



*Go for God!*

## MYSTERIES OF THE BIBLE (Part 1) **“MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE!”**

**Introduction:** There are eleven “*mysteries*” found in God’s Holy Word. The word *mystery* in the original Greek is ‘*mysterion*’ which means *a new truth not known before*. Mysteries are sacred secrets, hitherto unknown, but now known by revelation.

- Lewis Sperry Chafer writes, “The sum total of all the mysteries in the New Testament represents that entire body of added truth found in the New Testament which is unrevealed in the Old Testament. On the other hand, the New Testament mystery is to be distinguished from the mystery of the cults of Babylon and Rome, whose secrets were sealed and held on penalty of death; for the New Testament mystery, when it is revealed, is to be declared to the ends of the earth, and is restricted only to the extent of the limitation of the natural man.”

- In 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 - *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

- I would like to begin our series with one of the most exciting, encouraging, and invigorating revelations, which is “*The Mystery of the Rapture!*”

**- Let’s resolve 3 questions:**

**> Question #1 - What is the RAPTURE?**

- First, let’s turn to 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

- Observe four secrets unveiled in this mystery (v51-54):

- (1) *We shall not all sleep* (die);
- (2) *We shall be changed* (to make different);
- (3) *In a moment* (Gk. - *atomoo* – an atom of time);
- (4) *This corruption* (decayed, perishable) *puts on incorruption* (unending existence, genuineness), *this mortal puts on immortality* (deathlessness).

- This all happens in *the twinkling of an eye*, faster than a wink! Are you listening for *the trumpet of God*?

- Second, let’s turn to 1 Thessalonians Ch. 4

In verses 13–14 we have hope for those who have died as believers that they are with Jesus in heaven, (Paul writes in 2 Cor 5:6-8 - *So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*).

- Notice in verse 17 that we are “*caught up*” is *harpazo* in Greek, it means to “*to catch up or grasp hastily, to snatch up, to lift, to transport, or to rapture.*”

- In the Latin Vulgate we have the word “*rapturo*,” thus the term in English “*rapture.*” In verse 18 we are called to “*comfort one another with these words.*”

- Let's continue in chapter 5:1-11. This day will come like a *"thief in the night"* (v2). *God has not appointed us to wrath (the great tribulation) but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (v9).*

- As with all early Christians, Paul believed the event was near (cf. Rom. 13:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 10:11; 16:22; Phil. 3:20,21; 1 Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:13).

### > Question #2 - When will the RAPTURE happen?

- The rapture will happen when the gospel has gone out to the whole world (Matthew 24:14).

- The rapture will happen when Israel has become a nation once again (Matthew 24:32-35).

- The rapture will happen when the world is full of sin and corruption like the *"days of Noah"* (Matthew 24:36-39)

- The rapture will happen when there's a revived Roman Empire; today we have the European Union, which is the revived Roman Empire (Daniel Ch. 7 & 9).

- The rapture will happen at the conclusion of the church age (Rev. Ch. 2 & 3); the last days church will become *lukewarm* (Rev. 4:14-22) and *apostate* (to fall away from the faith, which is the Word of God) (2Thessalonians Ch. 2).

- Turn to Revelation Ch. 3:7-13, pay close attention to verse 10 - *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.*

- After the rapture then comes the *"Great Tribulation"* (Matthew 24:15-28), also known as the *"day of Jacob's trouble"* (Jer. 30:7) (Jacob represents Israel). Daniel 12:1 says, *"And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time."*

- Chuck Smith writes, "Why is this Great Tribulation coming? The Scripture says that its purpose is threefold:

(1) *to try men who dwell upon the earth* (Rev. 3:10);

(2) *that God might vent His wrath upon the wicked* (Rev. 15:7);

(3) *to destroy those who destroyed the earth* (Rev. 11:18).

Those who fall in one or all of these categories will be on the earth to experience the Tribulation period."

### > Question #3 - The RAPTURE, are you ready?

- Receive the PROMISE!

- John 14:1-3 - *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."*

- Remember the PRECEDENCE!

- Enoch (Gen 5:24 - *And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*); Noah (Genesis Ch. 6 - 9); Lot (Genesis Ch. 19).

**- WATCH and be READY!**

- Matthew 24 :36-51

- The word “*taken*” in verses 40-41 is *para lomanomi*, this Greek word is also found in Mt. 1:24 when Joseph *takes* Mary as his bride; and in Mt. 17:1 when Jesus *took* Peter, James and John to the Mt. of Transfiguration and was glorified; also John 14:3 – “*I will come again and take you unto myself that where I am there you may be also.*” Notice, a bride is taken like the church to Christ; up to glory (the Mt.), the bride glorified in heaven; and we are forever with the Lord.

**- REJOICE IN THE RAPTURE!**

Paul encourages us in Philippians 3:20-21 - *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*