

# The Not-So-Secret Rapture

*“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:30-31)*

There are two facts we learn about the return of Jesus from this passage. It will be a visible return, and it will be announced, loudly!

Before a person begins to study the symbolic language found in the Book of Revelation, it is important to understand some basic principles about the return of Christ that are taught plainly in the Scriptures *without* symbolism. One of the main points is that Jesus will not return secretly. He will come in a very visible way with clouds, and it will be quite loud as well. Lest anyone think that I am taking a private interpretation of what Jesus means here, let us look at how the Apostles applied this statement in their writings and teachings.

First of all, Jesus says that His return will be visible and the whole earth will know what is happening and see it.

This visible return is confirmed by an angel to the disciples in the book of Acts:

*“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:9-11)*

Jesus was visible as He ascended to heaven, and He will be visible when he returns!

John reminds us of the same thing in Revelation 1:7:

*“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”*

This text confirms the fact that the return of Jesus will be visible to all the world. Not only that, it also tells us that this event will occur when the laws of time and space are ended at the close of time. In an eternal setting, is the only way everyone on earth can see an event at the same time.

Moreover, the text teaches us that this will be a general resurrection. The very men that carried out the crucifixion will be raised from the dead to witness Christ's return.

The writer of Hebrews also tells us that he will *appear*, that is, be visible.

*“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Hebrews 9:28)*

This does not mean He will only be seen by those who look for Him. The writer is assuring those looking for Him that His return will be the end of all struggle because the victorious King will take His people home.

The second detail Jesus gives us is that His return will be announced with a trumpet (or loud voice) from heaven.

The Apostle Paul devoted an entire chapter teaching the Church at Corinth details and facts about the return of Jesus. In his argument, he links the resurrection of the dead with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and concludes with this detail about that day:

*“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, 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.” (1st Corinthians 15:52)*

Paul said that the moment of the resurrection will happen instantly, and there will be a trumpet sounding from heaven just like Jesus said.

He wrote similar words to the Church at Thessalonica:

*“For the Lord himself shall descend from with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: 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 shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1st Thessalonians 4:16-17)*

Paul gives further evidence that the return will not go unnoticed. The dead will be resurrected just before we are changed. I seriously doubt that billions of bodies coming from graves, tombs, the dust, and the sea will be hidden from view. Paul also says that we will be caught up together with them. This is where the term *rapture*, or being caught up, comes from. But notice, it is not a secret. We will be caught up together with those that had just been raised from the dead!

Jesus, confirmed by the Apostles, has taught us that He will return in a very visible and very loud manner. Yet, there are still those who would try and teach that this return will be secret and some will miss it. I guess they have forgotten how Jesus reassured those who were concerned about missing His return:

*“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:26-27)*

Jesus, the One Who will be returning, has clearly told us that His return will not be a secret or be something that you might miss. Just as the lightning starts in one part of the sky and then quickly fills the heavens, Jesus' return will be clearly seen and heard by the whole earth. This passage also tells us that the clearest sign of His return is – His return!