

# Major Bible Themes

## 52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*  
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### God the Son: His Coming for His Saints

- Unfulfilled Prophecy
  - Almost ¼ of the Bible was predictive prophecy when it was written, although much has already been fulfilled.
  - The fulfillment of biblical prophecy has always been literal (As prophesied, Christ was a “son” of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, a descendent of David, born in the city of Bethlehem).
  - The Word of God also presents prophecies which have not yet been fulfilled at the present time and we should have full expectation that these will be literally fulfilled as well.
  - Prophecy concerning Christ’s return include both His return *for* His church (the Rapture) as well as His return *with* His saints (to set up His earthly kingdom).
  - Nowhere in the O.T. is the Rapture prophesied.
- Prophecies of the Rapture
  - The first revelation that Jesus Christ would come for His saints was given in the Upper Room the night before His crucifixion (John 14:2-3) where He said they would be taken into heaven.
  - The disciples knew about the glorious return of Christ to set up His kingdom on earth (Matt 24:26-31), but this was different.
  - Paul gives details of this important event (1 Thess 4:13-18)...
    - ✦ Christ descends from heaven, accompanied by the souls of all the believers who have died in Christ (i.e. part of the Church).
    - ✦ He gives a “shout” of command accompanied by the voice of the archangel Michael and the trumpet of God.
    - ✦ The dead in Christ rise first to join the living saints.
    - ✦ Together, they go to meet Christ in the air on the way to heaven.
  - Further details are given in 1 Cor 15:51-58...
    - ✦ This event is a mystery, that is previously unrevealed in the O.T.
    - ✦ It takes place in a moment of time (the twinkling of an eye).
    - ✦ The dead in Christ are raised in their new, imperishable, resurrection bodies.
    - ✦ The living saints are “changed” to receive their resurrection bodies as well, since these earthly bodies are not suited for glory.
  - The Rapture is the resurrection of Church age saints only – those who are “in Christ”.

- O.T. saints will be raised at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent (Rev 20:4).
- Unbelievers are raised after the 1000 years of the Millennial Kingdom are complete (Rev 20:5-6).
- Contrasts Between Christ Coming for His Saints and His Coming with His Saints
  - Christ's coming for His saints is to take them from earth to heaven (His Father's house) whereas His coming with His saints is a movement from heaven to earth.
  - At the Rapture, living saints are "translated" while no such translation occurs at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent and they remain on earth.
  - At the Rapture, the world is unchanged and remains in sin while at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent the world is judged and righteousness is established on earth.
  - The Rapture of the Church is a deliverance from the wrath to come while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent is a deliverance of those who have believed in Christ during the tribulation and have survived.
  - The Rapture is described as imminent with no unfulfilled prophecy standing between the Church and its deliverance while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent is preceded by many signs and events.
  - The Rapture is a truth revealed only in the N.T. while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent is a prominent doctrine in both testaments.
  - The Rapture relates to believers being taken up from the earth while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent deals with both believers and unbelievers who are judged while both are on the earth.
  - At the Rapture Satan is not bound (and is very active in the period which follows) while at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent Satan is bound.
- The Rapture, the Blessed Hope
  - We have not been destined for wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9).
  - This truth should be comforting to us (1 Thess 4:18).
  - It is our blessed hope to look for His return (Titus 2:13).
  - This hope should motivate us to purify ourselves as He is pure to bring Him honor and glory in our lives (1 John 3:1-3).

- Questions
  - What proportion of the Bible was prophecy when it was written?
  - What is the significance of the fact that many prophecies have already been literally fulfilled?
  - What is the distinction between Christ coming for His saints and Christ coming with His saints?
  - What important events will occur between these two events?
  - When did Christ first reveal the Rapture of the Church and what did He reveal about it?
  - Why did the disciples have difficulty understanding the first mention of the Rapture?
  - Describe the order of events of the Rapture as given in 1 Thess 4:13-18.
  - Why does Christ bring the souls of Christians who have died with Him from heaven at the time of the Rapture?
  - Why is the truth of Christ coming for His saints declared a mystery in 1 Cor 15:51-52?
  - What additional facts concerning the Rapture are brought out in 1 Cor 15:51-58?
  - What kind of bodies will those translated or those who are raised from the dead receive?
  - If the O.T. saints are not raised at the Rapture, when will they be raised?
  - When are unbelievers raised?
  - Name some of the important contrasts between the Rapture and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent.
  - Given these contrasts, does Scripture support a pre-tribulation or post-tribulation Rapture?
  - What is the practical application of the truth of the Rapture to our daily lives?