

The Rapture (Harpazo)

- A. Two popular objections to the rapture
 - 1. The word “rapture” is not in the Bible
 - a. The word derives from the Latin word “rapiemur”.
 - b. This is the word the Latin Vulgate translation used to translate the word “harpazo” in the Greek (1 Thessalonians 4:17). It is translated “caught up” or “taken by force” and it means “to be seized”.
 - 2. The doctrine was not practiced by the Early Church and was introduced much later in Church History.
 - a. Evidence that the early church fathers took a literal view of the millennium exists. (Epistles of Barnabas {first century}; Irenaeus’ work *Against Heresies*; Hippolytus; Ephraem the Syrian of Nisibis (Eastern Church) and others.
 - b. We will expand on one: Ephraem the Syrian of Nisibis - According to Thomas D. Ice and Timothy J. Demy in an article that was to be published in the July-September 1995 issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Dallas Theological Seminary), a translated excerpt of a sermon by Ephraem the Syrian of Nisibis reads as follows: *“All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins.”*
 - c. Allegorizing and spiritualizing Scripture began with Origen (184 – 254). Augustine (354 -430) developed this doctrine, and it became the accepted church view of the Medieval Church. This was a time during which the church was very powerful politically.
- B. Jesus teaches concerning the rapture (John 14:1-4)
 - 1. This takes place during after the “Last Supper” just hours before the arrest of Jesus. It is an intimate conversation where Jesus gives his “last minute” encouragement to his disciples.
 - 2. Judas has left. These promises are given only to believers. Not to everyone.
 - 3. Notice the frequency of the use of the word “you”.
- C. Jewish Wedding:
 - 1. It all began with the engagement. This may have begun earlier with “negotiations” between the parents of both the bride and groom. Approximately a year before the wedding came the *ketubah*, the official engagement ceremony, which included payment of the purchase price, a contract was made, the bride-to-be was set apart (sanctified), and during the engagement ceremony both drink wine.
 - 2. Next, the bridegroom departed to build a house. Usually it was an additional room at his father’s house.
 - 3. The bride remained home and prepared for the groom’s imminent return. She was expected to be faithful, keeping herself pure for her husband. The engagement could only be broken by divorce.
 - 4. When the house was completed (upon the father’s approval) the groom would gather his wedding party and go to the bride’s home (often at night, with a torch-lit procession, and alerted by a shout) to literally snatch or catch away his bride. The bride, expecting the imminent return of her groom should have been ready with her wedding party. She was veiled.

5. Upon arriving at the groom's house, the wedding ceremony (huppah) began by the couple (the bride still veiled) entering into the bridal chamber which was a tent set up for the wedding. Here, the couple would consummate their marriage.
6. After the consummation, the groom would announce to the wedding party that the consummation had been completed. The party would tell the host and a seven day feast for the guests began.
7. During this time, the couple remained in the wedding chamber for the seven days of the feast.
8. At the end of the seven days, the groom appeared with his now unveiled bride and they were presented or introduced to the guests.

D. Correlations of the Jewish Wedding to the Church

1. We were chosen before the foundations of the world. (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20; John 17:24) Jesus Christ has paid the purchase price, with His blood. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) The church has been sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:2) and celebrates communion with the drinking of the wine. The covenant has been established (1 Corinthians 11:25-26)
2. Jesus Christ has returned to the Father and is interceding for His bride and preparing a place. (John 14:2-3)
3. The church should be living in anticipation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. It should be sanctified and pure. It is secured by the promise of Jesus. (John 14:3) It has been sanctified (set apart). (Ephesians 5:22-33; Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; James 4:4; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:10; Hebrews 13:12)
4. The Bible promises the coming of Jesus to catch up His bride, with a shout! (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17)
5. The Bible records a marriage supper in Revelation 19:7-9.
6. Presumably, this happens during the 70th week of Daniel (7 year tribulation period). Is there a correlation between the 7 days spent in the bridal chamber of the Jewish wedding?
7. At the end of Daniel's 70th week, Christ returns to earth with His bride. (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Jude 1:14)