

2. Definition

1. The word “Rapture” is used as a technical term for the resurrection of the royal family of God. It is the second event of the first resurrection subsequent to that of Jesus Christ in A.D. 33.
2. The Lord’s resurrection, ascension, and session is part of His strategic victory in the angelic conflict.
3. The dispensation of the Church functions within the framework of the Divine Court of Appeals during which witnesses for the Prosecution are elected as members of the Royal Family of God.
4. The Church Age has no specific date of termination. There is no prophecy in the dispensation except for its inauguration and its ultimate conclusion.
5. Consequently, there is no prophecy that provides any clue for when the Rapture will occur. All we can surmise is that once God decides that the royal family is complete, then the Rapture is implemented.
6. Jesus provided the first prophecy for the Rapture in:

John 14:1 “Do not let your soul be disturbed. Believe in God! Believe also in Me!

v. 2 “In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you! I go to prepare for your advantage a place for you.

v. 3 “And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I will always be in heaven, so will you also keep on being there also. (EXT)

3. The Imminency of the Rapture

1. The word “imminency” refers to something that *threatens* to occur immediately. It does not *mean* immediately.
2. It is imminent to occur because there is no prophecy that must be fulfilled before it *may* occur.
3. There are only two prophecies pertinent to the Church Age:
(1) its beginning in Acts 2, prophesied by the Lord in Acts 1:5, 8, and (2) its conclusion at the Rapture of the Church.



4. While the Rapture is imminent, the Second Advent is not. Before the Second Advent occurs four things must precede it: (1) the Rapture, (2) the dispensation of the Tribulation, (3) the Great Genuflection, and (4) the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ.
5. There is absolutely no prophecy that must be fulfilled before the Rapture may occur. In a passage we will study in about three years, James confirms this in:

James 5:7 Therefore be patient [aorist active imperative of μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*)], brethren, until the coming of the Lord [Rapture]. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

v. 8 You too be patient [aorist active imperative of μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*)]; strengthen [aorist active imperative of στηρίζω (*stērizō*)] your hearts [καρδίας (*kardías*): facilitation of souls' doctrinal inventory], for the coming [παρουσία (*parousía*): refers to the Rapture of the church] of the Lord is near [intensive perfect active indicative of ἐγγίζω (*engízō*): imminent]. (NASB)

6. This is one of numerous passages in Scripture that refers to the terminal event of the Church Age and the beginning of the Tribulation on earth. Here is a good synopsis:

παρουσία (*parousía*). His coming to remove His disciples from their toils and struggles on earth and to take them to the place He would prepare for them in His Father's house (John 14:2, 3, "that where I am, there you may be also"). This is what is referred to as the *parousía* of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15.

This coming is going to be startling and unexpected. The Lord will come to raise the dead in Christ, to transform the living who have believed, and to take them all to be with Him (1 Corinthians 15:50–54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17). This will constitute the Day of Christ or the Day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:2).



Simultaneously, however, there will begin a time of great suffering for those unbelievers who are alive at the time of the *parousía*. This is called the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6, 9; Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). All these passages speak of the period of the Tribulation and include judgments that extend over a period of time prior to the Second Coming [or Second Advent] of the Lord Jesus (which itself constitutes another time of His coming).

The coming of the Lord at the end of the seven-year tribulation period is what the Lord describes in Matthew 24:15–22, 32–34; Mark 13:14–23, 29, 30 (cf. Luke 19:41–44; 21:20–23, 32, 33; 23:28–30).

Thus the coming of the Lord or His *parousía* consists of several comings which are in reality stages of a continuous process.²

7. The Rapture could have occurred in the first century. It has not occurred yet in the twenty-first century. Over the course of about 1,987 years of the Church Age, many circumstances have occurred that the unenlightened have assumed would signal the Rapture, yet none have.
8. The reasons for this are that there is no biblical revelation that prophesies an event that signals its occurrence. It only reports that it is imminent which means that it “threatens to occur immediately.”
9. Speculation about “astral signs” or “human events,” or “wars and rumors of wars” have absolutely no biblical backing. James gives us the proper biblical rationale regarding the imminency of the Rapture in James 5:7–8.
10. Verse 7 begins with the commandment to have patience, the aorist active imperative of the compound verb, μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*).

² Spiros Zodhiates, gen. ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 1123–24.



11. This compound is made up of the adjective **μακρός (makrós)**, “far distant regarding time,” and the noun **θυμός (thumós)**, “mind or soul.” This compound came to mean a “long soul” and expressed by the term “longsuffering,” referring to personal endurance, patience, or forbearance.
12. In the King James Version of the Bible, the word “longsuffering” is used to translate of the verb, **μακροθυμέω (makrothuméō)**.
13. This term places emphasis on the soul where all solutions to temporal problems are resolved or not. Solutions to worldly problems can only be resolved by the soul’s ability to apply doctrine to the circumstances.
14. What this planet provides is what is typical for its present status quo which is entropy. Everything it produces is produced by the grace of God Who manages this entropy on behalf of the human race.
15. What attitude is a Hebrew farmer supposed to have regarding his crops? Have patience and trust in the Lord. However, he must take the responsibility to manage his crops. The entropy of the devil’s world intrudes with negative circumstances or human laziness to destroy a crop.

“The Boy Who Wouldn’t Hoe Corn”	
<p>Tell you a little story and it won't take long 'Bout a lazy farmer who wouldn't hoe his corn; The reason why I never could tell For that young man was always well.</p> <p>He planted his corn in the month of June And by July it was up to his eyes; Come September, came a big frost And all the young man's corn was lost.</p> <p>His story, kith, had just begun Said, "Young man, have you hoed some corn?" "Well, I tried and I tried, and I tried in vain But I don't believe I raised no grain."</p>	<p>He went downtown to his neighbor's door Where he had often been before; Sayin', "Pretty little miss, will you marry me? Little miss what do you say?"</p> <p>"Why do you come for me to wed? You, can't even make your own cornbread; Single I am and will remain A lazy man, I won't maintain."³</p>

³ Songwriters: Alison Maria Krauss, Barry Bales, Daniel John Tyminski, Jerry Douglas, Patrick John Brayer, Ron Block. © BMG Rights Management, A Side Music LLC D/B/A Modern Works Music Publishing.



16. Once the farmer breaks the soil and sows the seeds he is then at the mercy of the grace of God. If the crop comes in it will be because of the grace of God. In the meantime, he must patiently wait.
17. During this time, he patiently waits for the early and late rains. This situation demonstrates the importance of a grace-oriented believer's mental attitude who is at the mercy of the weather. Here is the circumstance that is typical for any farmer in the area of Palestine:

Most important to the farmer is the distribution of rainfall throughout the year. This is very uneven indeed. No rain falls at all during the four hottest months of the year. This hot, dry summer is a common feature of most of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean; it is balanced by a cool wet winter, but the two critical periods are the beginning and end of the wet season, when temperatures are high enough to promote growth, and the soil is moist enough to work.

The farmer's year is linked closely to the coming of the rains. In October these begin, generally with a series of thunderstorms, and plowing and sowing can then be started on the hard-baked soil. If the start of the rainy season is delayed, crop yields suffer; if the delay a long one, crop failure may result. Hence, these "early" rains are of the utmost importance. At the other end of the winter, rains continuing into late April and May, when temperatures are high, are of much more value than in January or February, when they are low; they increase yields for every day that the rains are prolonged. The farmer therefore hopes for the "latter rains."

This combination of early and latter rains is referred to frequently in the Bible, e.g. Deuteronomy 11:14; Jeremiah 5:24; Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23; James 5:7.⁴

⁴ J. H. Patterson, "Rain," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, 1976), 27–28.

