

End-Times Truth: The Rapture Reveals a Split Church

There are several resurrections and raptures in the Bible. I cannot understand those who argue that because there is no mention of the word “rapture” in the Bible they do not believe in it. They only believe in the Second Coming of the Lord. Some arguments are no arguments at all. The word “Bible” is not in the Bible either, so does that mean there is no Bible? Quite ridiculous.

Rapture means “a catching away.” Here then are the raptures: In the Old Testament Enoch was raptured (Gen. 5:24), then later Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), which are types and shadows of a pre-tribulation and post-tribulation harvest. We know that Jesus was resurrected and also caught away or raptured, and following Him were the many Old Testament saints who had to have been raptured after they came out of their graves and were resurrected, for no man can physically die twice in the sense of being disintegrated. Philip the evangelist was also translated, which in essence is a rapture. Finally, those in Christ who are part of the firstfruits (Rev. 14:4) will be caught away or raptured before the Great Tribulation, and the elect of God, or the Tribulation saints, will be raptured at the end of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:14). And don't forget the two witnesses who were also resurrected and then raptured for all to see in Revelation 11:11-12. Without a doubt, there are several raptures in the Bible. How exciting!

I believe the Scriptures are clear that just as there was a firstfruits resurrection and rapture of Old Testament saints (Matt. 27:51-53), there is a firstfruits resurrection and rapture of New Testament saints (1 Thess. 4:13-18), and a post-tribulation harvest of saints, called here “God's elect” (Matt. 24:29-31). The firstfruits are raptured and resurrected before the great tribulation (Rev 14:1-5), and the second

company of saints are reaped after the tribulation. They are called "the harvest of the earth" (Rev 14:14-16). These are not Jews as has been commonly taught.

It is also clear that the 144,000 in Revelation 14 are not Israel either. They are before the throne on heavenly Mt. Zion while, in the same chapter, the Tribulation is going on and saints are being martyred (Rev. 14:12-14). Neither are they the sealed 144,000 Israelites of Revelation 7 who are protected against God's wrath for the day of the Lord. How could they be in heaven and then return to earth to be sealed and protected against God's judgments? That makes no sense. These are two different groups: the first-fruit saints and the sealed Israelites.

Similarity in numbers is not necessarily proof of the same identity. For example, in Revelation 21:12 we see a reference to the 12 tribes of Israel, but in Revelation 21:14 we see another reference to the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

Here is a Scripture that will enlighten us as to the purpose of a firstfruit rapture.

"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown" (Rev. 3:10-11, NKJV).

Notice here that this promise of Christ to the Philadelphia church to be kept from the hour of trial or tribulation is associated with receiving a crown. So we must see it as a reward or a prize for the faithful, those who have persevered and stayed watchful and ready.

Notice also in the very next chapter, in Revelation 4:1-4, we see a type of the rapture of the church: the open door in heaven, the sound of a trumpet and then the 24 elders sitting on 24 thrones, clothed in white robes, with crowns on their

heads. These 24 elders are the celestial representatives of all the redeemed who have been raptured and glorified. They have been crowned. The Scriptures never show crowns given to disembodied spirits or to angels. These are human beings who are in heaven, apparently before the greatest part of the Tribulation has begun. This shows us without any measure of doubt or mystery that the rapture has already taken place.

The apostle Paul spoke of a crown he would receive on that day: "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" 2 Tim. 4:8).

Again, notice that the crown is associated with His appearing. Paul had an understanding of this mystery. In Philippians 3 we see him pressing for some sort of prize. Let the earnest reader discern that this prize is associated with a closeness to Christ, not only here on the earth but throughout eternity, that Paul was pressing toward, and a certain resurrection that was linked to it. This is not salvation, nor is it the general resurrection of the righteous. Our salvation and resurrection are based on our faith in Christ alone, but this is something different. Let the reader discern.

The Greek implies that this resurrection Paul speaks of is an "out-resurrection from among the dead." It is a firstfruits rapture and the prize Paul sought to obtain, which included a closeness to Christ throughout eternity (Rev. 14:5). Here is an expanded translation of Philippians 3:10-11,14 from one of the finest Greek scholars, Kenneth S. Wuest:

"And to come to know experientially the power of His resurrection and a joint-participation in His sufferings, and being brought to the place where my life will radiate a likeness to His death, if by any means I might arrive at the goal, namely, the out-resurrection from among those who are dead ... I am pursuing on for the prize of the call from above

of God which is in Christ Jesus.”

Is this not a reference to bride-ship, characteristics found among the firstfruits company of Revelation 14:1-5 who are seen before the throne, having been redeemed from the earth while the Tribulation is still on? Notice that they sing a new song, while the Tribulation saints who have overcome the beast and reached heaven in Revelation 15:1-4 sing the song of Moses.

I hope you are now seeing the many distinctions between these two companies. This marks the reason for the split church at the first phase of the Lord’s coming, which is the firstfruits.{eoa}

Bert Farias’ books are forerunners to personal holiness, the move of God and the return of the Lord. They also combat the departure from the faith and turning away from the truth we are seeing in this hour. His current passion is to promote a culture of the supernatural manifestations and ministries of the Holy Spirit in the church today and to pass it on to the next generation (Passing on the Move of God to the Next Generation). His newest release, now available on Kindle and on paperback, *The Supernatural Church of Love and Power*, is a simple blueprint for what the Lord Jesus is doing in His church today. Other materials/resources are available on his website, *Holy Fire Ministries*. You can also follow him on YouTube (*Holy Fire Ministries*), Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.