

Coming vs. Rapture

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8/11/2024

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For Discussion: Finding Peace in a Fear-Mongering World (www.jonathanbrentner.com; Feb 19, 2024)

Dealing with the disturbing trends of today...

Finding Peace in a Fear-Mongering World – Jonathan Brentner Monday, 19 February 2024

A realistic look at our world is enough to generate much anxiety. The widespread wickedness, violence, government corruption, and continual rumors of WWII and/or terrorist attacks often set off alarms concerning our future well-being. I write as one who is not immune to the panic that comes from living amid the multiple threats

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As we consider all the disturbing trends going on, how can we find peace?

Jesus promised to rescue us before it gets really bad...

1 Thessalonians 4:17-88 – *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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

It is a comfort to know that before God pours out His wrath on the earth, He will rescue His bride.

Is the rapture of the church the same as the return of Jesus?

No... the return of the Lord is in two phases: first for the church and later to end the Tribulation and usher in His Millennial reign on earth.

Why do people often confuse the rapture of the church with the return of Jesus?

Bad eschatology (the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind).

- Amillennialists do not believe there will be a millennial reign of Christ so they consider the rapture to occur at “the end of time” ushering in the Eternal State.

How is the rapture different from the second coming of Christ?

There are unreconcilable differences in Scripture between the two phases of Jesus’ return...



	Rapture	Second Coming
Seeing Jesus:	Believers only	All people
Meeting Jesus:	In the air	On earth
Resurrection:	All believers	No one
The church:	Goes to heaven	Returns to earth
Judgment:	Believers’ works	Nations
Predictability:	Imminent	Tied to key events
Timing:	Pre-tribulation	Post-tribulation
Bible references:	Veiled in O.T.	Prophesied in O.T.
Satan:	No references	Satan will be bound

What distinguishes the two-passage pairs below?

Hebrews 9:28 – *Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

...rapture: Appearing to believers only

Revelation 1:7 – *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.*

...2nd coming: All will see Him

1 Thessalonians 4:17 – *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.*

...rapture: Meeting the Lord in the air

Zechariah 14:4 – *And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two*

...2nd coming: Jesus will set foot on earth

Colossians 3:4 – *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

...rapture: When believers are resurrected

Revelation 19:14-15 – *And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.*

...2nd coming: No one is resurrected

John 14:3 – *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that **where I am, there you may be also.***

...rapture: Believers go to heaven

1 Thessalonians 3:13 – *so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord **Jesus Christ with all His saints.***

...2nd coming: Believers come to earth

1 Peter 1:7 – *that the genuineness of your faith... **may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ***

...rapture: Believers' works are judged

Matthew 25:31-32 – *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. **All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.***

...2nd coming: Nations are judged

1 Thessalonians 5:2 – *For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes **as a thief in the night.***

...rapture: Imminent, without warning or prerequisite (so always be ready)

Daniel 12:11-13 – *“And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, go your way till the end; **for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.**”*

...2nd coming: Related to specific events

Why is the timing of Christ's 2nd coming known?

So that those who trust in Jesus during that time will have hope knowing their suffering is limited.

Amos 3:7 – *Surely the Lord God does nothing,*

Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Revelation 3:10 – *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will **keep you from the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

...rapture: Occurs before the tribulation

Revelation 19:11 – *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness **He judges and makes war.***

...2nd coming: Occurs at the end of the Tribulation

Micah 7:2 – ***The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net.***

...rapture: Veiled in the Old Testament

Daniel 2:44 – *And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.***

...2nd coming: Prophesied in Old Testament

2 Thessalonians 2:7 – *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until **He is taken out of the way.***

...rapture: Satan given more autonomy

Revelation 20:2 – *He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and **bound him for a thousand years***

...2nd coming: Satan is incarcerated

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- The Lord's return is in two phases... miss this and your eschatology is worthless.
- The rapture of the church is very different from the 2nd coming; we don't have to wait for "the end of time!"