



**ZION'S ROAR**

MINISTRIES

**Joel 3:16**



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THE LORD ALSO SHALL ROAR OUT OF ZION, AND UTTER HIS VOICE FROM JERUSALEM;  
AND THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH SHALL SHAKE: BUT THE LORD WILL BE  
THE HOPE OF HIS PEOPLE, AND THE STRENGTH OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

### THE THREE QUESTIONS SERIES: Part 3 of 3

As a Bible Study teacher and frequent speaker, Rick is often asked a variety of questions about the focus of his ministry. There are three basic questions that seem to arise in many of these discussions. They are all inter-related, and they have come to form the foundational statements of **Zion's Roar Ministries**:

1. Why Study Bible Prophecy?
2. Why Care About Israel?
3. Why Believe in a Rapture?

**Question #3: Why Believe in a Rapture?** To be consistent, let's first examine why some don't.

One of the most common arguments against the Rapture is that the word itself does not appear in the biblical text. This is clearly a very weak argument and demonstrates an unfamiliarity with its etymological origins. The word "Rapture" originates from "*rapturo*" which is simply the Latin translation of the Greek word "*Harpazo*" which appears in **1 Thessalonians 4:17** in King James English as "caught up."

According to Strong's (the recognized standard among Bible concordance/dictionaries), the Greek word "*Harpazo*" (G726) means to be caught up, seized, taken, or snatched away. This in a nutshell, is what the word "Rapture" really means. At some future point, believers will suddenly be plucked from the Earth to be with the Lord. This will leave unbelievers behind to face what follows.

The second argument that has enjoyed recent promotion by seminarians on such unreliable theological venues as, "The History Channel," is the erroneous idea that the Rapture concept was not understood or taught by the early Church Fathers. These detractors say that the Rapture was only recently invented in the United States in the late 1800s by a Dispensationalist minister named John Nelson Darby, and then echoed by others such as Clarence Larkin, Cyrus Scoville, etc.

This is demonstrably false. Anyone reading the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers collection will soon discover that the concept of the Rapture existed from the earliest ages of Christianity. (NOTE: Ante-Nicene Church Fathers are those that lived and served prior to the first "Council of Nicea" held in 325 A.D. to formulate official Church doctrine for the newly Christianized Roman Empire).

The Rapture concept was actually propounded from the time of the original New Testament authors in the first century to their own disciples. This included John the Revelator himself, circa 30-95 A.D., to his disciple, the famous Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, 65-155 A.D., and then onto others in their tutorial linkage, such as Polycarp's own disciple, Irenaeus, 120-202 A.D., and onwards.

It only takes one quote from one ancient Church Father to demolish The History Channel's theology, so here's just a quick one from Irenaeus, who vouches for not only the Rapture concept, but for the pre-Trib view of it, in his famous work, "Against Heresies," Chp. XXIX, circa 182 A.D. saying: "*And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, 'there shall be Tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.'*" (underlined emphasis mine).



Clearly, the first century Church understood and taught the concept of being “caught up” in a *Rapture*, or a *Harpazo*, or even a “Great Snatch” (or whatever you wish to call it). At best, it could perhaps be argued that Darby, Larkin, and Scoville, et al., helped re-popularize this dormant teaching in the United States of the late 1800’s. If so, this unsurprisingly would correspond to documented periods of revival in American history known to historians as the “Great Awakening” periods.

Yet, there is at least one more reason that the Rapture concept is not believed by some.

This reasoning ties directly to the problem of Secessionism or “Replacement Theology” as discussed in the previous section on Question #2. Basically, those in both Catholic and Protestant traditions that have embraced the idea that they have “replaced” Jewish Israel in the eyes of G-d, have had to abandon or analogize the, as of yet, unfulfilled promises He made to her. Thus, by theological necessity, they adopt either a post-Millennial or Amillennial outlook, denying that Jesus Christ (Yeshua) will actually reign from an earthly Jerusalem as the King of Israel, for a thousand years before the creation of a new heaven and earth, as promised by G-d to the Prophets.

Since the Rapture itself is a predicate event aimed at establishing this Millennial promise to the Jews, it too by necessity must be abandoned by these Secessionists. Unfortunately, these theological gymnastics ignore or deny the actual biblical text, and have obfuscated and dangerously confused the teaching of eschatology for centuries. This is why so many people shrug their shoulders and give-up on understanding Bible prophecy. Various Church traditions have needlessly misapplied portions of prophecy intended for Jewish Israel to themselves, and vice versa.

So, by now, perhaps you are coming to realize why belief in the Rapture concept is so important after all. For the next several paragraphs, I’ll attempt to outline it for you. Despite any views to the contrary, the Rapture is a critical part of Bible prophecy and NOT a peripheral issue.

First of all, it is necessary to believe in the Rapture because the biblical text clearly teaches it. You may be surprised to know that the Rapture concept appears in both the Tanakh “Old Testament,” as well as the B’rit Chadashah “New Testament.” This is yet another argument against The History Channel theologians in that this teaching actually pre-dates the first century Ante-Nicene Church, as revealed to the ancients.

As discussed in Part 1 of this series, the reasons many people fail to recognize the teaching of the Rapture in these “Old Testament” verses are two-fold. First, it is due to a preoccupation with historical (*parashah*) and/or life application (*drash*) hermeneutics of the text. This either minimizes, or fails to realize, the more intricate patterns of prophetic biblical interpretation (*remez*). Second, and often unrecognized, is simply an over-reliance on the English translations of the text. The original languages, particularly Hebrew, often hold surprising meaning beyond what the translators could convey in our limited English language.

Many verses in the Tanakh (Old Testament) convey the concept of the Rapture, if/when the previous two issues are rectified. Overt references may just need a *remez* interpretation, while covert references may also require an adequate understanding of the Hebrew behind the text. Let’s look at some examples.



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For an example of hermeneutical conflict, see *Isaiah 40:31*. Yes, it is a familiar and comforting verse, and is often (if not always) taught in a “life application” (*drash*) manner. But frankly, it actually refers to the Rapture from the *remez* perspective: “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (underlined emphasis mine).

Now, you may think you know this verse, but think about this: Who are those that are WAITING upon the Lord? Is it not today’s believer awaiting the return of Yeshua (Jesus)? What does it mean to “MOUNT UP” like eagles? Is it not to be “caught up” into the air (as in rapture, *harpazo*, or other “snatched-up” terms)? When will man’s vigor and strength be renewed to such an extent that he no longer becomes weary? Is it not upon receiving the promise of a glorified body during the Rapture that restores the believer to man’s original immortality? Let’s take a look...

Note that Rabbi Sha’ul (the Apostle Paul) tells us in **1 Corinthians 15:51-53** that during the Rapture our bodies are changed back to man’s former immortal glory, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (die), 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

This assured promise corresponds to the famous Rapture-based declaration of **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will G-d bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of G-d: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Clearly, if the Rapture was not true, there’d be no comfort in these words...and Isaiah knew it.

Before His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven, Yeshua (Jesus) assured His followers in **John 14:1- 3**, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in G-d, 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (underlined emphasis mine).

Just to confirm this point, here’s another “Rapture” passage in the Tanakh (Old Testament) by the Prophet Isaiah. In **Isaiah 26:19-21**, the seer demonstrates that he was foretold of Yeshua’s promise: “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation



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*be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."*

Note that the Resurrection of the Dead occurs immediately with the Rapture of the Living. All believers in the Messiah, dead or alive, both before and after His arrival, will be removed from the Earth and hidden from the judgments of G-d to come upon this planet. This occurs, and is known as, "The Day of the Lord."

As Rabbi Sha'ul (the Apostle Paul) said, believers (dead/alive) are exempt from the wrath of G-d to come: **1Thessalonians 5:9-11**, "For G-d hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake (live) or sleep (die), we should live together with him (resurrection/rapture). Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." Not only did Paul teach this Rapture, he admonished us to teach it to others too!

This covers the hermeneutical issue for now, so quickly, I'll address the original language issue. As you will recall, my premise is that inadequate language in English sometimes conceals prophetic implications of a "Rapture" in the Tanakh (Old Testament) text. The Hebrew of the Tanakh (Old Testament) and the Greek of the B'rit Chadashah (New Testament) are very different languages from each other, and English.

Greek is known to be an extremely precise language with numerous different words to describe every intended nuance of any given topic. Comparatively, English suffers in that it usually has only one word to convey the intended thought. A common example, and one frequently cited, is the comparison of all the various Greek words for "love" that are rendered simply as "love" in English, i.e. *agape*: G-d's love; *phileo*: fraternal love; *eros*: Sexual love, etc. Greek is a very "left-brain" logical, rational, and orderly language.

Likewise, Hebrew far surpasses English, but in the opposite manner. A single word in Hebrew can convey multiple meanings, and many of them may be seemingly unrelated to the Western mind. Hebrew forms an intriguing "thought chain" and, unlike Greek, its meanings are often NOT necessarily linked in a topical fashion. Instead, Hebrew utilizes a broad conceptual, figurative, almost poetic approach. Thus, it is a very "right-brain" intuitive, spiritual and moving language.

For example, the King James translators correctly translated the following verse from Hebrew to English: **Psalm 12:1 To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David.** "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

However, due to the conceptual nature of Hebrew it is also accurately translated: "Help, LORD; for the godly man has completed his work (KJV: ceaseth) for the faithful have disappeared (KJV: fail) from among the children of men." To see this for yourself, simply turn to the standard reference in biblical concordance, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance: With Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*, and examine the list of additional definitions for the Hebrew words translated "ceaseth" and "fail" in the King James English (H1584, H6461).

This passage, when viewed from the prophetic *remez* hermeneutic, and with a base knowledge of the actual Hebrew behind it, clearly suggests the disappearance of the faithful believer in Yeshua, as to be expected by the Rapture; and the trouble Israel faces thereafter, the prophetic "Time of Jacob's Trouble."



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There are many more hidden references to the Rapture in the Tanakh (Old Testament), but this verse brings us to the MAIN reason to believe in the Rapture. So, let's embark upon that path...

The Rapture is a pivotal biblical event, not just for believers, but *especially* as a sign to Jewish Israel who have not yet believed into Yeshua Ha'Meshiach (Jesus Christ). The Bible teaches that the Rapture event will trigger a time of great judgment and Tribulation upon those that remain on the Earth... and unfortunately, even greater persecution against the Jews by the nations of the world. It becomes the grievous Time of Jacob's trouble as spoken by the prophet Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 30:7**) and Yeshua (Jesus Christ) Himself in **Matthew 24:21**, *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."*

Though this great darkness may endure for the night, greater joy will break forth when the Jewish people finally come into the morning light (**Psalms 30:5**) and recognize Yeshua (Jesus) for Who He is (**Zechariah 12:10**). This occurs during their time of great tribulation. After all believers in Yeshua (Jesus), dead and alive, and from all over the world, are removed from the planet, Israel will quickly discover they have absolutely no friends left on Earth, only enemies. Faced with the trauma of losing the vital support of Bible-believing true Christians with a love for Israel, and the obvious fact that these believers are physically missing in accordance with the Word of G-d, there will be no one else upon whom they can call, but Jesus Christ (Yeshua Ha'Meshiach) Himself.

This desperate call will at last bring the Jewish Messiah; physically acting in His long-awaited Jewish role as the reigning King of Israel. That is, the King that destroys her enemies and saves her from both them, and her own sins. This call will finally bring to a close Yeshua's words of anguish that have been in place since His prophesied destruction of the Second Temple which occurred in 70 A.D. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." **Matthew 23:37-39***

As we pointed out in Part 2 of this series, the "New Covenant," of which many Gentile believers are so often self-proud, was in all actuality an agreement made by G-d with His Chosen People: Jewish Israel (**Jeremiah 31:31**). In modern terms, it is the equivalent of an eternal insurance policy. It ensures eternal life and one's entrance into the World to Come. But, if you've ever contracted insurance, then you know that the agreement is made between the covenanting parties only. However, additional certain "riders" on that policy may be allowed...

For example, parents may have a vehicle insurance policy in their names, but when their children start to drive, they can be added as "riders" on their parents' policy. This is similar to the position that Gentile believers find themselves in the New Covenant according to the Rabbi Sha'ul (the Apostle Paul) in **Romans 9-11**. Never forget the "New Covenant" was made with the Jewish people, first and foremost.



Although G-d's eternal New Covenant was made with the Jewish people, Gentiles that are willing to avail themselves of His grace, by faith, may also be granted coverage within the policy limits. This is why it was necessary that the Gospel (the good news of Messiah's salvation) be preached to the Jew first, but also to the Gentile Greeks second (**Romans 1:16**).

This is also why Yeshua Himself said to the Gentile Syro-Phoenician woman that He was not sent, but to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel in **Matthew 15:24**. She wisely acknowledged this truth, but still managed to be blessed by laying claim to their covenant provisions as a Gentile "rider" on their policy!

The alarming thing to keep in mind is that insurance policies can be continued only through a temporary grace period. If by the end of that grace period, no decision is made, the contract becomes null and void and is no longer enforceable by either party. We have lived in the period of such grace for the last 2,000 years. But make no mistake, all grace periods eventually come to an end.

That is why NOW is the accepted day of salvation (**2 Corinthians 6:2**). If you are a Jew, have you entered into this New Covenant with G-d? If you are a Gentile "stranger," have you accepted its provisions as a rider on their policy? Time is short, and your window of opportunity may close sooner than you expect. The Rapture is a trigger event.

Throughout the years, many people have derided the Rapture concept as "escapist," just a way for weak members of the Church to escape their responsibilities for helping to mend the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Rapture has much greater prophetic importance and should mobilize believers to strive for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Yeshua), both far and wide, before it occurs (**Mark 16:15-16**)

Understand that the Rapture has a two-fold purpose. Obviously, it protects His beloved believers, trusting in His grace, from His judgment and wrath that is to come upon an unbelieving sinful world. But primarily, it is a trigger point to reconcile His beloved, but estranged, Jewish people to Himself. Although there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the New Covenant, there will be a shift from the Gentile "riders" back to the actual Jewish covenant partners following the Rapture.

In the final analysis, the Rapture is ultimately not so much about the benefit to believers, as it is about initiating the reconciliation of Jewish Israel with their own G-d, through their long-awaited Divine Messiah, Yeshua Ha'Meshiach (Jesus Christ). Grasping the overlooked concept of Jewish reconciliation with Yeshua and tracing its trail throughout the biblical text will take a person a long way toward understanding the whole of Bible prophecy.

MARANATHA! Our Lord Cometh!