

The Coming of Christ

By Conrad Barrett



*The Rapture –
when Jesus comes for His people.*

*The Great Tribulation –
seven years (Jacob's troubles)*

*The Second Coming –
when Jesus comes with His people*

Students of the Bible know it contains many promises that Jesus Christ will return. Not only did He say so, Himself, but many others including the prophets wrote about His coming again. Both Testaments are replete with information about His return and how it will actually happen.

Three specific things transpire on earth when Jesus does appear, but not at the same time. Some occur at least seven years apart. The first and most exciting event will be the **Rapture of Christians**. While the word "Rapture" does not appear as such in the Bible, it is described in many places. It simply means that Christians will be "taken up" or will be "caught up" to meet Jesus in the air to be forever with the Lord. This should be exciting for every Christian and something for which all Christians should look forward.

The second event happens at the time of the Rapture. **It is the resurrection of the dead bodies of Christians who have died before the time of the Rapture.** The Bible teaches that the souls of mankind will live on and on forever and will never die, but our bodies will either die or be changed. This change takes place at the Rapture and its effect will be instantaneous. Bodies of the Christian dead take on immortality at the time of this change and will be immortal forever.

The third is that **Jesus will come back to earth in person for the purpose of destroying the effects of Satan and all forces of evil and at that time set up His kingdom.** This is called the second coming of Christ when He actually comes back to earth in person. Unlike the Rapture when He only comes in the atmosphere or clouds area and from there calls His people from the earth; the Second Coming is different. He brings Christians back with Him at the Second Coming.

The following is my understanding of things which we should consider:

1. **The Rapture** – It simply is the sudden taking up of Christians from the earth. John 14: 3. Paul states in I Thess. 5:9 **"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.** Since Christians are already saved in a spiritual sense, the word salvation in this verse means being saved from something else, namely, the Great Tribulation which is coming to the world. In context that is what Paul is addressing. In chapter 4 of I Thessalonians, Paul gives a further explanation of how the Rapture actually happens. In gist, Christ comes and calls Christians who are living on earth at the time it happens to Himself and changes mortals into immortals instantly. The physically dead in Christ will rise first when their bodies and souls reunite. They will then be called to Christ, reunited in body and soul from all parts of the universe, wherever they have died or are buried. When Christians die, they only die physically and simultaneously their souls go immediately to Christ and leave behind only a lifeless body. At the Rapture the glorious change happens. That change does occur instantly. Every Christian from every place on earth or elsewhere who has experienced physical death will be affected by being a part of this resurrection. This is great news and is a marvelous promise. So, will there be a Rapture? Yes, absolutely, so that all prophesied things on this subject can happen in sequential order.
2. **The Great Tribulation** - The Great Tribulation is not included to be a time of trouble for all Christians, even though people saved during the Great Tribulation will have extreme difficulties. The Bible identifies the Great Tribulation as being a time of Jacob' troubles (Israel's troubles). The world system will inflict great pain on the Israeli people mainly because they were instrumental in producing Jesus.

At times they like Gentiles have been extremely rebellious against God, too. Prophetically and physically Jesus came through the Jewish people. Jesus told the Jews during His ministry that they would be hated by all nations because of Him, Matt. 24: 9. In reality, the hatred of the Jews is aimed directly at Jesus Christ and the Jews are the ones who are scorned because of Him. Too bad! The world system hates Jesus Christ but can never defeat Him. He will be the ultimate Conqueror of all political and social systems, and even religious systems. No doubt the Great Tribulation will extend to some degree to the whole world, but primarily its core of influence will be in and around Israel. Even the dreaded powers of the great Beast of Rev. 13 will directly bear upon the nation of Israel, but even in the worst of times, the Lord will help them. If the heads of world governments are wise, they too, will read the prophetic words of scripture and will join forces to protect the land of Israel and her people and because of their help for the Israeli people, God will in turn help them. This end-time conflict is more spiritual than military.

3. **The Second Coming** – There is a distinct difference in what happens at the Second Coming of Christ as it is compared to the Rapture. At the Rapture Christ comes for His people; at the Second Coming Jesus comes with His people. At the Rapture Jesus takes His people up and away from the earth; at the Second Coming Jesus brings His people back to the earth. At the Rapture Jesus never comes to the ground when He appears, but, at Second Coming He touches the ground and brings His people along with His angels back to establish His Kingdom.
4. He will then rule the earth for a thousand years in order to fulfill a promise, and then reigns eternally to fulfill another promise. At the Second Coming He destroys the antichrist, and the False Prophet and puts Satan in the bottomless pit and then proceeds to establish peace on earth and good will toward men. Both comings of Christ are exciting and seen to be seven years apart in order to fulfill prophecy. Be prepared for His coming because it will happen without further warning. His word and the relevant signs are now with us. “Watch and pray” are the words of Jesus, Himself.

Preparation for whatever may happen on our planet can be made by simply asking Jesus Christ, Creator of heaven and earth, to come into your life. Do it sincerely and do it now. Then follow the Lord with all your heart, mind and strength. Read His word; obey His word and pray. Be spiritually prepared for whatever may happen and whenever it may happen. Christians should have no worry, but should look forward to the coming of Christ with great anticipation. In the meantime He taught us to “occupy until He comes”.

Relevant Scriptures: Matthew 24,24; Luke 17; I Thessalonians; II Thessalonians; I Timothy 4; II Peter; Revelation 1-22.
Daniel 9-12; Ezekiel 37-38.

If you wish to receive Jesus as Savior,
and receive God’s promise of eternal life,
it will help you to pray like this:

Dear Heavenly Father,
I acknowledge that I am a sinner and worthy of death.
Lord, I believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the
penalty for my sin and that He rose from the dead and is alive today.
I ask you to forgive me of all my sins, purify my thoughts,
words, and deeds that I may turn from my sins and be more like Christ.

Now I ask that Jesus come into my heart and become Lord and Savior of my life.
Thank you Lord, for hearing my prayer, and entering my heart this very moment.
In the name of Jesus, Amen

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