

# **THE RAPTURE**

**A TEACHING MANUAL PRESENTED AT  
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THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
OF GOD**

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# DEDICATION

This manual is dedicated to the Almighty God who loved and called me out of darkness and translated me into His marvellous light. My Lover, Shield, Fortress, Rock, Strong Tower, and the Lifter up of my head. His name be praised forevermore.

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# ***TABLE OF CONTENT***

I.	DEFINITION.....	5
II.	A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAPTURE .....	5
IV.	THE RESURRECTIONS.....	7
V.	THE FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE.....	9
VI.	THE NATURE OF THE RAPTURED BODY.....	9
VII.	QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE RAPTURE.....	10
VIII.	THE PURPOSES OF THE RAPTURE .....	11
IX.	EVENTS THAT WILL PRECEDE THE RAPTURE: SCRIPTURAL SIGNS INDICATING THE IMMIDENT RETURN OF CHRIST .....	12
X.	EVENTS IN HEAVEN THAT WILL FOLLOW THE RAPTURE .....	14
XI.	EVENTS AND CHARACTERS ON EARTH AROUND THE TIME OF THE RAPTURE .....	15
XII.	THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (THE WAR OF ARMAGEDDON) .....	18
XIII.	THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RAPTURE AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST 20	
XIV.	HOW TO BE RAPTURABLE .....	22
	<b>OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR.....</b>	<b>i</b>
	<b>ABOUT THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACE MINISTRIES .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
	<b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR .....</b>	<b>vi</b>

# THE RAPTURE

## I. DEFINITION

The Rapture, according to the Bible, refers to the event where believers in Jesus Christ are taken up to meet Him in the air. The word ‘Rapture’ itself does not appear in the Bible but the concept is derived from passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

*"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: 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."* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

*"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

## II. A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAPTURE

1. **“Caught Up”** – It is a spiritualising of our natural bodies without death, as described in 1 Corinthians 15:50, that enables us to be “caught up” together with, and in the company of the righteous dead who shall be resurrected. The expression: “caught up”, depicts the swiftness and irresistible force with which believers will be caught up (see 2 Corinthians 12:4, and Acts 8:39). It implies that there will be the application of external force or power by which this will be done. It will not be by any power of ascending which they will themselves have; or by any tendency of their raised or changed bodies to ascend of their own accord, or even by any effort of their own will, but by a power applied to them which will cause them to rise. As explained earlier, the word “Rapture” itself does not appear in the Bible, but rather the word used by Paul in 1 Thes. 4:17 is “harpazó” and it means properly to seize by force; snatch up, snatch out or away, carry off, pluck, pull suddenly and decisively. It appears with this variation of meanings in other places in the New Testament such as Matthew 11:12, 13:19; John 6:15, 10:28,29; Acts 8:39, 23:10; 2 Corinthians 12:2,4; Jude 1:23; and Revelation 12:5.
2. **“Meeting with the Lord in the air”** – The meeting will happen on clouds, i.e. with the Lord enthroned in our midst on clouds. In the Old Testament, God rides on clouds as on a triumphal chariot (Psalm 104:3) and also the Messiah appears on clouds in the vision granted to Daniel (Daniel 7:13). According to Acts 1:9, Christ ascended to heaven on a cloud; and according to Acts 1:11, and Matthew 24:30, He will return on a cloud. So He bestows on us the greatness of the honour: as the Master Himself was taken up upon a shining cloud, so also we who have believed in Him both dead and alive, would meet Him in the cloud and so shall we ever be united with the Lord.

3. **“Forever be with the Lord”** – Once we are joined with the Head of the body in this manner, we shall forever remain united with Him. While on earth, we do have communion with Him but not in the complete sense because to be “at home in the body,” means that we are “absent from the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6). But after the meeting in the air, we shall be ever with Him; wherever He is; first in the air, where we shall meet Him; then in the third heaven, where we shall go up with Him; then on earth, where we shall descend and reign with Him a thousand years; and then in the ultimate glory to all eternity.

### III. RAPTURE – A FORM OF RESURRECTION.

The concept of the Rapture, as outlined in the New Testament, involves both the resurrection of deceased believers and the transformation of living believers, underscoring the idea that it is indeed *a form of resurrection* (Matt. 13:19; Acts 8:39; II Cor 12:4; I Thess. 4:17; Rev. 12:5).

Firstly, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 provides a vivid description of the Rapture in the context of speaking clearly about a resurrection event, as "the dead in Christ will rise first." This resurrection is not limited to a spiritual awakening but involves a physical raising of those who have died in faith.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 elaborates on the transformation that will occur during the Rapture, linking it directly to the concept of resurrection. Paul wrote, "*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*". This passage emphasizes the miraculous change that will take place, with the dead being raised imperishable, indicating a resurrection into an incorruptible state and at the same time, those who are alive at the time will undergo a transformation, akin to a resurrection, as they are changed from their mortal state to one that is immortal.

Thirdly, the concept of resurrection is central to Christian eschatology, and the Rapture fits within this framework as a specific aspect of eschatology under the broader topic of resurrection. In John 5:28-29, Jesus speaks of a future resurrection: "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*" This general resurrection includes the righteous rising to eternal life, which aligns with the description of the Rapture where the dead in Christ are raised.

Having understood that the Rapture is a form of resurrection, we need to study this theological event that underscores the hope of eternal life and the transformative power of God in fulfilling the promise of resurrection for all believers.

## IV. THE RESURRECTIONS

The principles of the Doctrine of Christ include "the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement" (Hebrews 6:1-2). (Read also Acts 17:30-31 and Hebrews 9:27). It is impossible to deal with the resurrections without dealing with the judgements of God because the resurrections and the Judgements of God are vitally linked and cannot be separated. For example, Revelation 20:1-15 deals with the Doctrine of the Resurrection and then the Great White Throne judgement. Thus resurrection and judgment are Inseparable. However, resurrection precedes judgment and judgment necessitates resurrection.

The resurrection is a doctrine taught and illustrated in both Old and New Testaments.

### i. Resurrections In the Old Testament

- a. In Testimony (Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:9; 17:15) The testimony of Job and the prophet David speak of the resurrection.
- b. In Type (Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:19) Abraham's son, Isaac, was raised from the dead in a type. Jonah's resurrection from the fish also typified the resurrection of Christ (Jonah 1-2 with Matthew 12:38-40).
- c. In Prophecy (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-3; Hoḡea 13:14). The prophets spoke of the resurrection of the body also.
- d. In Actuality (I Kings 17:17-24; II Kings 4:18-37; 8:5; 13:20-21; Jude 9). Elijah and Elisha knew the power of resurrection in the persons they raised from the dead.

### ii. In the New Testament

- a. In Teaching (John 5:28-29; 6:39-54; Luke 16:19-31; 20:35-36). Jesus taught the resurrection of the physical body as well as a spiritual resurrection (Acts 24:15; 1Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4: 14-18; Philippians 3:11,21). John also spoke of the resurrections (Revelation 20:4-6).
- b. In Actuality (Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 7:11-23; John 11:43-44; Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12; Matthew 10: 18; 27:50-53). There were actual physical resurrections in the New Testament also under the ministries of Jesus, Peter and Paul. The student is referred back to the resurrection of Christ also, for His resurrection is the sure proof of the resurrection of all men (Acts 17:30-31).

### iii. Types of Resurrections

Resurrection refers to the act of rising from the dead or transiting into another kind of life like in the case of the Rapture. In the case of the Rapture, living saints are snatched up from this earthly tabernacle and given a heavenly body just as it is in the case of the saints who have died in the Lord. Paul described this when he wrote: "*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If*

*so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” (2Cor 5:1-4).*

To resurrect means to bring back into use, to revive from disuse or inactivity, or, most significantly, to bring or come back to life again. The doctrine of resurrection is central to the Christian faith, and it encompasses both spiritual and material aspects. We shall briefly explore the two main kinds of resurrection—spiritual and material—and delve into the subcategories of material resurrection: temporary and permanent.

### **a. Spiritual Resurrection**

Spiritual resurrection refers to the revival of the spirit, being quickened from death in trespasses and sins. It signifies a transformative renewal of one's inner being, often described as being "born again" through faith in Jesus Christ. This is what we call a spiritual awakening and the commencement of a new life that is aligned with God's will. (See Ephesians 4:21-24, Colossians 3:10, 1 John 3:9)

### **b. Material Resurrection**

Material resurrection, also known as physical resurrection, involves the raising of the body from the dead. This type is further divided into two kinds: temporary resurrection and permanent resurrection.

#### **1) Temporary Resurrection**

Temporary resurrection involves bringing a dead person back to life, only for them to eventually die again later. We see instances of this in the ministry of the prophets in the Old Testament and the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and of His apostles thereafter. (See 1 Kings 17:21, 2 Kings 4:34, 2 Kings 13:20-21, Jonah 2:1-10, Matthew 9:25, Luke 7:14, John 11:43-44, Acts 9:40, Acts 14:20, Acts 20:10)

These resurrections, although temporary, are no less a demonstration of God's almightiness and a pointer to the hope of a future, permanent resurrection.

#### **2) Permanent Resurrection**

Permanent resurrection signifies being raised from mortality to immortality to live forever. This form of resurrection is also divided into two: the First Resurrection and the Second Resurrection.

- i. **The First Resurrection:** This is the resurrection of the righteous to eternal life before the millennium. It is described as a time when believers will be transformed and will reign with Christ. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- ii. **The Second Resurrection:** This is the resurrection of the wicked to face judgment and eternal damnation after the millennium. (See Revelation 20:11-15).

John tells us that these resurrections are a thousand years apart. He states "Blessed and holy are they who have part in the first resurrection." They are judged and receive eternal life and reward



according to their character and works in Christ. The people of the second resurrection are cursed and unholy. They also are judged and sentenced to eternal damnation according to their character and works in this life.

Permanent resurrection is the ultimate fulfilment of God's promise to humanity, offering eternal life to the righteous and eternal separation from God for the wicked.

## V. THE FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE

There are five Raptures in the first resurrection. These are:

1. The resurrection of Christ and the many saints that were resurrected after His resurrection (Rom 15:20; 23; Matt. 27:52-53; Eph 4:8-10).
2. The Rapture of they that are Christ's at His coming (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
3. The Rapture of the 144,000 Jews saved in the first 36 years of the tribulation (Rev. 7:1-8; 12:5; 14:1-5).
4. Rapture of the great multitude or tribulation saints who are saved after the Rapture of everyone in Christ, whether dead or alive (Rev. 6:1-21).
5. The Rapture of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7-11).

## VI. THE NATURE OF THE RAPTURED BODY

In the Rapture, the believers' bodies would be transformed into a new, glorified state. The nature of the Raptured body is synonymous with the resurrected body, as described in the Scriptures. Below is a brief exploration of what this glorious body would look like and its characteristics according to the Bible.

### **1. A Real Body of Flesh and Bones**

The Raptured body will be a real, tangible body of flesh and bones. This is evident from the accounts of Jesus Christ's resurrected body, which was physical and could be touched and seen (See Luke 24:39, John 5:28, 1 Corinthians 15:22, and Revelation 20:12).

### **2. A Spiritual Body**

While the Raptured body is real and tangible, it is also described as a spiritual body. This signifies a body that is not subject to the same limitations as our current physical bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:44).

### **3. A Redeemed Body**

The Raptured body is also a redeemed body, meaning it is liberated from the effects of sin and death. This redemption is part of the broader salvation that believers receive through Christ. (Romans 8:11-23, 2 Corinthians 5:4).

### **4. A Glorious Body**

The Raptured body will be a glorious body, reflecting the glory of Christ's own resurrected body. This glory signifies the radiant, transformed state of the body. (Philippians 3:21, Luke 24:39).

### **5. An Incorruptible Body**

The Raptured body is incorruptible, meaning it is imperishable and not subject to decay or death. This incorruptibility contrasts sharply with our current bodies, which age, weaken, and eventually die. (1 Corinthians 15:42).

### **6. A Heavenly Body**

Finally, the Raptured body is described as a heavenly body. This implies that it is suited for eternal existence in heaven, distinct from our earthly bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:47-49, 2 Corinthians 5:1-6).

So, we see that the nature of the Raptured body, as revealed in Scripture, encompasses several profound characteristics: it is a real body of flesh and bones, yet spiritual and redeemed; it is glorious and incorruptible, designed for a heavenly existence. These attributes reflect the transformative power of Christ's resurrection and the hope that believers hold for their future bodies. This transformation underscores the promise of eternal life and the ultimate victory over death, and it is a cornerstone of the Christian eschatological hope.

## **VII. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE RAPTURE**

According to Scripture, certain qualifications are necessary for one to be part of the transformative event called the Rapture. Below are some of these qualifications.

### **1. Salvation**

The foremost qualification for the Rapture is genuine conversion and salvation. This involves accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, repenting from sin, and experiencing a spiritual rebirth. (Matthew 18:13, Acts 3:19, John 3:3, 5-7, Luke 13:2, 5, 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 1:12).

### **2. Purity of Heart and Conduct**

Believers are called to live in purity, both in heart and in conduct. This involves living in holiness, rejecting sinful behaviours, and living a life that reflects the character of God. (Matthew 5:48, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:14-16, Hebrews 13:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22)

### **3. Supreme Love for God**

A supreme love for God is essential for those awaiting the Rapture. This love manifests in prioritizing God above all else and living a life dedicated to His will. (Philippians 3:7-21, Titus 2:11-14).

### **4. Working the Works of God and Walking in His Footsteps**

Believers are expected to be actively engaged in God's work and to live lives that emulate Christ's example. This involves serving others, spreading the Gospel, and maintaining a vigilant and faithful lifestyle. (Genesis 19:12-17, Revelation 22:12-17, Mark 13:32-37, 1 Corinthians 10:12).

The qualifications for the Rapture, as outlined in Scripture, emphasize a profound commitment to faith in Christ, purity, a deep love for God, and active participation in His work. These attributes are essential for believers who have the living hope of partaking in the Rapture, ensuring they are prepared for this pivotal moment in Christian eschatology.

## **VIII. THE PURPOSES OF THE RAPTURE**

The Rapture holds profound significance and serves multiple divine purposes. Some of them include:

### **1. To Receive Saints to Himself as Promised**

One of the primary purposes of the Rapture is for Jesus Christ to receive His followers unto Himself, fulfilling His promise of reuniting with them. (1 Thessalonians 4:17, John 14:1-3).

### **2. To Resurrect the Dead in Christ from Among the Wicked Dead**

The Rapture will also involve the resurrection of believers who have died, distinguishing them from those who did not have faith in Christ. This resurrection is part of the first resurrection, which precedes the final judgment. (1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16-17, Philippians 3:11, Revelation 20:1-3).

### **3. To Take Saints to Heaven to Live in the New Jerusalem and Receive Rewards**

The Rapture is a transition for believers from earthly life to their eternal home in heaven, specifically the New Jerusalem, where they will receive their heavenly rewards. (1 Thessalonians 3:13, John 14:1-3).

### **4. To Change the Bodies of Saints to Immortality**

A significant purpose of the Rapture is the transformation of believers' mortal bodies into immortal ones. This change ensures that they are suited for eternal life with Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, Philippians 3:21, Jude 24, Revelation 19:1-10).

## **The Imminence of the Rapture**

It is important to note that the Rapture is characterized by its imminence, meaning it can occur at any moment without prior warning. This suddenness calls for believers to live in a state of constant readiness, maintaining their faith and devotion to God. (Matthew 24:42-44, Mark 13:32-37).

The Rapture serves multiple divine purposes, including reuniting Christ with believers, resurrecting the dead in Christ, transitioning believers to their heavenly abode, and transforming their bodies to immortality. These events are foundational to Christian hope and eschatology, emphasizing the importance of living in readiness for the imminent return of Christ.

## **IX. EVENTS THAT WILL PRECEDE THE RAPTURE: SCRIPTURAL SIGNS INDICATING THE IMMINENT RETURN OF CHRIST**

According to the Bible, numerous signs and events will precede the Rapture, marking the imminent return of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures outline many of these End-Time Signs, most of which have been witnessed in this modern era. Below is a list of some of these signs and events that will herald the Rapture.

### **1. Mass Suffering and Destruction**

#### **i. Wars**

Wars and conflicts are frequently mentioned as indicators of the end times. The 20th century alone has seen two world wars and numerous other clashes (Matthew 24:6-8).

#### **ii. Hunger, Famine, and Population Explosion**

Global hunger and famine are escalating problems, exacerbated by population growth and resource scarcity (Matthew 24:7). It is a major sign of the beginning of the birth pangs that accompany the end times. *“But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.”* (Matthew 24:8 NASB).

#### **iii. Widespread Persecution**

Christians around the world face persecution for their faith, fulfilling prophecies of widespread suffering among believers (Matthew 24:9-10).

#### **iv. Dangers of Scientific Inventions**

While scientific advancements have brought many benefits, they also pose significant risks, from nuclear weapons to bioengineering (See Daniel 12:4 for increase of knowledge).

#### **v. Natural Catastrophes**

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and hurricanes are becoming more frequent and severe (Matthew 24:7).

### **2. Decline of Morals and Mass Corruption**

#### **i. Mass Divorce, Abortion, Euthanasia, and Single Parenthood**

These social issues reflect a decline in traditional family values and ethics (Matthew 24:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-5).

## **ii. Indiscipline in Family Circles**

Disobedience and lack of respect within families are some of the signs of moral decay that accompany the end times (2 Timothy 3:2).

## **iii. Sexual Immorality**

The proliferation of sexual immorality, including promiscuity and same-sex relationships, is a major indication and a significant sign of the end times (Romans 1:24-27).

## **iv. Drug Addiction and Violence**

Rising drug abuse and violent behaviour contribute to the kind of societal decay which has been prophesied about the end times (Galatians 5:19-21, Genesis 6:5).

## **v. Crimes, Bribery, and Mass Corruption**

Corruption and criminal activity are rampant in many modern-day societies (Isaiah 5:20-23).

# **3. Mind Control and Standardization of Thought and Behaviour**

## **i. Problems of Human Engineering**

Technological advances in human engineering, such as cloning and memory transfer, raise ethical and moral concerns (Genesis 6:5).

## **ii. Religious Hypnotism and Political Indoctrination**

The formation of godless societies and the rise of political ideologies that reject religious principles are considered signs of the end times (Luke 21:25-26).

## **iii. The Idea of Religious Unity**

Efforts to unify different religions and diminish doctrinal differences are seen as steps toward a one-world religion (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3).

## **v. Widespread Apostasy and the Growth of Occultism and Satanism**

The departure from the true faith and the rise of occult practices are prominent signs (Matthew 24:11).

## **vi. Increase of Knowledge**

The exponential growth of knowledge and technological advancements are indicative of the end times (Daniel 12:4).

## **vii. Israel's Deliverance**

The return of the Jewish people to Israel and the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East are significant signs (Jeremiah 32:37-41, Ezekiel 36:24, Amos 9:14-15).

### **Additional Signs Include:**

#### **a. Return of Jews from Captivity**

The establishment of Israel in 1948 is seen as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy (Ezekiel 37:21-22).

#### **b. Egypt and the Arab World**

The political and social unrest in Egypt and surrounding Arab nations are viewed as significant (Isaiah 19:1-25).

### **c. The Rise of Eastern Giants**

The emergence of powerful nations in the East, such as China and India, is considered significant (Revelation 16:12).

### **d. The Northern Confederacy**

The coalition of nations to the north of Israel, often identified with Russia and its allies (Ezekiel 38-39).

### **e. The Budding of the Fig Tree and Supernatural Preservation**

The fig tree is often symbolically associated with Israel, and its budding represents the nation's revival and God's protection (Matthew 24:32-34).

So, we see that history is prophecy fulfilled, and the Word of God is clear on the signs that precede the Rapture. While no one knows the exact time the Rapture will happen or of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36), the signs outlined in Scripture provide clear indications that the end times are approaching. We as believers must remain vigilant and steadfast in faith, recognizing these signs as a call to prepare for the imminent return of Christ.

## **X. EVENTS IN HEAVEN THAT WILL FOLLOW THE RAPTURE**

Following the Rapture, theologians believe that two significant events will unfold in heaven: the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. These events hold profound implications for believers and reflect key aspects of Christian eschatology.

### **1. The Judgment Seat of Christ**

The Judgment Seat of Christ, also known as the Judgement of Believer's Works, is where believers will be judged for their works and deeds performed while in the body. This judgment is not for condemnation but for the evaluation of one's service and faithfulness to Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10-12, Ephesians 6:8, Colossians 3:24, Luke 14:14, 2 Timothy 4:14, Revelation 2:23).

There are seven judgments mentioned in Scripture:

- **Judgment of Believers' Sins:** Already judged at the cross (John 5:24; Romans 8:1).
- **Judgment of Believers' Self:** Ongoing self-examination and repentance (1 Corinthians 11:31-32).
- **Judgment of Israel:** God's dealings with Israel (Ezekiel 20:33-38; Matthew 24:21).
- **Judgment of Angels:** For their rebellion against God (1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6).
- **Judgment of the Nations:** At Christ's return (Matthew 25:31-46).
- **Judgment of Believers' Works:** Evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

- **Judgment of the Wicked Dead:** At the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

## **Crowns and Rewards**

Believers will receive various crowns as rewards for their faithfulness and service:

- **The Crown of Life:** Awarded for enduring trials and persecution (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).
- **The Crown of Rejoicing:** Given for leading others to Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Daniel 12:3).
- **The Incorruptible Crown:** For living a disciplined and victorious life (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
- **The Crown of Glory:** Bestowed upon faithful shepherds and leaders in the church (1 Peter 5:1-4).
- **The Crown of Righteousness:** For those who long for Christ's appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

## **2. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is a celebratory event that will take place in heaven before Christ's second coming to the earth. It symbolizes the union between Christ (the Bridegroom) and the Church (the Bride), representing all the redeemed who have partaken in the first resurrection and will dwell in the New Jerusalem forever. (Revelation 19:1-9, Revelation 21:2, 9-10).

Following the Rapture, the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be pivotal events in heaven. These events represent the reward system of heaven in rewarding the saints for their faithfulness and the ultimate union of Christ with His Church.

N.B. The Church, the Bride of Christ, is now married. The marriage supper of the Lamb is the concluding ceremony of the marriage between the Lamb and His Bride, it is not the marriage contract entered into by Christians at conversion.

# **XI. EVENTS AND CHARACTERS ON EARTH AROUND THE TIME OF THE RAPTURE**

The period around the Rapture will be marked by significant events and the emergence of notable characters. We shall now explore this including the rise and reign of the Antichrist, the role of the False Prophet, and the tribulation period, drawing from various scriptural references.

## **The Rise and Reign of the Antichrist**

The Antichrist, whose name means "against Christ" or "in place of Christ," will be a dominant figure during the end times. He will oppose Jesus Christ and seek to establish his own dominion on earth.

### **Names and Characteristics of the Antichrist:**

1. **The Boastful and Deceitful Man:** Psalm 5:6
2. **The Wicked One:** Psalm 10:24
3. **The Man of the Earth:** Psalm 10:18
4. **The Mighty Man:** Psalm 52:1; Psalm 55:3
5. **The Enemy, The Adversary:** Psalm 74:8-10
6. **The Head of Many Countries:** Psalm 111:6
7. **The Violent Man:** Psalm 140:1
8. **The Spoiler:** Isaiah 16:4-5
9. **The Profane and Wicked Prince:** Ezekiel 21:25-27
10. **The Little Horn:** Daniel 7:8
11. **The Prince That Shall Come:** Daniel 9:29
12. **The Vile Person:** Daniel 11:21
13. **The Wilful King:** Daniel 11:36
14. **The Man of Sin, The Son of Perdition:** 2 Thessalonians 2:3
15. **The Lawless One:** 2 Thessalonians 2:8
16. **The Antichrist:** 1 John 2:22
17. **The Beast:** Revelation 11:7; Revelation 13:1

### **Characteristics of the Antichrist:**

1. **Highly Intelligent:** Daniel 8:23-25
2. **Great Orator:** Revelation 13:2, 5-6; Daniel 11:36
3. **Understanding of Philosophy and Theology:** Revelation 13:5
4. **Involved in the Occult:** Revelation 16:13; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 John 4:1-6
5. **Persuasive Religious Leader:** Revelation 17:1-8
6. **Initially a Man of Peace:** Daniel 8:25; 11:21; 1 Thessalonians 5:3
7. **Man of War:** Revelation 6:4-7
8. **Opponent of Christianity:** Revelation 17:18

The Antichrist will present himself as a saviour figure, initially bringing peace and unity but eventually revealing his true nature as a tyrant and persecutor.



## The False Prophet

The False Prophet will be the right-hand man of the Antichrist, executing his plans and enforcing his rule.

See the following scriptures:

**Revelation 13:17:** Enforcing the mark of the beast.

**Revelation 14:9-11:** Those who worship the beast and receive his mark will face God's wrath.

The False Prophet will introduce three brands associated with the Antichrist:

1. **A Mark:** A literal brand on the right hand or forehead (Revelation 13:16-17; 14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2; 20:4-6).
2. **The Name of the Beast:** (Revelation 14:11).
3. **The Number of His Name:** The numerical value of 666 (Revelation 13:18).

Towards the end of their reign, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be captured, killed, and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

## The Tribulation

The tribulation is a period of immense suffering and trouble, prophesied as the most terrible time in human history.

### Time and Length of the Tribulation:

- **Duration:** The entire 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9:27).
- **End:** The second advent of Christ (Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-21).

### Divisions of the Tribulation:

1. **Lesser Tribulation:** The first 3½ years, marked by the judgments of the six seals and the first six trumpets (Revelation 6:1-9; 21).
2. **Great Tribulation:** The last 3½ years, featuring the judgments of the seven vials (Revelation 10:1-19; 21; Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 30:4-11; Matthew 24:21-22).

### Purpose of the Tribulation:

- **Purify Israel:** Bringing them to a place where God can fulfill His covenant (Isaiah 2:5-22; Ezekiel 20:33-34; 22:17-22; Romans 11:25-29).
- **Remove Rebels:** Purge Israel of those who reject God (Ezekiel 22:17-22; Zechariah 13:8-9; Malachi 3:3-4).
- **Establish the New Covenant:** Lead Israel into a new covenant with God (Ezekiel 36:24-28; Jeremiah 30:3-11; Malachi 4:3-4).

- **Punish for Rejection:** Judge Israel for rejecting the Messiah and prepare them to accept Him (Zechariah 12:10-13:9; 14:1-15; Matthew 24:15-31).
- **Judge the Nations:** For their persecution of Israel (Isaiah 63:1-5; Joel 3; Revelation 6:1-19; 20).
- **Complete Repentance:** Bring Israel to full repentance (Zechariah 12:10-13:9; Romans 11:26-29; Matthew 23:39).
- **Fulfill Prophecy:** Complete the prophecies regarding the end times (Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 6:1-19:21; Matthew 24:15, 29).
- **Drive Israel to God:** Cause Israel to flee to God for help amidst severe persecution (Isaiah 16:1-5; Ezekiel 20:33-35; Daniel 11:40-42; Matthew 24:15-31; Hosea 3:14-17; Revelation 12).

The period surrounding the Rapture will be marked by significant events and the emergence of key figures like the Antichrist and the False Prophet. These events, including the tribulation, serve specific purposes in God's plan for Israel and the world.

## XII. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (THE WAR OF ARMAGEDDON)

The Second Coming of Christ is a pivotal event in Christian eschatology, marking the end of the Great Tribulation and the culmination of God's plan for humanity. This event, often referred to in the context of the War of Armageddon, signifies the final struggle between good and evil and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth.

### **The Great Tribulation and the War of Armageddon**

The Great Tribulation is described in the Bible as a period of intense suffering and conflict, a final struggle between God and the Devil over the possession of the earth (Revelation 11:15; 12:7-12; 19:1-21; 20:1-3). This period will culminate in the War of Armageddon, which will herald the Second Coming of Christ.

### **The Battle of Armageddon:**

- The Battle of Armageddon will be a brief but decisive conflict, lasting only one day (Zechariah 14:1-7).
- Unlike earthly battles between nations, it will not be a battle between nations. Not an ordinary battle or series of battles between two sets of earthly nations, rather, it will be a battle between Christ and His heavenly armies and earthly Israel on one side, and Satan and his angels (demons) and earthly armies under the Antichrist on the other side (Revelation 19:11-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Zechariah 14:5; Jude 14; Daniel 2:44-45; 7:19-27; Ezekiel 38-39).

- The timing of this battle will coincide with the completion of the ministry of the Two Witnesses.

## **Reasons for the Battle of Armageddon**

### **Satan's Purpose:**

- Satan aims to prevent Christ from taking possession of the earth, thereby averting his impending doom.

### **God's Purposes:**

1. **Deliver Israel:** To deliver Israel and end the times of the Gentiles.
2. **Punish the Nations:** To punish the nations for their persecution of Israel.
3. **Set Up Divine Government:** To establish a divine government over the nations of the earth.
4. **Re-establish the Kingdom of David:** To fulfil the promise of re-establishing the Kingdom of David.
5. **Rid the Earth of Rebellion:** To eliminate all forms of rebellion.
6. **Unite All Things in Christ:** To gather together in one all things in Christ, both in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1:10).
7. **Final Dispensational Test:** To give humanity one final dispensational test before destroying all rebels and restoring man's dominion as before the curse.

## **The Outcome of the War of Armageddon**

As a result of the War of Armageddon:

- The Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Revelation 19:20).
- Satan, his angels, and demons will be bound and confined to the abyss for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).
- Christ will establish His millennial reign on earth, fulfilling numerous prophecies about the establishment of His kingdom (Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33; Daniel 2:44-45; 7:13-27).

## **The Significance of the Second Coming of Christ**

The Second Coming of Christ is significant for several reasons:

1. **Fulfilment of Prophecy:** It fulfils numerous Old and New Testament prophecies regarding the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom.
2. **Judgment and Redemption:** It brings judgment upon the wicked and redemption for the faithful, culminating in the final defeat of Satan and his forces.

3. **Restoration of Order:** It restores divine order and justice, establishing Christ's reign of peace and righteousness.
4. **Eternal Kingdom:** It inaugurates the eternal kingdom of God, where Christ reigns supreme and His followers live in eternal peace and joy.

The Second Coming of Christ is a cornerstone of the Christian faith, it represents the ultimate victory of good over evil and the fulfilment of God's plan for humanity. The War of Armageddon, though brief, will be a significant event that leads to the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth, the final judgment of the wicked, and the eternal reign of peace and righteousness.

### XIII. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RAPTURE AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The Rapture and the second coming of Christ are two distinct events in Christian eschatology, often conflated due to their intertwined nature in end-times prophecy. Understanding the differences between these two events is crucial for interpreting biblical prophecy accurately.

#### **The Rapture**

The Rapture refers to the event where Jesus Christ returns to remove the church (all believers in Christ) from the earth. This is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-54.

During the Rapture:

- **Resurrection of Believers:** Believers who have died will have their bodies resurrected, and along with believers who are still alive, will meet the Lord in the air. This will happen in an instant, "in the twinkling of an eye."
- **Deliverance:** The Rapture is seen as an act of deliverance, sparing believers from the coming wrath and tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

#### **The Second Coming**

The second coming of Christ occurs after the Great Tribulation and is when Jesus returns to defeat the Antichrist, destroy evil, and establish His millennial kingdom. This event is detailed in Revelation 19:11-16. During the second coming:

- **Visible Return:** Unlike the Rapture, which will be instantaneous and secret, the second coming will be visible to all (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:29-30).
- **Judgment:** It involves the removal of unbelievers as an act of judgment (Matthew 24:40-41).
- **Establishment of the Kingdom:** Jesus will set up His millennial kingdom on earth, fulfilling numerous prophecies.

## **Key Differences Between the Rapture and the Second Coming**

### **1. Meeting Place:**

- **Rapture:** Believers meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
- **Second Coming:** Believers return with the Lord to the earth (Revelation 19:14).

### **2. Timing Relative to the Tribulation:**

- **Rapture:** Occurs before the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10).
- **Second Coming:** Occurs after the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6-19).

### **3. Purpose:**

- **Rapture:** An act of deliverance for believers (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, 5:9).
- **Second Coming:** Includes the judgment of unbelievers (Matthew 24:40-41).

### **4. Visibility:**

- **Rapture:** Secret and instant (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).
- **Second Coming:** Visible to all (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:29-30).

### **5. Imminence:**

- **Rapture:** Imminent, can occur at any moment without any preceding events (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54).
- **Second Coming:** Occurs after specific end-times events (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Matthew 24:15-30; Revelation 6-18).

## **Importance of Distinguishing Between the Two Events**

### **1. Tribulation Experience:**

- If the Rapture and the second coming are the same event, believers would have to endure the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

### **2. Imminence of Christ's Return:**

- If they are the same event, Christ's return is not imminent as several events must occur first (Matthew 24:4-30).

### **3. Role of the Church:**

- During the tribulation, the focus shifts to Israel, and the church is not mentioned in Revelation chapters 6-19, indicating its prior removal (Jeremiah 30:7; Romans 11:17-31).

While the Rapture and the second coming of Christ both involve Jesus' return and are integral to end-times prophecy, they serve different purposes and occur at different times. The Rapture is the

moment when Christ comes to take His believers away from the earth before the tribulation, an act of deliverance. In contrast, the second coming is when Christ returns to the earth visibly, bringing the tribulation to an end, defeating the Antichrist, and establishing His millennial kingdom. Recognising these distinctions is vital for a correct understanding of Biblical prophecy and the sequence of end-time events.

## XIV. HOW TO BE RAPTURABLE

To be part of this divine event called the Rapture, the Bible outlines several conditions that believers must meet. These conditions emphasise the importance of salvation, purity, love for God, and living a life that reflects God's will.

### 1. Salvation: Genuine Conversion

The primary condition to qualify for the Rapture is genuine conversion and salvation through Jesus Christ. According to the Bible, one must be born again to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5-7). This involves acknowledging one's sins, repenting, and accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. (Acts 3:19, 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 1:12).

### 2. Purity of Heart and Conduct

A rapturable believer must strive for purity in heart and conduct. This means living a holy life, abstaining from sin, and continually seeking to align one's actions with God's will. See the following verses in the Bible:

- **Matthew 5:8** - Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- **Hebrews 12:14** - Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.
- **1 Peter 1:14-16** - Be holy as God is holy.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:22** - Abstain from all appearance of evil.

### 3. Supreme Love for God

A deep, supreme love for God is non-negotiable. This involves prioritizing God above all else, including personal desires and worldly pursuits. (Philippians 3:7-8, Titus 2:11-14).

### 4. Working the Works of God and Walking in His Footsteps

Living a life that reflects the teachings and example of Christ is crucial. This includes serving others, sharing the gospel, and demonstrating Christ-like love and humility. (John 6:29, Mark 13:32-37, 1 Corinthians 10:12).

## **5. Faithfulness and Watchfulness**

Believers must remain faithful and watchful, living each day as if Christ could return at any moment. This involves being spiritually vigilant and maintaining a strong relationship with God. (Matthew 24:42-44, Luke 21:36).

In summary, to qualify for the Rapture, the Bible emphasizes the necessity of genuine salvation, a pure and holy life, supreme love for God, active engagement in God's work, and vigilant faithfulness. These conditions call for a deep, personal commitment to living according to God's will and continually seeking to grow in one's relationship with Him.

## OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

1. Your Home: Heaven on Earth
2. Ye Must Be Born Again
3. Now That You Are Born Again
4. Fountain of Praise (A Song Book)
5. Covenant Blessings of A Sheep Under a Shepherd
6. Conflicts and Resolutions in Marriage
7. The Family in God's Plan
8. The Kingdom
9. Greater is He that is in Us
10. Hearing From God
11. Wired For The Top
12. The Great Physician (*Manual*)
13. Workshop and Study Outline on Leadership Training (*Manual*)
14. Contending For the Faith (*Manual*)
15. Sounding Your Mind For Exploits
16. The Secrets of Dominion (*Manual*)
17. Earth Shaking Prayers (*Manual*)
18. Parenting To God's Glory (Rev. & Pastor (Mrs.) Adebara)
19. Before The Marital Vows



20. Excellent Blessings (*Manual*)
21. Power of Total Submission (*Manual*)
22. Greater Works Than These (*Manual*)
23. The Glories of Answered Prayers (*Manual*)
24. You Shall Move Mountains (*Manual*)
25. The Ministry of Deliverance
26. Perfect Wholeness
27. Key to Spiritual Fulfillment (*Manual*)
28. High Praises (*Manual*)
29. From Glory to Glory (*Manual*)
30. Fearful Miracles (*Manual*)

## **ABOUT THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACE MINISTRIES**

1. Fountain of Grace Ministries started with the church arm which was born on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 1992 with 133 people in attendance. The birth and growth of the Chapel is really a testimony of the unfeigned word of God as revealed in I John 5:4 – *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith.”*

The Ministries’ headquarters is located at Number 5, Holy Trinity Road, Abayomi Estate, Old Ife Road, Ibadan.

### 2. **MINISTERING TEAM**

The ministries operate under the leadership of **Rev Solomon Adebara** and his wife **Pastor (Mrs) Titilola Adebara**. They are assisted by other anointed ministers of the gospel.

### 3. **THE VISION**

We believe that heaven is a prepared place for God’s people. There is therefore the need to prepare a people for the place because God’s standard cannot be broken. The motto: *“Preparing a people for a prepared place”* is the watchword of the ministries. The ministry is also a good and fertile ground for opportunities to serve God. Men and women are encouraged to be their best to the Master and are given opportunities to prove what is on the inside of them. Others who want to learn are equally given the opportunity to be trained and be useful in His service. The vision is, therefore, to build a virile end-time army for the Lord, in an atmosphere where each person can excel, without fear or rancor, in a family setting. Hence, our emphasis is that only what is built upon the Word – **Jesus Christ** – can endure. Each believer is encouraged to be grounded in the Word so that together, we can become power brokers in Christ.

#### 4. **BIBLE COLLEGE**

The ministry has a Bible College (**Grace Bible Institute**). The vision of the Bible College is to train and equip all men whether with a perceived call of God, or those who just want to be equipped for service.

#### 5. **PRISON MINISTRY**

The Prison Ministry is headed by a team of committed brethren and tremendous results abound to this call. Some of the converts have been rehabilitated and are established as members.

#### 6. **TELEVISION MINISTRY**

Our television programme titled “*Voice of Grace*” has become a household name. It started over 27 years ago and we believe God to take the programme across the globe.

#### 7. **VIDEO AND AUDIO MINISTRY**

The dynamic teachings of Rev’d Solomon Adebara are available on the ministry’s YouTube channel: Fountain of Grace Ministries on YouTube. In addition, the ministry is working on making available older video messages captured on video tapes available on the YouTube channel. Furthermore, we have a radio ministry called “Fountain Radio” where audio messages are relayed via the internet on our website: <https://fogm.org>. We also have an audio library on the website where people can listen to recorded audio messages.

#### 8. **MISSIONS**

Presently, the ministry has two mission fields located in Ibadan and strategic planning is going on to take other places for Christ. Moreover, the ministry has been involved in sponsoring missions and missionaries at different levels. We also intend to go into mission fields abroad and harvest the people for Christ.

## 9. **PUBLICATIONS**

To the glory of God, there are over 30 anointed books and manuals published so far. These books have been of tremendous blessing to many with outstanding testimonies.

## 10. **GRACE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

This is a recent arm of the ministry which involves gathering leaders from all over the nations to teach God's word in light of further preparing and equipping them in these end times. It is also multi-denominational and cuts across Christian leaders from every facet of life. This arm of ministry aims to keep leaders focused on the Word in their various spheres of life and not get swayed by the happenings around them.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author *Solomon Adebara* is an ordained minister, a sound teacher of the Word of God, a marriage counsellor, a conference speaker and a dynamic anointed minister of the gospel with a healing ministry. He is also the minister of the famous *Voice of Grace*, a television outreach ministry.

He was born again in his secondary school days and was followed up and established by the Holy Spirit. He has been in position of spiritual responsibility and leadership from his undergraduate days at the University of Lagos where he once served as the Bible Study Secretary of the Lagos Varsity Christian Union (LVCU). He also served as a past chairman of the Unity Ministers Forum (UMF), a group of renowned ministers of God in the city of Ibadan.

A chartered Architect by profession, he is currently the Chairman/Chief Executive of Adonai Consult Limited, a multifaceted company. He is the president of Fountain of Grace Ministries and pastors the Fountain of Grace Chapel with headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria.

He is happily married and blessed with children.