



# LOOKING AHEAD

What the Bible tells us about the future  
(eschatology)

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## PART 3: THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

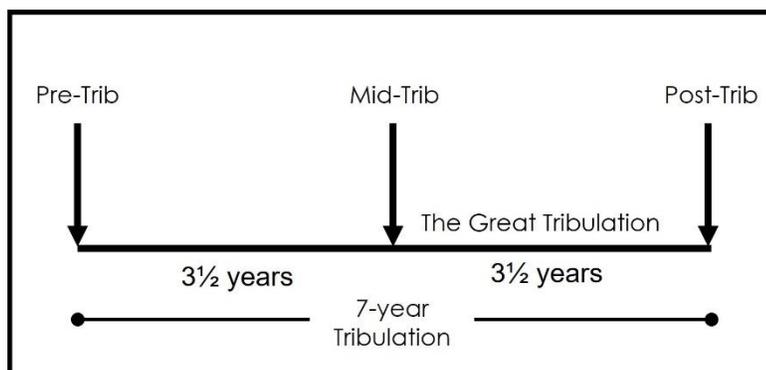
Note: The following is a very brief summary of this topic. Additional information on this subject can be found at [www.TaylorNotes.Info](http://www.TaylorNotes.Info)

### A. What is the Rapture?

The word "rapture" comes from the Latin verb *rapiemur* which means "to carry off" or "catch up." The rapture is the catching away of the church from earth to heaven (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

### B. Five views of when the Rapture takes place

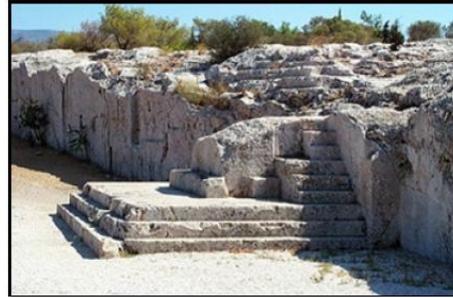
- Mid-Tribulation Rapture View: The church (believers) will be raptured at the midpoint of the 7-year Tribulation Period.
- Partial Rapture View: There will be a series of raptures during the Tribulation.
- Pre-wrath Rapture View: The rapture occurs between the beginning of the Great Tribulation and Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.
- Post-Tribulation Rapture View: The church (believers) will be raptured at the end of the seven-year Tribulation to meet the Lord in the air on his way from heaven to earth (second coming).
- Pre-Tribulation Rapture View: The church (believers) will be raptured before the 7-year Tribulation Period. The majority of Bible scholars hold this view.



### C. The Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:9-15)

All believers will someday stand before the judgment seat (bema) of Christ to be rewarded for their earthly works.

In Greek times a bema was a raised, throne-like stone platform on which rulers or judges sat when making speeches (Acts 12:21) or hearing and deciding cases (e.g., Acts 18: 12-17). It was also used to present awards to the victors in an athletic contest. The "bema seat" is where the presiding officer sat.



Only believers will stand before this judgment seat and will be rewarded for the earthly deeds they accomplished. Their sins are not being judged here since they have already been judged on the cross. The outcome will be a reward (or deprivation of reward). Salvation is not in question (Psalm 103:12; Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 3:15; 1 John 2:12).

- The time of the bema of Christ: most likely right after the rapture of the church.
- The place of the bema of Christ: in heaven.
- The Judge at the bema: Jesus (John 5:22).
- The subjects at the bema: believers only.
- The basis of the examination at the bema of Christ: the believer's works, not their sins (Rom. 8:1; cf. Prov. 16:2).
- The rewards of the bema of Christ: crowns (or wreaths), as many as five (1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Thess. 2:19; Jas 1:12; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4). These crowns will most likely be used for worshipping God (Rev. 4:10).

### D. The Marriage Feast of the Lamb

The marriage feast of the Lamb is a future event where the church is joined with Jesus Christ probably after the judgment seat of Christ and before the second coming (Rev. 19:7-10; Eph. 5:25-27).

The marriage feast of the Lamb bears similarity to the third stage of a traditional Jewish marriage.



- Stage 1: The Jewish betrothal. A legal binding between a young boy and a young girl. This resembles the point in time when a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Stage 2: The Jewish marriage. The bridegroom comes for his bride and is married to her. This resembles the rapture of the church (bride).
- Stage 3: The Jewish marriage feast of the bride and groom. This resembles the marriage feast of the Lamb.