

THE RAPTURE

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Section 1 - The End of the World Age

Elsewhere, based on (a) the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:1-44, Mark 13:13-14:1, and Luke 21:5-38), and (b) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, I have described the *End of the World Age* as consisting of the following events: (1) Parousia or Messiah's 2nd Advent, when He appears in the sky at the head of a host of heavenly angels, (2) the General Resurrection, in which the dead are raised from their graves, (3) the Rapture of the saints, in which they are raised up to meet Messiah in the sky, (4) Armageddon, in which Messiah battles and subjugates His enemies, rebellious men and nations, and (5) the destruction of the Old Heavens and the Old Earth, which is the **Desolation** resulting from the 2nd instance of the Abomination of Desolation and ends this current age.

Section 2 - Rapture Passages

Here are three passages on which much discussion of the Rapture is based.

Subsection 2A - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 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. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 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. 16 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: 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: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (KJV 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Subsection 2B - 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 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. (KJV1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

Subsection 2C - John 14:3

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (KJV John 14:3)

Section 3 - Comment

In my opinion, all these passages fit comfortably into my sequence for the End of the World Age. Messiah is currently in Heaven preparing a place for His Bride, the faithful believers of all time. At the appropriate hour, which is known only to Messiah's Father,¹

- The Parousia or 2nd Coming of Messiah will occur, which will be announced by three sounds (a) a shout, (b) the voice of the archangel, and (c) the sound of a trumpet, after which Messiah will appear in the sky with a host of heavenly angels.
- The General Resurrection will occur next and consist of raising the dead of all ages from their graves.
- The Rapture of the Saints will occur next and will consist of the gathering up of both (a) the resurrected believers and (b) the living believers into the sky to be with Him forever,
- The Battle of Armageddon will occur next and consist of Messiah and His host of Angels subduing His enemies, (a) the godless men who rejected Messiah as their Lord and Savior, and (b) the godless nations who reject Messiah as the King of kings and Lord of Lords, whom God has given absolute sovereignty over them.
- The Destruction of the Old Heavens and the Old Earth, which will bring the current age to an end.

¹ There are two possibilities here. (1) Jesus the man is speaking about God, who is His father in Heaven or (2) God-the-Son, the 2nd person of the Trinity, is speaking about God-the-Father, the 1st person of the Trinity. Some commentators who believe the latter are puzzled by Jesus' statement that only His Father knows the hour of the Parousia because all three persons of the triune Godhead are regarded as omniscient. There is a simple explanation for it. Each of the three persons of the Godhead possesses his own mind, and they do not necessarily share all their thoughts with one another. God-the-Father conceived of Creation and put the design and script for it in the Decrees of God, which is the Book with Seven Seals that the apostle John saw God-the-Son take from the right hand of God-the-Father during John's visit to the throne room of God (see Revelation 5). Subsequently God-the-Son and God-the-Holy Spirit, who do only what the God-the-Father tells them to do in the Decrees of God, (a) made and energized Creation and enlivened its creatures in conformance with the Father's design and (b) are now sustaining and managing them in accordance with God-the-Father's script. If God-the-Son does not know the hour of the Parousia, God-the-Father did not put it in his instructions.

Presumably, the end of this age will be followed by (1) the Day of Judgment, (2) the Marriage of the Lamb, (3) the Creation of New Heavens and a New Earth, and (4) the Descent of New Jerusalem to the New Earth.