

INTRODUCTION

In ancient Jewish culture, a couple would become betrothed before marriage. The groom would leave his father's house, travel to the bride's home, pay a bride price, and establish a covenant. Then the groom would return home, where he would build a new wedding chamber onto his father's house. When the new chamber was declared to be finished by the groom's father, the groom would return unexpectedly at night to take the bride away in a bridal procession back to their new home. In the same way, Jesus Christ returned to heaven to prepare a place for His bride, the church. One day, Jesus will come with a trumpet sound to receive His people. This event is called the rapture.

The rapture is synonymous with the resurrection of the saints. Those who died in Christ will rise first, and those who are living will rise to meet Christ in the air. This event precedes the second coming of Christ. There will be signs to indicate when His second coming is approaching, but no one knows the day or the hour of the rapture except God the Father. It will happen suddenly and without warning, so believers need to be ready. After the rapture, the world will experience total pandemonium, the rise of the Antichrist, and God's judgment. Believers have nothing to fear because we know that God will rescue His people before enacting His wrath – as He did with Enoch, Noah, and Lot.

Christ will only receive His bride, His true followers who are saved. That is why it is so important for you to share the gospel with your friends, family, and neighbors. You should not fear the rapture, but it should cause you to feel a sense of urgency. You do not know when it is coming, so you need to be ready. Pursue Christ, live in a way that honors Him, and share the gospel everywhere you go. Christ is coming back!

GETTING STARTED

1. What are some meaningful wedding traditions in America and around the world?
2. What signs are you seeing in the world today that Christ's second coming is getting closer?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. What did this message clarify for you about the rapture and the second coming of Christ?
2. Is it easy or difficult for you to share the gospel with others, and why?
3. If someone were to watch your life for a week, would they be able to tell that you are a Christian? Why or why not?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. If thinking about the rapture makes you fearful, how can you address that fear and trust God instead?
2. Who in your family, friend group, or neighborhood needs to know the gospel? How can you find an opportunity to share the gospel with that person this week?
3. ***Want to dig deeper?*** Take a look at the following passages: Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 1:18; Genesis 24:53; Genesis 29:18, 30; Mark 13:4, 32; Ephesians 5:32; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:52; Matthew 24:3, 15; Luke 21:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 6-7, 9; 1 Thessalonians 5:3; Daniel 9:27; Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:3, 7, 16-18; Genesis 5:23-24; Genesis 18-19; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 3:10; Zechariah 14:4-5; Genesis 7:1-23; Genesis 19:12-25; Joshua 6:22-25; 2 Kings 2:11; Jeremiah 39:11-18; Exodus 12:12-23; Jeremiah 45:1-5; Luke 21:20-22; Hebrews 11:5; Acts 8:39-40; 2 Corinthians 12:2-4; Revelation 4:1-2; Revelation 11:11-12; Daniel 11:32, 38; Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 8:1; John 5:24; Romans 5:9.

RENEW YOUR MIND

*And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. – **Hebrews 10:24-25***