

sians 3:1 or a spiritual resurrection of the cause for which they died. There is no reason to conclude that it is a bodily resurrection. Second, the Bible makes it clear that Christ reigns now. He now has all authority (Matthew 28:18), His kingdom exists now (Colossians 1:13) and it is not an earthly kingdom (John 18:36). Thus, the "first resurrection" of Revelation refers to martyred saints spiritually reigning with Christ until the end of the age.

The false doctrine of "The Rapture" is dangerous because it relies upon a misconception of the nature of the church and Christ's kingdom. The church and the kingdom are the same and exist now. All who truly submit their lives to Christ as King are part of His kingdom and can look forward to that wonderful final Day of Judgment when His church will be **"caught up"** to meet Him in the air.

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BULLETIN OF THE OLSEN PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings



Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:
Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:
Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:
Kyle Pope

Waiting for the Rapture?

By Kyle Pope

A few years ago a religious group predicted a certain day on which they had calculated that "The Rapture" would occur. To their disappointment and embarrassment the day passed with no fulfillment of their prediction. Though these men and women most certainly believed in what they had predicted, it was their misunderstanding of Scripture that led to their failure. In fact, that same misunderstanding will lead many in the religious world to the same disappointment.

What Is "The Rapture"?

The careful Bible student will ask this question because of the fact that the word is never used in Scripture. The phrase "The Rapture" refers to a doctrine taught in the world, which is tied into various false doctrines regarding an earthly millennial (i.e. 1000 year) reign.

Many teach that prior to a period of intense tribulation Christ will return only for the church. At which time the righteous dead will be resurrected and together with the living saints be "raptured" (i.e. caught up) with Christ to await the end of the "Tribulation." At that time (so the theory says) Christ will return with all the saints to reign on the earth 1000 years. At the end of this earthly reign (they claim) there will be the final resurrection and judgement.

What Does the Bible Say?

Undeniably the Bible teaches a type of rapture (i.e. being "caught up") with the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 the apostle Paul responds to concerns the brethren had about saints that had died. He reassures them that those alive won't—**"Precede those who are asleep"** (vs. 15). Instead, **"The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. 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"** (vss. 16-17).

How does this differ from the false doctrine of "The Rapture"? First, notice the occasion: **"The coming of the Lord"** (vs. 15). Hebrews 9:27-28 makes it very clear that resurrection will be followed by **"judgement,"** and the Lord's second coming by **"salvation."** The "rapture" doctrine claims judgement follows resurrection by over 1000 years. Further, notice the declaration that, **"The dead in Christ will rise first"** (vs 16). The Bible makes it clear that although the saints may be first in succession, the occasion for the resurrection of the just and unjust is the same. John 5:28, 29 speak of it as "The hour ... in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice." The passage then refers to both the righteous and the unrighteous. Even in 1 Thessalonians the very next chapter (still in the same context) speaks of this occasion as the **"Day of the Lord"** (vs 2) which comes **"as a thief in the night"** (vs 2), from which **"they shall not escape"** (vs 3). According to Scripture both the righteous and the wicked will face judgement when the Lord returns in connection with the saints being **"caught up."**



Olsen Park church of Christ

Proponents of this doctrine often appeal to two passages to support this concept: Matthew 24:40,41 and Revelation 20:5. The first comes in the midst of Jesus' discussion with His disciples about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Reference is made to those **"taken"** and those **"left."** Although in parts of this passage Jesus points ahead to the final judgement, much of this passage deals with the destruction of Jerusalem. Notice the promise **"This generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled"** (Matthew 24:34). The reference to those **"taken"** and **"left"** refers to those present during the destruction of Jerusalem who were led away captive as can be seen in Luke's account of this same teaching (21:24).

The second text they look to, which is perhaps a little more difficult to interpret, speaks of a **"first resurrection"** in which souls beheaded for their testimony live and reigned with Christ (Revelation 20:4-6). First, we must note that there is no reference in this text to a bodily resurrection. This is speaking of a spiritual resurrection similar to Ephesians 2:4-6, Colos-