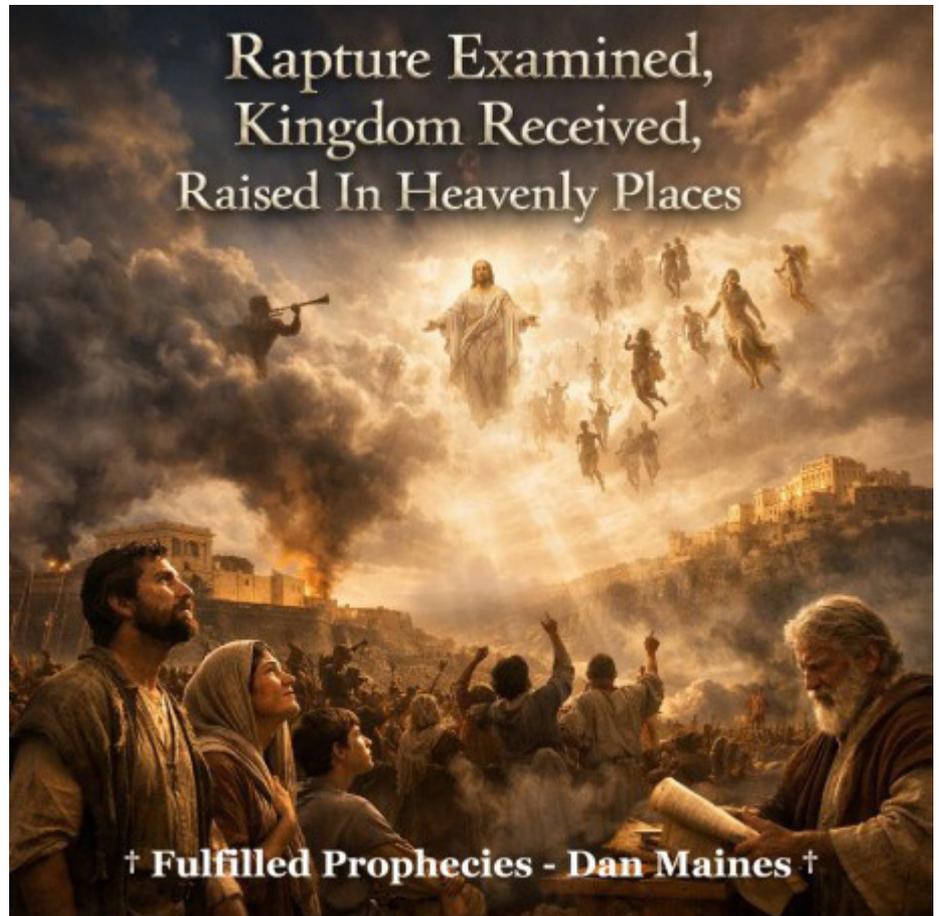


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**Rapture Examined,
Kingdom
Received, Raised
In Heavenly Places**



By Dan Maines

Rapture Examined, Kingdom Received, Raised In Heavenly Places

Introduction

† The idea of a future rapture has become one of the most assumed teachings in modern Christianity, yet it doesn't come from the apostles, the prophets, or the early church.

† Scripture never teaches believers escaping the earth, instead it teaches believers being transferred, raised, and seated in Christ.

† This sermon will let Scripture define the kingdom, the resurrection, the coming of Christ, and the heavenly places, without importing futurist assumptions.

Colossians 1:13

He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

† The verb transferred is past tense, not future expectation, this action was already accomplished.

† The movement described is covenantal, not geographical, from darkness to light, from death to life.

† If believers were already transferred into Christ's kingdom, there isn't any biblical room for a future rapture into it.

Ephesians 2:4-6

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

† Paul places resurrection, ascension, and seating as one completed covenant act.

† Raised up doesn't describe physical elevation into the sky, it describes covenant resurrection from death in Adam to life in Christ.

† Being seated means sharing in Christ's reign now, not waiting for a future bodily removal.

Luke 17:20-21

Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor

will they say, Look, here it is, or, There it is. For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.

† Jesus explicitly denied a visible, outward arrival of the kingdom.

† If the kingdom doesn't arrive by observation, it can't arrive by mass disappearance either.

† The kingdom was present in Christ and fully established through His death, resurrection, and judgment.

Daniel 7:13-14

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.

And to Him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

† Clouds here signify divine authority and enthronement, not physical travel through the atmosphere.

† The Son of Man comes to the Father, not away from the earth.

† This passage defines the kingdom as already received, ruling, and everlasting.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we

shall always be with the Lord.

† Paul repeatedly uses we and us, placing fulfillment within his own generation.

† Trumpets and clouds are covenant judgment imagery rooted in the Old Testament.

† Meeting the Lord reflects royal reception language, not believers abandoning the earth.

Isaiah 13:9-10

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation, and He will exterminate its sinners from it.

For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light, the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light.

† Cosmic language here describes judgment on nations, not literal astronomical collapse.

† This establishes how prophetic imagery functions throughout Scripture.

† Paul uses the same language pattern in Thessalonians.

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

† You have come is present reality, not future hope.

† Heavenly Jerusalem is a covenant identity, not a physical location believers are waiting to reach.

† Believers are already participating in the heavenly realm while living on earth.

What The Heavenly Places Are

† Heavenly places describe covenant standing, authority, and access to God through Christ.

† They contrast with the earthly shadows of the Mosaic system, temple, and priesthood.

† Being seated with Christ means reigning with Him now, not escaping creation later.

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the judgment on Jerusalem using the same signs Jesus foretold.

† Eusebius affirmed Christ's coming in judgment occurred in that generation.

† Irenaeus rejected escapist eschatology and taught resurrection as transformation, not removal.

† Clement of Alexandria taught believers already participate in heavenly realities through Christ.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't live waiting to disappear, we live as citizens of the kingdom already received.

† Our assurance rests in what Christ has already accomplished.

† Resurrection life is lived now through faithfulness, obedience, and covenant identity.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 2:4-6; Luke 17:20-21; Daniel 7:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Isaiah 13:9-10; Hebrews 12:22-24

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

Common Futurist Objections To The Rapture, Answered From Scripture

† Objection: The rapture is clearly taught in 1 Thessalonians 4, believers are taken to heaven.

† Answer: The text never says believers leave the earth or go to heaven. Paul describes a meeting with the Lord using clouds, trumpets, and descent, all established Old Testament judgment and enthronement imagery. The language comes from Daniel, Isaiah, and the Psalms, not from space travel concepts. Paul also places this event in his generation by repeatedly saying we who are alive and remain.

† Objection: Being caught up proves physical removal.

† Answer: Caught up is not a technical term for escape. The same language is used in prophetic and royal reception settings where subjects go out to meet a coming king and return with him in victory. Nothing in the passage says believers leave creation or stay suspended in the sky.

† Objection: The kingdom hasn't come yet because the world is still evil.

† Answer: Scripture never defines the kingdom by global morality. Jesus said the kingdom does not come with observation and is not located by here or there. The kingdom is defined by Christ's reign, not by the absence of sin in the world. Colossians 1:13 says believers were already transferred into it.

† Objection: Heavenly places means heaven after death.

† Answer: Ephesians 2 places believers already seated in heavenly places while still alive. Hebrews 12 says believers have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem. Heavenly places describe covenant access, authority, and identity in Christ, not a future relocation.

† Objection: The resurrection must be physical because graves are mentioned.

† Answer: Resurrection language in Scripture consistently describes covenant transition from death to life. Paul explicitly contrasts natural and spiritual bodies and places resurrection within redemptive history. Ephesians 2 calls the living dead, and then raised, without leaving their physical bodies.

† Objection: The rapture wasn't taught clearly because it was a mystery.

† Answer: Mystery in Scripture refers to something once hidden and now revealed, not something delayed for thousands of years. Paul says the mystery was revealed to his generation, not postponed to ours.

† Objection: The early church believed in a future rapture.

† Answer: There is no documented belief in an escape based rapture in the early church. Writers like Irenaeus, Clement, and Eusebius interpreted resurrection and Christ's coming in covenantal and historical terms, not removal from the earth.

† Objection: If Christ already came, why are we still here.

† Answer: Scripture never says Christ's coming ends human history. His coming ended the Old Covenant age, judged Jerusalem, and established the everlasting kingdom. Believers remain as citizens of that kingdom, living resurrection life now.

† Objection: Denying the rapture removes hope.

† Answer: Our hope is not escape, it's union with Christ, assurance, and kingdom life now. Scripture places hope in what

has been accomplished, not in fear driven timelines.

† Objection: This view spiritualizes the Bible.

† Answer: Scripture itself defines how prophetic language works. When God judged Egypt, Babylon, and Edom, the same cosmic language was used without literal stars falling. Letting Scripture interpret Scripture isn't spiritualizing, it's biblical.

† The simple truth is this: The rapture doctrine requires reading Scripture through a futurist lens that the Bible itself never uses. When the text is allowed to speak in its own covenantal, historical, and prophetic context, the rapture disappears, and the kingdom stands exactly where Scripture says it is, already received, already reigning, already ours.

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