

# CHAPTER 3

## The Rapture

### The Story of Enoch

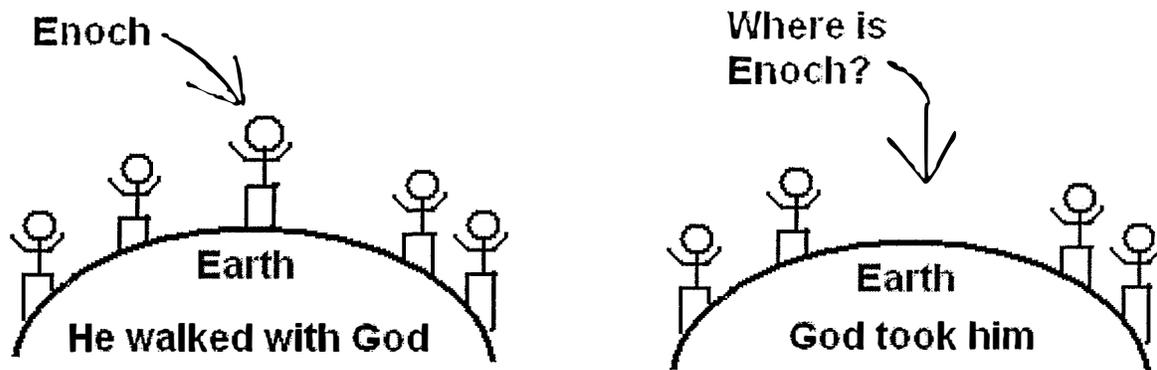
Enoch was a man who lived in this world even before the time of Noah. Enoch had a most unusual life story. Something happened to him that was very unique. In Genesis chapter 5 we have the names of different men (like Adam, Seth and Methuselah) who lived in the days before the great flood. Read Genesis chapter 5, verses 5,8,11,14,17 and 20 What are the last three words in each of these verses? \_\_\_\_\_

All of these men died! Methuselah was the oldest man who ever lived. How old was he when he died (Genesis 5:27)? \_\_\_\_\_ These men all died, but there is one man mentioned in this chapter who did not die. Something very unusual and something very special happened to this man and he never died!

We learn about this man in Genesis 5:21-24. His name was Enoch. Did Enoch fight against God and disobey God, or did he love God and walk with God? (Genesis 5:22)?

\_\_\_\_\_ The days when Enoch walked upon the earth were not easy days. Men were very sinful and God was going to judge the whole world by sending a great flood. But in the middle of this wicked world there was a man who pleased God and walked with God. What happened to this man?

The Bible tells us what happened to Enoch in Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch \_\_\_\_\_ with God: and he was \_\_\_\_\_ for God \_\_\_\_\_ him." Enoch was walking with God and all of a sudden HE WAS NOT! He was, and then suddenly he was not! All of a sudden he disappeared because God took him and removed him from the earth!



**First he was there ..... then he was not!**

We also learn about Enoch in Hebrews 11:5. According to this verse did Enoch ever see death? \_\_\_\_\_ We are told that Enoch was TRANSLATED (Hebrews 11:5). This means that he was quickly moved from one place to another. He was quickly moved from earth to heaven! Enoch WAS NOT FOUND! Those who were still on the earth could not find him because God took him! Was Enoch a man who pleased God or displeased God (Hebrews 11:5)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Was Enoch a man who believed God (Hebrews 11:6)? \_\_\_\_\_

Enoch was a man who never died. What happened to him was very unusual! But the amazing thing is that the Bible tells us that what happened to Enoch is going to happen again, perhaps very soon! And this time it will not happen to just one man, it will happen to many people. There will be a whole group of people who will never see death. There will be a whole group of people who will suddenly be removed from the earth and they will not be found by those who remain on the earth. This unusual future event is called THE RAPTURE.

Look at the diagram at the end of **Chapter 1** of these study notes. You will notice that the rapture is the next event that will take place. What is this event? What does the word RAPTURE really mean?

Christians often talk about the RAPTURE and we need to understand what this word means. The word RAPTURE means "TO BE CAUGHT UP, to be snatched up, to be taken or carried away suddenly, to be taken away quickly by force." The word is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17:

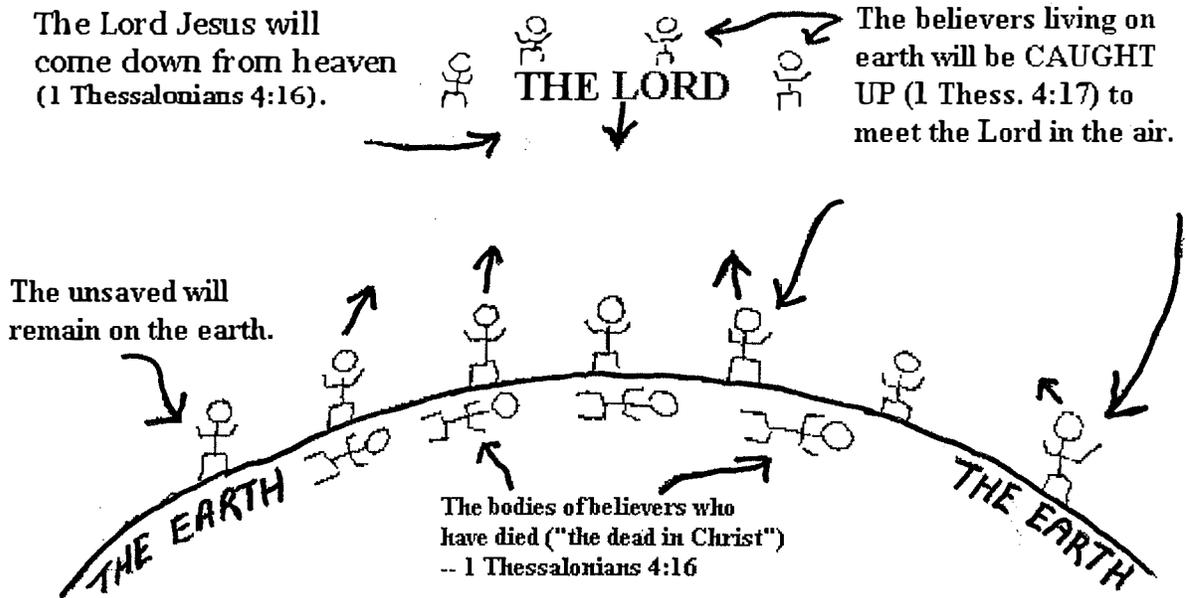
"Then we which are alive and remain shall be \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

This same Greek word [harpazo] is used elsewhere in the New Testament:

- 1) In Acts 8:39 this word is used. We learn that the Lord "C \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_ Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more." Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch and when they came out of the water, suddenly Philip was gone! God had moved him from one place to another place.
- 2) In 2 Corinthians 12:2 this word is used of Paul who was caught \_\_\_\_\_ to the third heaven" (see also verse 4).
- 3) This word is used of the Lord Jesus (the "MAN CHILD") who was \_\_\_\_\_ unto God when He ascended back to heaven (Revelation 12:5). We also read about the day when Christ was taken up into heaven in Acts 1:2,9.

For a more complete study of the term "rapture" see the study entitled **How to do Word Studies**.

Enoch was removed from earth and taken to heaven. Someday Christ will come and remove a whole group of people from the earth and take them to heaven. Christ will also raise up the bodies of those Christians who have already died (such as Peter, Paul, John, George Whitefield, George Mueller, and a great host of others). The most important passage in the Bible that tells us about this is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Read these verses and consider the following diagram:



THEY (the believers coming down with the Lord) and WE (the believers walking with the Lord on earth) will meet **together** in the air to be with the Lord FOREVER in new bodies that will last forever! See 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

When Christ comes down from heaven (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16) there are two things that will happen. What is the first thing that will happen (see 1 Thess. 4:16)? THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL R\_\_\_\_\_ (God will raise up their bodies). What is the next thing that will happen (see 1 Thess. 4:17)? Those who are living when Christ returns will be C\_\_\_\_\_ U\_\_\_\_\_ (raptured) with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

Yes, the Bible teaches that there will be a group of people living on the earth who will never SLEEP (see 1 Corinthians 15:51). This means that they will never DIE (just like Enoch did not die). The reason they will never die is because they will be CAUGHT UP to heaven just like Enoch was. If Christ were to come down from heaven today, would you be CAUGHT UP?

### Who Will Be Caught Up?

There is only one kind of person who will be "caught up" (1 Thess. 4:17). This person must "B\_\_\_\_\_" that Jesus Christ died and rose again" (1 Thess. 4:14). The Lord Jesus spoke of the rapture in John 14:3. If a person wants to take part in this great event, what must he do (John 14:1)? \_\_\_\_\_

In other words, the rapture is FOR BELIEVERS ONLY!! If a person wants to be CAUGHT UP in the air to be with Christ (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:17), he must first COME TO CHRIST for salvation (John 6:35,37)!

Have you received Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour (John 1:12)? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you honestly and from your heart said to God that you are a sinner and that you need a Saviour? Have you confessed that the Lord Jesus Christ died, was buried and was raised up from the dead because of your sin and that He took your place and received God's judgment of sin for you? Have you put all of your trust in the Lord and in Him alone? Are you trusting Him to be saving you from sin and from sin's penalty and power? Do you know that He forgave all your sin? If

you have done this then the rapture is for you! When Christ comes He will take all of the saved people. Those who are not saved will not be taken. They will remain on the earth. Every believer should be able to say this: "I know that Christ died for me and that He rose again for me and that He is coming back for me someday!" If you are not sure that you are saved, see the study entitled, **Am I a True Believer?**

### Where Will The Caught Up People End Up?

Where is Christ today? Is He in heaven or on the earth (John 14:2)? \_\_\_\_\_  
He is preparing a wonderful place for His believers (John 14:2). When Christ comes again, where will He take us to be (John 14:3)? Will He take us to heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

If we are saved, heaven is our true home. Someday Christ is going to come to take us home (Philippians 3:20-21). Usually we think that a person must die to go to heaven. But when Christ comes He will take all living believers straight to heaven. He will do for us just what He did for Enoch!

### How Quickly Will They Be Caught Up?

That which happened to Enoch happened quite suddenly. One moment he was there and the next moment he was not. The rapture will also be a very sudden event. The Bible tells us that the rapture will take place "in a \_\_\_\_\_, in the \_\_\_\_\_ of an \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

The word "MOMENT" means "SPLIT-SECOND" (faster than you can snap your fingers). [Note: It is the Greek word "atom" which literally means "uncut." For example, an hour can be cut into 60 minutes and one minute can be cut into 60 seconds. An "atom" is a unit of time that can't be cut anymore because it is such a small unit. Thus "split-second" would be a good translation]. It shall also be "in the twinkling of an eye" (faster than you can blink). This event will take place very rapidly.

Suppose an unsaved young person said something like this: "There is no need to be saved now. I'll wait until the last minute. When I think Christ is coming then I'll believe in Him and He will take me to heaven." Do you think this person's plan will really work? Why not?

### Why Will They Be Caught Up?

In John 14:3 Jesus said, "I will come again." According to this verse, why will He come again (circle the correct answer)?

- a. To set up His kingdom on the earth
- b. To judge the wicked and send them to hell
- c. To remove Satan from the earth
- d. To receive believers unto Himself to take them to heaven

Today we are ABSENT FROM THE LORD. The Lord Jesus Christ is in His resurrected and glorified body in heaven at the right hand of God. He is in heaven and we are on the earth (even though as God He has promised to be with us at all times--Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5). When Jesus comes for us then we will be PRESENT WITH THE LORD and have an even more wonderful relationship with Him (see 1 Thessalonians 4:17--"then shall we ever be

\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord"; see also 2 Corinthians 5:8). Is there a difference between talking to your grandmother on the phone when she is miles away and actually being with her? Christ is coming so that we can be with Him!

### **When Will They Be Caught Up?**

When will the rapture take place? Today? Tomorrow? Next month? Next year? First we need to understand what God is doing in the world today. Christ is building His church (Matthew 16:18). This means that every person who is saved becomes a member of Christ's church (see Acts 2:47; compare 1 Cor. 12:13).

Think of a motel. If the sign on the motel says VACANCY, this means that there is still room for people. The motel is saying this: "Please come and spend the night with us. We have room for you." If the sign said, "NO VACANCY" this would mean that the motel is all filled up and there is no more room. The motel is saying this: "Sorry, you are too late. There is no more room!"

Today God has a sign that says VACANCY. God is saying this: "You are invited to be saved and to become a member of the church. There is room at the cross for you. If you believe on Christ you can be a member of the church." There is coming a day, however, when God's church will be filled up and there will be no more room for any other members. There will be a NO VACANCY sign then: "Sorry, you are too late. You cannot be a member of the church. There is no more room for you!" When the church is all filled up, Christ will come and take the church (the believers) to heaven. People can still be saved after the rapture, but they will not be members of the church.

When will the rapture take place? We do not know. It is possible that there is only one more person that needs to be saved before the Church is complete. Maybe there are 10 more people or 100 people or 1000 people that need to be saved before the Church is complete. For about 2000 years God has been saving people and making them members of His Church. But we do not know when He will finish building His church.

The Lord Jesus could come at any time. We know He will come (John 14:3) but we do not know exactly when. Even Paul thought that he might be alive to experience the rapture (see 1 Thess. 14:17 and notice the word "WE"). Today we can pray the same prayer that John once prayed: "Even so, \_\_\_\_\_, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). The rapture could happen at any time and we need to be ready.

### **Are You Ready To Be Caught Up?**

The first thing that you should do to be ready for the rapture is to make sure you are saved. If you are not sure that you are saved, be sure to talk to your Sunday School Teacher or your Pastor about this so that they can help you.

If we are saved, we need to be ready for the Lord's coming also. The story is told about a certain man who visited a small one-room country school. He made the promise that he would give a prize to the student whose desk was found in the very best order when he came back. He gave no indication, not even a hint, when he would return. He had no more than left the room when one of the students announced that she meant to win the prize. She was a girl whose desk was usually a mess. Her schoolmates laughed at her saying, "Why Mary, your desk is always out of order. It's never clean." "But, starting right now," Mary responded, "I'm going to clean it every

Monday morning." "But, supposing our visitor comes at the end of the week?" someone asked. "Well then," Mary said, "I'll clean it up every morning." "But, what if he comes at the *end* of the day?" another questioned. At that thought, Mary was silent for a moment. Then her face lit up and she said, "I know what I'll do. I'll just keep it clean all the time!"

Christ may come at any time. Therefore we must keep our lives clean ALL THE TIME!

Suppose your parents went away on a trip for one week and left you and your older brothers and sisters home. Throughout the week the dirty dishes pile up until they almost reach the ceiling! Finally on the evening before mother and dad return home, the children get together and clean up the whole mess! Would you have been ashamed if your parents had come back one day earlier? \_\_\_\_\_

The Apostle John wrote these words: "And now little children, \_\_\_\_\_ in Him (stay in a right relationship with the Lord and keep your life clean ALL THE TIME and use 1 John 1:9 whenever you need to); that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be \_\_\_\_\_ before Him at His coming (at the RAPTURE)."-- SEE 1 JOHN 2:28.

When you have guests about to come over to your home, your family makes sure that everything is ready. The house is prepared for their coming. The rooms are cleaned up. Everything is put in its place. Everything is neat and tidy. Food items have been purchased and prepared. Everything is ready for your guests.

Our heavenly Guest is coming, but we do not know when. It could be soon. We need to be ready always. He is not coming to stay in our home. He is coming to take us to His home. We need to be ready and prepared for His coming. When He comes we do not want to be found in the wrong place, doing wrong things, saying wrong things. Wouldn't you want Him to find you serving Him, pleasing Him, thanking Him and obeying Him?

### WILL YOU BE READY?

### IT MAY BE TODAY!!

<b>THE RAPTURE</b>	
<b>As taught by our Lord (John 14:1-3)</b>	<b>As taught by Paul (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)</b>
<b>Comforting Words</b>	
"Let not your heart be troubled."	"Comfort one another with these words."
<b>The Necessity of Personal Faith</b>	
"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."	"If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."
<b>We Can Take Christ at His Word</b>	
"If it were not so, I would have told you."	"This we say unto you by the Word of the Lord."
<b>The Promise of His Coming</b>	
"I will come again."	"The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven."
<b>The Remarkable Removal from Earth</b>	
"and receive you unto Myself."	"We...shall be caught up...to meet the Lord in the air."
<b>Forever Present with the Lord</b>	
"That where I am, there ye may be also."	"and so shall we ever be with the Lord."