

[Differences Between the Rapture and Second Coming](#)

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By [Nathan Jones](#)

As Web Minister for Lamb & Lion Ministries, I get the blessing each day of responding to an in-boxful of great questions related to Bible prophecy. Many of these questions come from people wanting to know more about the return of Jesus Christ.

Concerning Jesus' prophesied return, it comes as a surprise to some to find out that the Rapture is an event that is going to occur separate and apart from the Second Coming. Here's how I explain it:

When you look at the Bible verses on the Rapture — [John 14:1-14](#), [1 Corinthians 15:51-58](#), [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) — and then you look at other verses that talk about the Second Coming — [Zechariah 14:1-12](#), Jesus' account in [Matthew 24:29-31](#) and in [Mark 13:24-27](#), [Luke 21:25-27](#), and Revelation 19 — when compared they tell a different story. We go into reading these verses as if they are supposed to be all about the Second Coming, but discover there is a vast difference between the two accounts.

For instance, if you look at the verses particularly about the Rapture, they tell that when Jesus comes He comes in the air. Believers are brought from the ground up into the air to be with Christ. But, in Second Coming verses, the order occurs the other way around — Jesus is coming down and He actually lands on Earth. So, for the Rapture Jesus is up in the air, but for the Second Coming Jesus comes to the ground.

Also, take the Mount of Olives. In the Rapture verses believers in Christ are brought up into the air and Jesus is waiting for them. But, in the Second Coming verses Jesus comes down to Earth and when He lands (especially in Zechariah 14 explains this) the Mount of Olives splits forming a new valley on the East side of Jerusalem. For such a remarkable event, there is oddly no mention of that in the Rapture verses.

It is like the Rapture and the Second Coming are two different stories — two different events — and so I think that is indeed the case.

Again, let's look at the location of believers in Christ during these events. The believers are brought up to Heaven in the Rapture verses, but when Jesus comes back to Earth there are believers on the Earth. So, if Jesus brought all the believers up at the Rapture, how could there be believers still on the Earth at the Second Coming? A significant time lapse would have had to occur between the Rapture and Second Coming for so many people to come to believe in Jesus as Savior. So, again, these have to be two separate and distinct events.

When you read like 1 Thessalonians 4 and you compare it to Revelation 19 you find they don't have anything in common except that they both focus upon Jesus Christ. In one account Jesus appears in the heavens, but in the other account He comes down to Earth. In one He appears for His believers and the other He returns with His believers.

Even the nature of Christ's return is different. In the Rapture account He is appearing as a Deliverer and as a Bridegroom for His Bride, but in the Second Coming account He is coming back to Earth for the purpose of pouring out the wrath of God upon those who have rejected the grace, mercy and love of God, and He comes with His believers and He comes to be a King. They have to be two different events because the stories just don't line up.

What these differences mean is that the Second Coming of Jesus is going to occur in two stages — first the Rapture for the Church and second the later return to the Earth of Jesus with His Church to reign.

Having the Second Coming in two separate stages solves a problem with the differences in accounts, in that the Bible tells us that we cannot know anything about the timing of the Lord's return ([Matt. 24:36-24](#)). And, yet, if we go over to the book of Revelation we'll see it says that once the Antichrist signs a peace covenant the time will be exactly seven years until Jesus returns (Dan. 9; Rev. 11). These scriptures give us the exact amount of time that God is going to pour out His wrath on this Earth — 84 months. So, when Jesus in Matthew 24 speaks about not knowing when Christ's coming will happen, it has to be referring to the Rapture. Even Jesus says He doesn't know when He is supposed to come back to the Earth. If the Antichrist signed a peace treaty and then 3 1/2 years later desecrated the newly rebuilt Temple, Jesus could say, "Okay, I've got this many days before I am going to show up."

Because of these differences in the accounts, the Rapture and the Second Coming must be separate events within Jesus' prophesied return.