

Doctrine of the Rapture

Jude 3

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”

The Meaning of Harpazo

1. Those who believe in Dispensational Theology appeal to the Greek word harpazo in defense of their understanding of *the* Rapture, which is generally understood in Dispensationalism as that *particular* event when the church is caught away, or *raptured*, from earth in order for a seven year period of tribulation to begin.

Special Note.

It is believed by many that the church is going to escape a special great tribulational period, though there is no verse in the Bible which uses the word, *thlipsis*, tribulation, to support this idea.

Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Paul taught that, “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

The great tribulation that Israel was prophesied to endure in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 is today a historical reality, for Jesus said that everything which He predicted during the Olivet Discourse would happen within the generation to which He spoke. *“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled”* (Matt. 24:34). History confirms that what Christ predicted in AD 30 occurred between AD 66 – 70 with the fall of Jerusalem. Jesus was a Priest, a King, and a Prophet. The sign of a prophet was to be correct. All that Jesus said would happen, did happen.

2. A good place to begin the consideration of the position of Dispensational Theology on this matter is with a definition.
3. Strong's Definition of harpazo: verb, to seize (in various applications): AV, catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force).
4. Notice that the word harpazo, as used in the NT, is a verb, not a noun. Also, there is no definite article in any Biblical verse which uses harpazo.
5. The following Scriptures (Septuagint, LXX) contain the word harpazo.
 - Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take [harpazo] it by force [harpazo].

- Matthew 13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away [harpazo] that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.
 - John 6:15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take [harpazo] him by force [harpazo], to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.
 - John 10:12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth [harpazo] them, and scattereth the sheep.
 - John 10:28 And I give to them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck [harpazo] them out of my hand.
 - John 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck [harpazo] them out of my Father's hand.
 - Acts 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away [harpazo] Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.
 - Acts 23:10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take [harpazo] him by force [harpazo] from among them, and to bring him into the castle.
 - 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 an one caught up [harpazo] to the third heaven.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:4 How that he was caught up [harpazo] into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up [harpazo] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
 - Jude 1:23 And others save with fear, pulling [harpazo] them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.
 - 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 [harpazo] to God, and to his throne.
6. In none of these verses does the word harpazo speak of going away from earth for seven years, only to return with Christ again.

7. Dispensationalists like to speak of Christ coming for His Church in *the Rapture*, and then returning with His church at the Second Advent proper.
8. The Christian church has consistently believed that at the Second Advent of Jesus, believers shall be caught up suddenly to greet the descending Christ who has promised to come again, the second time, for all who believe. Christ shall return in the same manner in which He ascended into heaven following His resurrection.
 - *Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*
 - *Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*
9. What the historic Christian church has never officially believed or stated, in any Creed, in any Confession of Faith, or discussed in any ecumenical council is the idea of a “rapture” being a separate event from the return of Jesus according to promise.
10. In no Biblical passage where harpazo is used is there the idea of Christians disappearing from earth for seven years only to return again.
11. The popular Dispensational teaching of *the Rapture* is the figment of human imagination, and not a clear exegesis of Scripture. Nor does the *Rapture* find any support in the church Fathers.
12. Christians, who want to embrace the simplicity of Scripture, and a historic faith, should be concerned, because *the Rapture* theory transforms every other facet of Christian theology. It changes what the church has taught historically about salvation, Israel, the Moral Law, and the church.