

Contrasting Events Of The Second Coming

Rapture/Blessed Hope	Glorious Appearing
1. Christ comes in air for His own	1. Christ comes with His own to earth
2. Rapture/translation of all Christians	2. No one translated
3. Christians taken to the Father's House	3. Resurrected saints don't see Father's House
4. No Judgment on earth at Rapture	4. Christ judges inhabitants of earth
5. Church taken to Heaven at Rapture	5. Christ sets up His kingdom on earth
6. Rapture imminent/could happen any time	6. Glorious appearing at least 7 more years
7. No signs for Rapture	7. Many signs for Christ's physical coming
8. For believers only	8. Affects all humanity
9. Time of Joy	9. Time of mourning
10. Before the Day of Wrath (Tribulation)	10. Immediately after Tribulation (Matthew 24)
11. No mention of Satan	11. Satan bound in Abyss for 1000 years
12. The Judgment Seat of Christ	12. No time or place for Judgment Seat
13. Marriage of the Lamb	13. His bride descends with Him
14. Only His own see Him	14. Every eye will see Him
15. Tribulation begins	15. 1000 year kingdom of Christ begins

The Glorious Appearing Cannot Come Today!

...The Glorious Appearing of Christ cannot come for at least seven years! Yet the early church for three hundred years lived almost every day in the light of His return, which is why they were so successful in reaching the world for Christ. Even today millions of Christians expect Christ to return at any moment, as the many Rapture passages listed above teach. He will not disappoint us! He will come—and His coming could be at any moment—but that coming is for His Church only, which is made up of all true believers everywhere who have received Him personally by faith. But to expect His return in power and majesty to take control of this earth and set up His Kingdom for at least seven years is to expect the impossible.

The differing passages relating to Christ's coming are harmonized when we see that some are exclusive for His Church and others include the entire world. I am convinced these two phases of Christ's return are what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote to Titus, "...looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing..." (2:13, KJV). The "blessed hope" is the confident way we put our deceased Christian loved ones to rest in anticipation of that day just before the Tribulation when we will be gathered together with them to meet the Lord in the clouds and then be taken to His Father's house. The "Glorious Appearing" refers to His coming to the earth in "power and great glory." To those who take the Bible literally, this interpretation passes the test of "making common sense" out of the scriptures.

The Rapture Could Come At Any Moment

Many of the texts cited above for the Rapture of the Church teach an imminent coming of Christ. That means He could come at any moment. Take, for example, one of the first teachings on the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10: 9) *"For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10) And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."*(my bold).

The Thessalonian Church was not sitting around waiting for the Rapture, they were "serving the living and true God" in an attitude of expectancy "to wait for His Son." That's how it should be, for it could take place today, or it could be a generation or more away. Philippians 3:20 is another example, a right understanding of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 is another, and there are many others. But, It must be stressed again, the Rapture is scheduled prior to His Glorious Appearing.¹

¹ Revelation Unveiled By Tim LaHaye; Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Mich. ©1999.