

How the Rapture Happened Without Being Noticed

by Edward E. Stevens

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IN A POST ON Facebook, a futurist wondered how the Parousia, resurrection, Rapture, and Judgment could have occurred on earth in the visible realm without anyone noticing it and reporting it.

Of course, his objection is based on the typical futurist idea that the end-time events would be a cataclysmic destruction by fire of the whole planet and universe. But there are many reasons why that concept is out of touch with biblical and historical reality.

In regard to the resurrection and Rapture, the futurists are looking for the *wrong kind of events* (physical bodies raised out of the ground, or bodies floating up into the sky), and looking in the *wrong place* (in the SEEN realm on earth, instead of in the UNSEEN realm).

It also shows that they are unaware of the amazing supernatural events that *Josephus*, *Yosippon*, and *Hegesippus* recorded, which included the coming of the Son of Man with His angels, and the resurrection of the dead out of Hades.

Consequently, futurists who are skeptical about the first-century fulfillments have misunderstood the manner in which those events happened. So, it is the NATURE of fulfillment that is under examination here, not just the TIME of those events. And we need to explain HOW those events happened without anyone noticing them and reporting them.

How the Events Happened

Revelation 20:13-15 teaches that at the Parousia the dead (plural) in Christ were raised out of Hades in the UNSEEN realm to receive their new immortal bodies that were reserved in heaven for them (1 Cor 15:37-38; 2 Cor 5:1). Then the living saints had their mortal bodies changed into immortal bodies (1 Cor 15:51-52; 2 Cor 5:2-4; Phil 3:21), which put them into the UNSEEN realm with the resurrected saints. Then both groups of saints (now together in the UNSEEN realm) were “caught up together” to meet Christ and remain with Him forever afterward in the UNSEEN realm (1 Thess 4:17; Matt 24:31; John 14:3).

So, we see that our preterist concept of the resurrection, bodily change, and Rapture is NOT the same as the futurist “Left Behind” idea which thinks that human bodies will visibly float up into the sky. It is perfectly legitimate to reject that kind of a rapture because it is obviously NOT what happened at the Parousia in AD 70. So, let’s look at a different NATURE of fulfillment.

Living Changed First Before Raptured

Some futurists and even many preterists fail to grasp the concept of the ***bodily change*** of the living saints, and how that change from mortal to immortal instantly *translated* those living saints into the UNSEEN realm without them having to die first. Thus, their physical bodies did not float up into the sky, but instead were *changed* from mortal to immortal, which instantly put them in the UNSEEN realm (1 Cor 15:51-52; Phil 3:21). They disappeared just like Enoch did (Gen 5:22-24).

And once they were in the unseen realm and no longer visible on earth, they were together with the resurrected saints and then *caught up together* with them to *meet* Christ in the “air” (mid-heaven) in the UNSEEN realm above (1 Thess 4:16-17).

It was at that “meeting” with Christ in the UNSEEN realm above where all those saints “*glorified Him on that day and marveled at him in the presence of all who had believed*” (2 Thess 1:10). Think about that. How were “ALL who had believed” (both the resurrected saints and the changed living saints) gathered into His presence to *marvel at him*? It necessarily implies that those living saints were *changed and translated* into the unseen realm where they *rejoiced with exultation* (1 Pet 4:13) when they *stood before the Son of Man* in His glorious presence at the Parousia (Luke 21:36; Jude 24; 1 Thess 2:19).

The Rapture Was Not Visible on Earth

So, the *catching up* (rapture) and the *meeting* with Christ did not occur in the VISIBLE realm, nor were there any physical bodies caught up. Instead, their mortal bodies were first *changed* into immortal bodies, which put them in the UNSEEN realm, and then they were *caught up together* with the resurrected saints to *meet* Christ and remain with Him forever afterward.

However, we still need to explain why no unbelievers noticed their disappearance and reported it. How could they just vanish into the thin air without anyone seeing it? Here is the most likely scenario.

How Did They Disappear Without Notice?

The Neronic persecution (AD 64-66) was happening at the time of the Parousia and Rapture. The majority of Christians were killed in the Neronic persecution or fell away in the apostasy, leaving only a small minority. There were not tens of thousands of true Christians remaining alive at the Parousia. And the Neronic persecution forced them to go into hiding and *meet secretly behind closed doors* with no unbelievers allowed to be among them.

Furthermore, the unbelievers were afraid to be associated with the Christians for fear of being arrested and killed. It was like the situation in Nazi Germany during World War Two. When the Jews were arrested in the night and taken away to be killed, their non-Jewish neighbors did not run down to the local Gestapo to report them missing for fear that they might be arrested also.

Warned Not to Forsake the Assembly

Hebrews 10:25 (written in AD 63 a year before the Neronian persecution began) urged the saints “*not to forsake their assembling together*” on the first day of every week, especially as they saw the signs that His coming was drawing near. As we will see below, there was a very good reason why it was extremely important for those living and remaining saints to gather together on the first day of every week, especially after they saw the signs that the Parousia and the Rapture were about to occur.

Moreover, Jesus informed them in advance that when they see the Son of Man coming in the sky, they should “*straighten up and lift up their heads, because their redemption was drawing near*” (Luke 21:28). They surely kept that in mind as they intensely watched for His coming (Matt 24:42-44; Rev 16:15; 2 Pet 3:12ff).

The Day and the Hour

Josephus gives us “the day and the hour” when *the angelic armies* appeared in the sky signaling that the extended period of the Parousia had begun:

...Besides [the other signs just mentioned], a few days after that feast [**Passover**], on the **twenty-first day of the month Artemisius** [*the day*], a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, **before sunset** [*the hour*], *chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities ...* [Wars 6.5.3 (6.296-299)].

The angels appeared in the sky above Judea precisely two weeks before Pentecost (AD 66), which was a first day of the week. Josephus tells us that the angelic armies were seen just before sunset at the very hour when the saints were on their way to their first-day assemblies. Can you imagine how ecstatic and electrified they must have been when they gathered behind closed doors? This was the sign that they had been waiting for. They now knew for certain that *their redemption* (the Rapture) had drawn near (Luke 21:28).

Josephus also gives us “the day and the hour” when the *resurrection of the dead saints* took place:

Moreover at that feast which we call **Pentecost** [*the day*], as the priests were **going by night** [*the hour*] into the inner [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a *great multitude*, saying, “*Let us remove hence*” [Wars 6.5.3 (6.299-300)].

He says that the priests after dark on the evening of Pentecost (the first day of the week), as they were entering into the temple, heard a great multitude *in the unseen realm* saying that they were leaving one place in the unseen realm (Hades) and going to another place in the unseen realm (Heaven). That was the resurrection of the dead saints out of Hades, and it happened in the unseen realm. The priests did not see it, but they heard it and felt it.

Bodily Change and Rapture

The apostle Paul tells us that the *bodily change* of the living saints would occur at the very same moment “*in the blink of an eye*” when the dead saints were RAISED out of Hades (1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:16). We noted above that this occurred after dark on the first day of the week while the saints were gathered behind closed doors. After seeing the angelic armies appear in the sky two weeks before, we can only imagine how anxious and expectant those saints must have been as they assembled together on that first day of the week!

And while they were assembled in secret behind closed doors after dark, *their bodies were changed and translated into the unseen realm* where they were *caught up together* with the resurrected saints to meet Christ in the unseen realm above and then remain with Him forever afterward (1 Thess 4:16-17).

No Unbelievers Saw It

Thus, since unbelievers avoided any association with Christians for fear of being arrested and killed, and since they were not allowed in those secret assemblies anyway, they never saw the saints disappear. It happened in secret at night behind closed doors while the saints were assembled on the first day of the week (Pentecost in AD 66).

Moreover, since the unbelievers did not know that there was supposed to be a Rapture, if any of them noticed that the Christians were gone, they would only have thought that they were *arrested in the night* and taken away to be killed or that they *fled in the night* to escape the persecution.

So, this is how the Rapture most likely occurred without any non-Christians noticing it and reporting it. Hope that helps. If this raised any questions for you, feel free to email me. ☩