

# The Full Preterist View on the Rapture

**NOTE:** This reflects the *Full Preterist*, or *Realized Eschatologist* which is a heretical viewpoint due to its denial of the future return of Christ and the resurrection. This is not the view of the *partial* or *"inconsistent"* Preterist.

*"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."  
(1 Thes. 4:15-17)*

## "We"

"We" in this passage refers to Paul, Silvanus, Timothy, and the brethren in their time - not to "us" as the readers in the present time. Keep in mind that the New Testament was written *for* us, not *to* us.

Now notice what Paul wrote in this passage, ". . . we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord." They were expecting of an imminent coming in their lifetime. The text does not read, "we might all be changed. . ." or, "we might not all sleep. . ." Was Paul inspired to be wrong?

## The Last Trumpet

There appears to be a connection between 1 Thes. 4:15-17 (the "rapture" passage), Matt. 24:30-31 (the Olivett Discourse), 1 Cor. 15:50-5 (the "Last Trump"), and Rev. 11:15 (the 7th Trump) as being the same event because of the last "trumpet of God":

*"And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, the all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the our winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Matt. 24:30-31).*

*"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:50-52).*

*"And the seventh (trumpet) angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).*

This can be none other than the trump of God of 1 Thess.4:16, and the last trump of 1 Cor.15:52. If not, then do the scriptures teach two separate gatherings preceded by two universal trumpets? Why make them all the more confusing (a fact evidenced by the attempt to divide Matthew 24), by placing them both at a coming of Christ, a consummation of an age, a gathering together of the elect in the clouds, and an inheriting of the kingdom, (Matt.8:11-12, 24:3, 30-31, 34; 1 Cor.15:23-24, 50-52; 1 Thess.4:14-17)? It should be readily apparent that the trumpet is one and the same. Equally certain is the fact that Matthew 24 places the sounding of that trumpet at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, before that first-century generation passed, (Matt.24:31,34).

If we don't relocate this prophecy of Matt. 24 into our future, then it was a prophecy to them, who were there at the Mount of Olives, when Jesus spoke, that is: in "that generation" (Matt. 24:34). The gathering seems to be the event known as "the rapture." If not, why would the same language be used in both verses? If this language can be dismissed as an event other than the "rapture" then why take anything as referring to that event? Notice that this "gathering" was to take place in that generation . . . in the first century.

## "Generation"

*"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."*

The Greek word here is "genea." Some say that Jesus was speaking to a generation that was not going to exist for thousands of years in the future ("the generation that sees these signs begin"). But the usage in every other part of the Bible is clearly speaking of that first century group to whom Jesus spoke.

Others claim that the whole Jewish "race" was in view. But there is a Greek word, "genos", for "race" (see Acts 7:19; 17:28; Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:5; and 1 Peter 2:9).

The following are passages in Scripture where the same "generation" term is used, which of these verses refers to a time in their future?

### ***Matt. 11:16 (Luke 7:31)***

*"But what shall I compare this generation?"*

Jesus cannot compare "this" generation of the wicked with any other generation.

### ***Matt. 12:39-45***

*"But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craved for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet. The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something is greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation."*

Clearly, Jesus was speaking to the Jewish leaders, who were seeking for a sign at that time.

### ***Matt. 17:17 (Mark 9:19 & Luke 9:41)***

*"And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me."*

Jesus was clearly already "putting up" with that first century generation.

**Matt. 23:36**

*"Truly I say to you, all these things shall be upon this generation."*

Jesus pronounced His "woes" on Israel's first century religious leaders in this chapter.

**Mark 8:38-9:1**

*"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." He was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."*

The Lord was talking to His disciples when He said this.

**Luke 11:50, 51 (Matt. 23:36)**

*"In order that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation."*

It was Jerusalem (not the Roman Catholic Church!) that was charged with the blood of the Prophets (see Rev. 17-18).

**Luke 17:25**

*"But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."*

It was those first century Jews that rejected Christ, for it was to them that He came to preach.

**Acts 2:40**

*"And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!'"*

How could they be saved out of a generation they did not belong to?

**Phil. 2:14-16**

*"Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain."*

How could they be "among" a future generation?

### **Heb. 3:9-11**

*"Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said 'They always go astray in their hearts; and they did not know My way'; as I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter MY rest.'"*

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years with Moses, no other generation did this.

The language of the Thessalonian letter is parallel to that of Matthew 24, Jesus' description of His return after the Great Tribulation (the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD). Jesus said that that generation would see all these things fulfilled (Matthew 24:34). Why do some insist that "this generation" in Matthew 24 must be some future generation or race? To say that "this generation" (or, for that matter, "at hand" or "quickly" or "near" or "at the door" or "coming quickly" or "delay no longer") meant two thousand years (so far!) is to put the integrity of the New Testament at risk.

### **The Rapture: Physical or Spiritual?**

*"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." - Matthew 24:30-31*

In biblical language "clouds" are symbolic of God's wrath and judgment against the enemies of His people. For instance, the Lord said that He would ride into Egypt on a cloud and punish them:

*"The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it." - Isaiah 19:1*

The Lord did not literally ride on a cloud, the Egyptian's hearts did not melt within them, but Egypt did receive this judgment at the hands of the Assyrians (Isaiah 20:1-6). The idea of Jesus physically coming on the clouds would have been contrary to the nature of their understanding of the OT prophets. . . this language was used as a way of conveying God's message of wrath to come.

In 1 Thessalonians 4-5 Paul spoke of the same coming of the Lord to gather the saints. How many comings of the Lord, with his angels, in fire, in power and glory, to gather the saints, are there in the NT? Just ONE! In verse 13, Christ clarifies that this is what will occur in that generation when He comes. The significance of this is that when Christ came in the clouds, he literally, yet spiritually, gathered those that were alive to be caught up in the kingdom with Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ spiritually returned with the believers to the earth, to ever be with them. This was a spiritual event that was visibly manifest in the destruction of Jerusalem.

### **Caught up in "the Air"**

What does the word "air" mean here? Is it in our atmosphere or the air we breathe? We can compare Scripture with Scripture to arrive at a conclusion.

*"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air," - Ephesians 2:2*

The word "air" is another word for heavenly or spiritual realm. Satan was called "the prince of the power of the air." If that is the same "air" where the saints were to meet and be gathered, then there is no necessity for us to believe that the rapture gathering and meeting was to be physical or visible anymore than Satan's kingdom was physical or visible. The "gathering together" is in the heavenly places in Christ - the spiritual kingdom of God. Being caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air is the end-of-the-age gathering together of God's elect. It was accomplished when the faithful remnant of Jewish believers with the ingrafted Gentiles was transformed into Christ's new spiritual Israel when the old covenant was taken away in AD 70.

*"that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him."  
Ephesians 1:10*

## **Conclusion**

The word "rapture" is nowhere to be found in the Bible, neither is it taught there. There is no Scriptural support for it. When Jesus Christ returned in 70 AD He gathered the elect of all the ages into His kingdom. We as believers now live in the kingdom of God (Colossians 3:1-4). May we learn to focus on the spiritual and not the physical.

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