

# Rapture Question #3: How is the Rapture a “Mystery”?

Recommended: Rapture Question #1: Is the word “Rapture” found in the Bible?

The previous article Rapture Question #2: What Does the Term “In Christ” Mean?” pointed out that Post-Tribulation proponents believe that since the 1 Thessalonians passage describes the resurrection of the dead, this must be referring to the resurrection which occurs at the 2nd Coming. The first issue with this view is that only the dead “in Christ” are resurrected and this term only refers to members of the Body of Christ.

A second issue with believing this to be the resurrection at the 2nd Coming is regarding the word “mystery” being used in [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#). The English word “Mystery” is translated from the Greek word *mystērion* μυστήριον. It is a secret that hitherto has not been revealed.

## What is the Biblical Definition of a Mystery?

In [Colossians 1:26](#) Paul indicates that a “mystery” is something that had been hidden from past generations, but is later revealed to the saints.

In a similar way, Paul explains in [Ephesians 3:2-6](#) that the “mystery” that *“the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel”* was revealed to him by Jesus who *“made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is NOW revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”*

In **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** Paul then reveals another “mystery” when he states: *“Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*<sup>1</sup>

### **Was the Coming of the Lord Revealed in the Old Testament?**

This event (the Rapture of the Church) was unknown until Paul revealed it to the Church by revelation directly from Jesus Christ. This is very important, because the 2nd Coming and the resurrection of the just and the unjust were clearly discussed in the Old Testament.

In **Daniel 7:13-14**, Daniel states *“I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”*

Zechariah describes the coming of the Lord in **Zechariah 14:4-5** in which He stands on the Mount of Olives and it divides in two. In verse 5 it states *“...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with him.”*

**Daniel 12:2** describes the resurrection that will occur at the “end of days.” *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt...v13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the **end of days.**”*

So the “Mystery” that Paul revealed in **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** could NOT be referring to the resurrection that occurs at the

2nd Coming because the 2nd Coming was clearly described BEFORE the Church even came into existence, and therefore, wasn't an undisclosed mystery.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Even though Paul doesn't specifically state the dead "in Christ" in this passage, at the beginning of this Epistle to the Corinthians, he indicates that he is writing it to "*the Church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints which are in Achaia.*" He is writing to the believers who by definition are "in Christ."

Next: The Rapture Question #4: Is the Rapture Imminent?

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# Rapture Question #2: What Does the Term "In Christ" Mean?

Recommended: Rapture Question #1: Is the word "Rapture" found in the Bible.

One of the main arguments put forth to support a Post-Tribulation Rapture is [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) where it is asserted that since the dead are being raised this must be the Resurrection which happens at the 2nd Coming of Christ. However, they ignore one very important detail—not all of the dead will be raised at the Rapture. Paul makes a point of indicating that it is only the dead IN CHRIST who are being raised at this time.

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,*

*with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” 1 Corinthians 15:18* also describes believers who have died as those which are *“fallen asleep in Christ.”*

### **Who are the Dead “in Christ”?**

The term “In Christ” is used numerous times in the New Testament where it refers to believers who make up the Body of Christ, the “Church” the Ekklesia of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** describes what happens when a person becomes a believer– *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

**Romans 12:5** declares *“So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”*

Another passage where this is shown is in **Romans 16:7** which states, *“Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.”* Paul indicates here that Andronicus and Junia were “in Christ” before he was, meaning that they were believers before Paul became a believer.

Other references to check out are:

Romans 8:1; Romans 16:3, 9; 1 Corinthians 3:1; 2 Corinthians 12:2; Galatians 1:22; Galatians 3:28; Philippians 1:1; Philippians 4:21; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Peter 5:14; Philemon 1:23 and Philippians 4:21.

### **When did the Church begin?**

In **Matthew 17:18**, Jesus states *“Upon this rock (himself, the cornerstone) I WILL build my Ekklesia (Church).”* “I WILL build” is translated from the Greek word οἰκοδομήσω which is in the **Future Tense**.

The most important part of the Greek verb is the ending of the verb which tells us more than one thing. What is important in this instance is the sigma **σ**. This is called a tense formative. The sigma is the tense formative that tells us the verb is in the future tense. At the time Jesus spoke these words, what he was speaking of was still something that would happen in the future. The Ekklesia could not have existed before this. Future means future.

In **1 Corinthians 12:13**, Paul describes the means by which we enter into the Body of Christ. ***“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”***

So, when did this happen? The matter of when the Church began rests squarely on when the first believers were baptized into the Body of Christ. The Church could not have existed until this began to occur.

In **Acts 1:5** just before ascending into Heaven, Jesus states ***“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”*** So even at the time of the ascension, the Church had not yet begun.

Just as Jesus stated, a short time later in **Acts 2** a total of 120 people (including the 12 Apostles, Mary the Mother of Jesus, the brothers of Jesus and other un-named women) were in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost just as Jesus had promised.

### **When is the Church complete?**

In **Romans 11:25** Paul tells the Roman believers, ***“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”*** The church will continue until the final believer has become a part of the body of Christ. The Rapture of the

Body of Christ will occur when the Body of Christ is complete. Then soon after that, the partial blindness of Israel will be removed.

The Old Testament saints are not included in the Rapture because they are not part of the Body of Christ, they are not "in Christ." They are resurrected at the 2nd Coming of Christ along with those who become believers AFTER the Rapture occurs (which are often called "tribulation saints") and before the 2nd Coming of Christ.

(For more information on the identity of the Church, please see "The Church in the Wilderness.")

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## **Rapture Question #1: Is the Word "Rapture" Found in the Bible?**

As many uninformed people point out, the word “Rapture” does not occur in the “Bible.” They are only right in the fact that it doesn’t appear in the ENGLISH translation of the Bible. However, It **does** occur in the Latin translation of the Bible.

**Q.** Is the word  
“Rapture” Found in  
the Bible?

**A.** Yes! It is found in  
the Latin Translation  
of the Bible

And, it is the Latin  
translation of the  
Greek word Harpazo!

The word Rapture comes from the Latin word rapiemur. Raptus is the past participle of rapio, and our English words “rapt” and “rapture” stem from this past participle.<sup>1</sup> It appears in the following New Testament verses:

**Revelation 12:5** “et peperit filium masculinum qui recturus erit omnes gentes in virga ferrea et **raptus** est filius eius ad Deum et ad thronum eius”

**Revelation 12:5** “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was **caught up** unto God, and to his throne.”

**2 Corinthians 12:2** “scio hominem in Christo ante annos quattuordecim sive in corpore nescio sive extra corpus nescio Deus scit **raptum** eiusmodi usque ad tertium caelum”

**2 Corinthians 12:2** “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one **caught up** to the third heaven.

**12:4** “quoniam **raptus** est in paradisum et audivit arcana verba quae non licet homini loqui”

**12:4** “How that he was **caught up** into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

**Acts 8:39** “cum autem ascendissent de aqua Spiritus Domini **rapuit** Philippum et amplius non vidit eum eunuchus ibat enim per viam suam gaudens”

**Acts 8:39** “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord **caught away** Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more...”

**1 Thessalonians 4:17** “deinde nos qui vivimus qui relinquimur simul **rapiemur** cum illis in nubibus obviam Domino in aera et sic semper cum Domino erimus”

**1 Thessalonians 4:17** “Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

In the original Greek, the word that is translated “caught up” is ἀρπάζω (harpazo), “to take away by force.” The definition of “Harpazo” is:

- 1) to seize, carry off by force
- 2) to seize on, claim for one’s self eagerly
- 3) to snatch out or away<sup>2</sup>

Philip is an interesting example of someone being caught away. In Acts 8, there is the account of the Ethiopian Eunuch who was traveling along trying to understand Isaiah 53:7,8. The Eunuch asked Philip what this passage meant. After Philip explained it to him, the Eunuch asked to be baptized. Philip agreed and baptized him, then immediately after the Eunuch was baptized, Philip was “caught away.”

**Acts 8:39** “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord **caught away** Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”

“Caught away” in this passage uses the Greek word “Harpazo.” Philip disappeared and then was “found” or “seen to be present” in Azotus. (Acts 8:40). I think it is an interesting comparison that when we are raptured as believers, WE will be

found in the presence of the Lord!

Conclusion: The word "Rapture" and "Harpazo" are found in the Bible.

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.khouse.org/articles/2002/444/print/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?-Strongs=G726&t=KJV>

Next: The Rapture Question #2: What does the term "In Christ" mean?