
RAPTURE: WHY NO ONE NOTICED

By Kenneth N Higgs

Jesus warned his disciples, in ancient Judea circa AD 30, about the tribulation and persecution that they would suffer within their lifetime:

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake.” (Matthew 24:9)

That prophesied tribulation was dramatically fulfilled in the days of Nero Caesar, the absolute tyrant who ruled the Roman Empire from AD 54 to 68.

PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS BY NERO

In our article *“Who is the Beast of Revelation?”*, we concluded that Nero was the Beast From the Sea described in Revelation:

“... it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months ... to make war on the saints and to conquer them.” (Revelation 13:5,7)

Nero was easily the most depraved and brutal ‘animal’ or ‘beast’ to ever become Emperor. In AD 64, a disastrous fire in Rome destroyed ten of the city’s fourteen regions, and rumours spread that Nero was the arsonist behind it. In order to scotch the rumours, Nero blamed the followers of Christ and had many arrested and tortured. For 42 months, he persecuted the Christians with all manner of horrific and cruel punishments, resulting in a vast number of deaths. The persecution only ceased with the death of Nero in June AD 68. Jewish authorities and mobs in many cities also joined in the horrendous slaughter, but only up until they themselves became enemies of Rome when the Jewish rebellion broke out in AD 65. Just as Jesus had promised his first disciples in AD 30, their tribulation and persecution would be “cut short” to save their lives:

“ And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.” (Matthew 24:22)

CHRISTIANS FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS

The outbreak of the Jewish war resulted in Rome sending Cestius with the Twelfth Legion and other troops to quell the uprising in Judea. His army attacked and destroyed many cities and towns. In October AD 66 Cestius seized the suburbs of Jerusalem, and besieged the Temple Mount, but was driven back and in November 66, there was a brief lull in fighting. This was the time for Christians, who survived the Neronian persecution, to save their lives, by obeying Jesus’ command to *“flee to the mountains” (Matt 24:16)*. No Christians were found in the city after that date.

NON-BELIEVERS WOULD NOT SEE THE RAPTURE AND RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

We have no historical record of what happened after the surviving Christians were able to flee to the mountains and escape the siege of Jerusalem. But we can clearly see that they escaped to safety away from the power of Rome and the Jews. It is also reasonable to surmise that they would avoid any

contact whatsoever with non-believers, for fear of being arrested and killed. So non-believers would have no idea of what happened to them, or if they were raptured.

“I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” (John 14:3)

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

“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.” (Mark 13:26-27)

Forty years earlier, Jesus promised to “rapture” the surviving 1st century Christians (NOT you or me 2,000 years later). This was to be an actual gathering of living Christians to take them out of the earthly realm, give them new immortal bodies and translate them into the heavenly realm, where they would live forevermore with Jesus. Similarly, the “dead in Christ”, who died before the parousia, would be resurrected out of the confines of Hades, where their souls waited for deliverance.

“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.” (1 Corinthians 15:52,53)

Non-believers were not present in the location where the surviving Christians sought refuge, away from Judea. Non-believing Jews or Romans would not witness or even know about the resurrection of the dead saints nor the rapture of the living saints. The whole miraculous event would take place in the blink of an eye, taking the saints into the unseen realm, and no one left on earth would notice it or report it.

You can read more about the Rapture and Great Tribulation and the Parousia of Christ (*Second Coming*) at the Biblical website: ParousiaFulfilled.com

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