



CORE CONVICTIONS AT CORNERSTONE

The Pretribulation Rapture

Living with Hope as We Await His Return

Selected Scripture

INTRODUCTION

What We Believe at Cornerstone

A

We Are in the Last Days

Acts 2:17

“In the last days, God says, I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind ...”
The next great event is the return of Christ.

B

We Are Pre-Millennial

Revelation 20:6

Christ returns before the Millennium and the Eternal State. “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection.”

C

We Hold to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture

1 Thess. 1:9–10

The church is raptured before Daniel’s seventieth week — rescued from the coming wrath of God.

Defining “The Rapture”



THE WORD

The English word rapture comes from the Latin *raptura*, which in Latin Bibles translates the Greek *harpazō* — to seize or catch up quickly.

THE POSITION

The pretribulation view asserts the church will be raptured before Daniel’s seventieth week. Since the whole tribulation is the “wrath of God,” the church must be rescued beforehand.

1 Thessalonians 1:9–10

God’s promise that the church will escape His coming wrath.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:23

The Five Orders of Resurrection



Scripture reveals five distinct groups, resurrected at five different times.

1

OT Saints

Daniel 12:2

2

The Church

1 Thess 4:16–17

3

**Tribulation
Saints**

Revelation 20:4

4

**Millennium
Saints**

Isaiah 65:20

Glorified Bodies — and Earthly Bodies



Glorified Bodies

Three subgroups: the Church, resurrected or changed at the rapture (1 Thess 4:13–18; 1 Cor 15:21–23, 51–53); Tribulation martyrs, resurrected after Christ returns (Rev 20:4–6); and OT saints, resurrected at the same time (Dan 12:2).



Earthly Bodies

Two subgroups who survived the tribulation and enter the kingdom in natural bodies: believing Gentiles and believing Jews.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:23

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Isaiah 65:20

5

**The
Unrighteous**

John 5:28–29

TURNING TO THE TEXT

Two Scriptural Reasons We Hold to a Pre-Tribulational Rapture

The Promise of the Rapture · The Comfort of the Rapture

REASON ONE

The Promise of the Rapture

1 Corinthians 15:51–52

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet ... and we will be changed.”

The same trumpet-sound resurrection described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17.

Revelation 3:10

“Because you have kept my word which produces perseverance, I will keep you from the hour of trial.”

Why this verse carries biblical weight for the pretribulational view.

“Kept From” — What the Word Means

Kept, Not Merely Guarded

“Keep” means to reserve, preserve, guard — used of the guards at Jesus’ tomb (Matt 27:36) and Peter kept in prison (Acts 12:5). But those describe keeping over a grave or in a jail.

“From,” Not “Over” or “In”

In Revelation 3:10, the keeping is not over or in — it is from. Just as John 17:15 keeps us from the evil one’s influence, here we are kept from the hour of trial itself.

“Out Of” — A Removal

The Greek preposition ek (“from”) indicates “out of” — showing removal. The hour of trial is a specific season coming to test the whole world: the tribulation.

REASON TWO

The Comfort of the Rapture



1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

“... that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope ... Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

Asleep, Not Gone

When a believer dies, their soul is immediately with Christ — their body is only “asleep,” awaiting the resurrection.

Acts 7:59–60 — Stephen: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ... he fell asleep.”

John 11:11 — “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him.”

Three Reasons for Hope in the Rapture

i

Jesus' Resurrection

v.14

As certainly as Jesus died and rose, so those asleep in Him will rise — He rose for them.

ii

Jesus' Revelation

v.15

“The Word of the Lord” is a special OT expression of prophetic authority — God’s Word, not man’s.

iii

Jesus' Return

v.16–17

He descends with a shout, an archangel’s voice, and a trumpet — and gathers His own.

The Return — Sudden, Certain, Near



The Bridegroom Custom

The shout, archangel's voice, and trumpet echo the Jewish custom of a bridegroom returning after preparing a home, ending the betrothal and beginning the marriage celebration (2 Cor 11:2).

John 5:25 — “An hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live.”

Any Moment — Imminency

“We who are alive” — Paul includes himself among the living. Jesus could come at any time.

Harpazō & Rapiō

The Greek harpazō implies a quick, forceful action — Jesus' power. The Latin rapiō means “to seize quickly,” giving us the word rapture.

A KEY DISTINCTION

“Meet Him in the Clouds” vs. His Return to Earth

1 Thess 4:17

Believers caught up to meet the Lord
in the clouds.

Revelation 4–18

The church is not mentioned once
during the tribulation.

Revelation 19:14–15

The saints are seen returning with
Christ to the earth.

Two different comings, in two different directions — evidence of a rapture distinct from the visible Second Coming.

THE PROMISE STANDS FOREVER

“So We Shall Always Be with the Lord”

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.”



This union with Christ is not temporary — it is permanent. What a comfort this is!



A CLOSING WORD

Comfort One Another

“Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 4:18

"Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."

Martin Luther
