



In recent years, the concept of the “rapture” has consumed much of Christian conversation. The best-selling book series *Left Behind* has contributed significantly to shaping the public perspective on the subject, though the series claims to be fictional in nature. Tonight, we want to be responsible to build our hope of the rapture upon the trustworthy foundation of God’s Word. Though the term “rapture” itself is not a biblical term, it is nonetheless a biblical concept at the heart of God’s plan of salvation.

Defining “Rapture”

- Revelation 1:7; 22:7, 12, 20—The bookends of Revelation are clearly intentional about reminding us that Jesus is _____ and that He is coming _____.
- John 14:1-3—Jesus’ apparent eagerness is motivated by His desire to take us to be with Him for eternity.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17—Pointing to the 2nd coming, Paul describes believers as being _____, a Greek term that has connotations of suddenness. (The Latin word used here in the Latin Vulgate is the term from which we get “rapture” today.)
- Rather than being an entirely separate event, the biblical concept of “rapture” is the reception of God’s people to Himself at the 2nd _____ of Jesus.

What will Jesus’ 2nd Coming Be Like?

- Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7; Mathew 25:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18—According to these verses, Jesus’ return will be an event that is:
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 - ▶ v _____
 - ▶ g _____
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Secret or Sudden?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4—When Paul describes Jesus' second coming as a "thief in the night," he is clearly referring to the _____ of His return, not the _____ of His return.
- What did Jesus Himself teach?
 - ▶ Matthew 24:23-27—He taught us to be wary about _____ regarding His 2nd coming, especially the manner of it.
 - ▶ Matthew 24:30-31—He emphasized that all would see the glory of His coming.
 - ▶ Matthew 24:36, 42-44—He reiterated that the unknown aspect of His return was its _____.
 - ▶ In other words, the coming of Jesus, as compared to a thief, would be a sudden event and not a secret one.

What About "Left Behind"?

- Matthew 24:37-41—The context of these verses is emphasizing the thief-like nature of the _____ of Jesus' return.
- Noah's day (Mt. 24:37-39) aptly illustrates the _____ arrival of an unexpected event, not a secret one.
- 2 Peter 3:4, 10—Peter definitely understood that though the coming of Jesus would be unexpected like a thief, it would be an event that could not be a secret.

Keeping Watch

- Why the suspense? Matthew 24:42-44—Jesus wants us to be in a constant state of expectancy, that is, to be in _____ with Him at all times.

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