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

He was translated, without ever dying, and taken directly to Heaven. If there was any doubt, it is dispelled by Hebrews 11:5, which reads,

Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "AND WAS NOT FOUND, BECAUSE GOD HAD TAKEN HIM"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Jude has quite a lot to say about Enoch:

Jud 1:14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,

Jud 1:15 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."

Because he was raptured and therefore never died, some suggest that Enoch will be one of the two witnesses in the Book of the Revelation. Possibly; but I think they are Moses and Elijah, mostly because they are the two who met with Jesus at His transfiguration to discuss the future.

Enoch was taken before the flood, and thus avoided the judgment upon the earth.

He was a prophet who seemed to speak about the Second Coming of Jesus with His saints - way, way beyond his own time.

So, in the first rapture, you see elements of the rapture of the church, e.g., taken to Heaven before judgment on the earth; preaching the Lord's coming again to encourage repentance and salvation.

Elijah is the next saint to be raptured:

2Ki 2:1 And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

2Ki 2:11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Elijah makes a few appearances on earth after his rapture:

- He and Moses are with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

- In the Book of Acts, two men are said to appear as Jesus ascends into Heaven, who tell the disciples that the Lord will return in like manner. We assume they are angels, but it is more likely they are Moses and Elijah.
- If Elijah is one of the two witnesses in The Revelation, he will again be rapture.

Elijah is a rapture-junkie!

Did Ezekiel get raptured?

Eze 3:12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!"

Eze 3:13 I also heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise.

Eze 3:14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

Eze 3:15 Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

Clearly, God transported Ezekiel from one place to another.

Isaiah was taken to Heaven, then returned to the earth.

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

Isa 6:2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isa 6:3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

Isa 6:4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.

Isa 6:7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

Isa 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

The first rapture in the New Testament is that of Philip the evangelist. Having just led the Ethiopian eunuch to faith in Jesus, the text says,

Act 8:36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

Act 8:37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Act 8:38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Act 8:39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

The apostle Paul was taken to Heaven, then returned to the earth:

2Co 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago - whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows - such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

2Co 12:3 And I know such a man - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows -

2Co 12:4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Twice Paul mentions that he was "caught up [raptured] to the third heaven" and received "visions and revelations of the Lord."

Paul's heavenly trip reminds us of Isaiah's throne room commission (Isaiah 6:1–13). Paul, via rapture, received a commission, message, and revelation that became the foundation for the unique purpose for the church during this age, "which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:5).

The next rapture is that of John in the Revelation:

Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Rev 4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

Based on the outline of the book given in chapter one of the Revelation, we see John as a type of the church being raptured before the Tribulation begins.

There's a rapture during the Tribulation. It's when the two witnesses are killed. As their bodies lie in state for the whole world to see and celebrate.

Rev 11:11 Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

Rev 11:12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

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."

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.

Let's be rapture ready!