



## Harpazo: The Blessed Hope Part 1

We all have a protective instinct when we perceive an immediate threat towards those we love. It is a quick wit, striking high-pressure action towards salvation or safety, in order to preserve life or well-being.

If we as humans react in such a way to physically save those we love when we perceive danger, how much more God?

In like manner, the Gospel of Grace also reveals a quick wit, striking high pressure action from God in order to preserve the believer in Christ from the terrible things that will come upon the earth during a very dark age of judgment in the very near future.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:17**

“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.”

The Bible calls this event “catching away” or *harpazo* in the Greek. It is more famously known as the Rapture. It is when the Lord will remove every believer in Christ physically from the earth in an instant before a time of great tribulation. It is a different event from the second coming of Christ, which will come in the end of the tribulation.

The Rapture is perhaps one of the most controversial topics within the Church today. One thing I have learned is the most controversial topics within the Church are powerful truths that Satan has tried to obstruct as much as possible.

As a consequence, many have taught a message of insecurity around the Rapture and reason this hope away by teaching not to live with this expectation but rather live as if the Rapture would never happen. In other words, prepare for the worst. At the end of the day it is simply unbelief to an aspect of the Gospel of Grace. For example, healing is also an inheritance given in Christ. Just because some haven't received healing, does that mean it's alright to teach to live as if healing doesn't exist just in case it doesn't happen? God forbid.

The Apostle Paul says quite the opposite. If you are a believer in Christ, having this blessed hope will purify your heart from fear unto bold and godly living. (1 John 3:3)

Others have taught against the Rapture, building human doctrine that negates this event by calling it a fairy tale. Such believe that the believer in Christ will either go through this judgment or don't believe in a future judgment at all. But nothing can be further from the truth.

The Apostle Paul says, we who have been made righteous by the blood of Christ will be saved from the wrath of God through Him. (Romans 5:9)

One of the first century Church fathers, writes about this Biblical truth – His name is Irenaeus. He was a Bishop of the church in Lyons, France. He was an eyewitness to the apostle John and a disciple to Polycarp - a direct disciple of the apostle John. Irenaeus, says in one of his historical writings:

- “...When in the end the Church shall be suddenly **caught up** from this [**corruption**], it is said, ‘There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.’ For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.” – **Irenaeus** (Emphasis in bold by Joyner Briceño)

According to Irenaeus, first is the catching away, then there will be a great tribulation in the earth. I believe this is the generation that will experience this mystery, as the Bible calls it. This generation of believers in Christ will experience the Rapture. I say it with all Grace by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, please don’t misunderstand me, I’m not here to set a date. But the Lord in His great mercy and grace has revealed the season to His Church just as the bride new the season of her Beloved’s return. (Songs of Solomon 2:10-13)

### **Revelation 3:10**

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.”

The good news is, as a believer in Christ, whether you believe in the Rapture or not, you are still righteous by faith in Christ, and when it occurs, you will be kept from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world. But that’s not the issue.

The real issue is will you be among those that remain alive? If so, in what shape will you finish the race when the Rapture occurs?

Having this blessed hope will fortify your heart towards what lies in the upcoming years, and it will spring forth faith to finish strong knowing you will remain alive. Know that this world will get darker and darker as this glorious day approaches. So be like those that eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ who will rescue you out before it becomes unlivable in this world. So when your hear of more wars, disease up rise, natural phenomenon’s, and terrorism spread, your hearts can be secure knowing that we will not experience physical death but remain until the Lord catches us away from this fallen world.

This means no natural phenomenon will ever destroy you, no accident will ever sneak up on you, no disease will ever touch your body, and no war or terrorist will take your life because you are among those believers in Christ that will not sleep (die) but remain alive. You will not suffer physical death but be transformed in the twinkling of eye, conformed to His glorious body. This promise is exclusively for this final generation of believers in Christ. It is exclusively for you!

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