

"The World, One Second after the Rapture"

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction: I was listening to a radio talk show while we were away and I heard a discussion about life on the earth after the rapture and as I listened, I realized that many people have the wrong theology when it comes to the start of the Tribulation. There have been many books written that describe the events that take place after the rapture and they can be very exciting to read. The show that I listened to had a guest speaker who painted a picture with his words of what life will be like when the church is gone. He said that the rapture will devastate the world. Millions upon millions of people will be missing. He said that planes will be left with no pilots and they will crash. He made mention of the people who will be driving cars and trucks that will crash immediately after the rapture. He went on to talk about how the economy will crash and the world will just basically plunge into a period of chaos.

This all gets the attention of people and it makes for some exciting messages that have been preached from the pulpits of the world. But is it TRUE? Today I want to look at the Scriptures and see if we can get a clear picture of what life will be like after the rapture takes place.

I. The Event

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

This is the event. The dead in Christ will be resurrected with glorified bodies and then the living believers will be changed and then caught away instantly into the presence of the Lord.

Notice 1 Thessalonians 4:17 again.

The words "caught up" in verse 17 come from the Greek word "Harpazo" which means to take suddenly and vehemently, often with violence and speed or quickly and without warning. The idea is to take by force with a sudden swoop and usually indicates a force which cannot be resisted.

There are critics that declare that the Rapture is false teaching because the word "Rapture" is not in the Bible. They are correct that it is not in the Bible but some research helps us to understand where the word came from.

In addressing their argument, we must keep in mind that the Latin Vulgate was the primary Bible translation utilized for one thousand years preceding the Reformation. In short, the Latin Vulgate "reigned" as the primary Bible translation longer than any other translation. In the Latin Vulgate the Greek word "harpazo" was translated "rapiemur" which is clearly related to our English terms "Rapture" or "raptured".

Paul also writes about the Rapture in 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

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.*

⁵³ *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

II. The Saved

What does the Bible say about the number of people who will be saved by believing the Gospel? There are two passages that shine light upon this.

Matthew 13:18-23

¹⁸ *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*

¹⁹ *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

²⁰ *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

²¹ *Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

²² *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*

²³ *But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

There are two points to see here.

1. According to the Parable of the Sower, only 1 out of 4 that hear the Gospel will be saved.
2. As time moves on, we see the numbers decrease from a hundredfold down to thirtyfold.

Let us look at another passage.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Jesus goes on in this sermon and reveals more.

Matthew 7:21-23

²¹ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

I believe that we can see several pictures of how “FEW” will be saved in two significant events of the Bible.

1. The Flood

Genesis 6:5, 8

⁵ *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

⁸ *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*

1 Peter 3:20

²⁰ Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

2. Sodom and Gomorrah

Genesis 19:14-16

¹⁴ And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

¹⁵ And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

¹⁶ And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

In Noah's day 8 people out of several billion escaped the judgment and in Sodom only Lot and his family escaped the judgment. In both situations there were only a FEW that were saved.

The question to ask then is, "Has the depravity of man improved over time?"

III. The Economy

Many teach that when the Rapture happens that it will crash the economy because of all the people that are taken. The previous point helps us to understand that there will not be as many taken as people believe. A close look at the Scriptures will also help us to see that the economy will continue to function right up to the end of the Tribulation.

Revelation 13:16-17

¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Those who do not receive the mark will not be permitted to buy or sell. This tells us there will be an economy that is regulated by the government of the Anti-Christ. We do not see the total collapse of the economy until we get to Revelation 18.

Revelation 18:1-13

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

⁶ Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

⁷ How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

⁸ Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

⁹ And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

¹⁰ Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

¹¹ And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

¹² The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

¹³ And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

IV. The Mindset of the Unbelieving World

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

² *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

³ *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

Before the judgments of the Tribulation begin to fall, the Seal, Trumpets and Bowls, the unbelieving world will have a false sense of peace and safety. If the economy collapsed and millions upon millions of people vanished, they would not be claiming peace and security.

Let me touch on one more thought if I could.

V. The Children

There are many who say that when the Rapture happens that all the children under the age of accountability will be raptured with the Church. They say this will cause great devastation and panic throughout the world. I would agree that if this happened it would devastate the world. What would be the explanation? The problem with this teaching is that there are no verses to back it up. There is no verse that tells us that all the children under the age of accountability will be raptured away. Someone may say, "Would a loving God allow the children to remain here for the Tribulation?" My response to the question would be, "Did He take all the children out of the world before the flood? Did He take all the children out of Sodom and Gomorrah before He rained down fire and brimstone?" The answer to both questions is, "NO!" There may have been millions of children who died in the flood and we have no idea how many died under the rain of fire and brimstone in Sodom and Gomorrah. We can be sure that those who died under the age of accountability would have been saved under the grace of God.

Let me give you my thought on what will happen at the Rapture. I believe only the children of believers will be raptured away. Why do I say this?

1 Corinthians 7:13-14

¹³ And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

*¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; **but now are they holy.***

The children of the saved are HOLY in the eyes of God.

Conclusion:

In the flood only Noah's sons were taken into the ark. At Sodom and Gomorrah only Lot's daughters were brought out.

Based upon what the Bible says there are many people who claim to be believers but are not. There are few true believers in the world and according to the Words of Jesus there will be less and less as times moves forward.