

Brief on The two raptures at the end of the world ¹

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¹ RJMI's Briefs are Long Commentaries contained in the end of *The Catholic Bible*, revised by RJMI.

Raptures

Rapture means the taking of men up to the heavens either in soul only or in body and soul. They are taken up into either 1) the heaven directly above the earth, or 2) the intermediate heaven which is between the heaven above the earth and the heaven of God's home (which is probably outer space), or 3) the heaven of God's home (which St. Paul calls the third heaven).

1) Raptured up to the heaven above the earth

Elias

The holy Prophet Elias was raptured body and soul up to the heaven above the earth:

“And as they went on, walking and talking together, behold a fiery chariot, and fiery horses parted them both asunder: and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” (4 Ki. 2:11)

Elias then landed upon earth in an undisclosed location and died. His body was then buried and his soul went to the Limbo of the Fathers. And he, in his soul, came from the Limbo of the Fathers to meet Jesus on Mount Tabor when Jesus was transfigured:

“And after six days Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him.” (Mt. 17:1-3)

Ezechiel

The Prophet Ezechiel's body and soul were raptured to the heaven above the earth and transported to the river Chobar:

“And he said to me: Son of man, receive in thy heart, and hear with thy ears, all the words that I speak to thee: And go get thee in to them of the captivity, to the children of thy people, and thou shalt speak to them, and shalt say to them: Thus saith the Lord: If so be they will hear and will forbear. And the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great commotion, saying: Blessed be the glory of the Lord, from his place. And the noise of the wings of the living creatures striking one against another, and the noise of the wheels following the living creatures, and the noise of a great commotion. The spirit also lifted me, and took me up: and I went away in bitterness in the indignation of my spirit: for the hand of the Lord was with me, strengthening me. And I came to them of the captivity, to the heap of new corn, to them that dwelt by the river Chobar, and I sat where they sat: and I remained there seven days mourning in the midst of them.” (Ez. 3:10-15)

And the Prophet Ezechiel's soul, and maybe his body, was raptured (transported) from Babylon to Israel:

“In the visions of God he brought me into the land of Israel and set me upon a very high mountain, upon which there was as the building of a city, bending towards the south.” (Ez. 40:2)

Habacuc

The holy Prophet Habacuc was raptured body and soul up to the heaven above the earth and landed in Babylon to feed Daniel who was in the lion's den:

“And Habacuc said: Lord, I never saw Babylon, nor do I know the den. And the angel of the Lord took him by the top of his head, and carried him by the hair of his head, and set him in Babylon over the den in the force of his spirit. And Habacuc cried, saying: O Daniel, thou servant of God, take the dinner that God hath sent thee.” (Dan. 14:34-36)

The Two Witnesses

The Two Witnesses will be raptured body and soul up either to the heaven above the earth or maybe even to a higher heaven three days after the Antichrist kills them:

“And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth... And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, that ascendeth out of the abyss, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city, which is called spiritually, Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord also was crucified... And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them. And they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying to them: Come up hither. And they went up to heaven in a cloud: and their enemies saw them.” (Apoc. 11:3, 7-8, 11-12)

The elect and reprobates just previous to the killing of all the reprobates

After the reign of the Antichrist and after the days of darkness, the elect and then the reprobates will be raptured in their bodies and souls to the heaven above the earth and land in Jerusalem, where the killing of all the reprobates will occur.²

2) Raptured up to the intermediate heaven

The intermediate heaven is between the heaven of the earth and the heaven of God’s home and is probably outer space (where the stars and planets are). This probably is where Satan is allowed to go when he petitions God, such as when he petitioned God regarding holy Job:

“Now on a certain day when the angels of God came to stand before the Lord, Satan also was present among them. And the Lord said to him: Whence comest thou? And he answered and said: I have gone round about the earth, and walked through it. And the Lord said to him: Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a simple and upright man, and fearing God, and avoiding evil?” (Job 1:6-8)

Wherever men on earth or their inventions are, so are devils. Hence devils roam outer space because men send spaceships into outer space.

The elect and reprobates just previous to the General Judgment

Just previous to the General Judgment, all of the elect and reprobates are raptured body and soul to the intermediate heaven. All will have died and the bodies of the elect will have been resurrected in a glorified state and the bodies of the reprobates will have been resurrected in a corrupted state.³

² See in this article “1) The rapture that occurs after the reign of the Antichrist and just before all the wicked are killed,” p. [1085](#).

³ See in this article “2) The rapture that occurs just previous to the General Judgment,” p. [1085](#).

3) Raptured up to the heaven of God's home

Isaias

The holy Prophet Isaias was raptured in soul and probably in body to the heaven of God's home:

“In the year that king Ozias died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated: and his train filled the temple... And I said: Woe is me, because I have held my peace; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people that hath unclean lips, and I have seen with my eyes the King the Lord of hosts. And one of the seraphims flew to me, and in his hand was a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: Behold this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquities shall be taken away, and thy sin shall be cleansed.” (Isa. 6:1, 5-7)

St. Paul

St. Paul was raptured either in soul only or body and soul to the heaven of God's home, which he calls the third heaven:

“If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed), but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), that he was caught up into paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter. For such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities.” (2 Cor. 12:1-5)

The Jerome Biblical Commentary, 1968: Commentary on 2 Cor. 12:2-3: “2. I know a man in Christ: Paul cannot refrain from mentioning a special experience once accorded him. However, his humility forces him to speak of it as if it had happened to another Christian, fourteen years ago: We do not know where this occurred, whether in the body I do not know, whether out of the body I do not know: Those who have had mystical experiences often find them difficult to describe; it is said that such is true of any type of ecstasy... Third heaven: Identified with Paradise (v. 4). The first heaven was our earth's atmosphere; the second, the region of the stars; the third, the place where God dwells and is seen as he truly is... What the Apostle is saying here is that he was made to enter into very close contact with the deity, and this overwhelmed him. 3. The repetition of his ignorance of the actual state of his soul at the time of the experience emphasizes the extraordinary character of the event. His whole consciousness was enraptured.”⁴

St. John

The Apostle St. John was raptured up in his soul to the heaven of God's home:

“After these things I [St. John] looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven and the first voice which I heard, as it were, of a trumpet speaking with me, said: Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must be done hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting.” (Apoc. 4:1-2)

⁴ Edited and *Nihil Obstat* by Raymond E. Brown, S.S.; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.; Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm. Imprimatur by +Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore, June 6, 1968. Forward by His Eminence Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J. Published by Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, USA, 1968.

All of the elect who are in heaven

All of the elect who are in heaven have been raptured in their souls to the heaven of God's home, except the Blessed Virgin Mary who was raptured (assumed) in both body and soul into the heaven of God's home.

The two raptures that occur at the end of the world

At the end of the world there will be two major raptures, one after the reign of the Antichrist and just before Jesus and his army kill all the evildoers, and one after all the evildoers are killed and just before the General Judgment.

1) The rapture that occurs after the reign of the Antichrist and just before all the wicked are killed

After the reign of the Antichrist and after the days of darkness, the elect who are alive on earth will be raptured body and soul up to the heaven above the earth and placed down in Jerusalem:

“And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them... Then two shall be in the field: one shall be taken [the elect], and one shall be left [the reprobates].” (Mt. 24:29-31, 40)

After the elect are raptured and land in Jerusalem, the reprobates who are alive will then be raptured body and soul up to the heaven above the earth and placed down in Jerusalem in Kidron Valley where they will be killed:

“Even as cockle therefore is gathered up and burnt with fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Mt. 13:40-42)

The casting into the furnace of fire occurs as the reprobates are killed in Kidron Valley. So many will be killed in Kidron Valley that their blood will come up to the horses' bridles:

“And another angel came out from the temple crying with a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud: Thrust in thy sickle and reap [the reprobates] because the hour is come to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust his sickle into the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying: Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vineyard of the earth because the grapes thereof are ripe. And the angel thrust in his sharp sickle into the earth and gathered the vineyard of the earth and cast it into the great press of the wrath of God. And the press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the press, up to the horses' bridles, for a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” (Apoc. 14:15-20)

Therefore, the first major rapture at the end of the world will occur after the reign of the Antichrist and just previous to the killing of all the reprobates. The elect will be raptured and

placed in Jerusalem and then the reprobates will be raptured and placed in Jerusalem and killed. And it is probable that the elect who are placed in Jerusalem will participate in the killing.

2) The rapture that occurs just previous to the General Judgment

Bodies are resurrected and taken up to the intermediate heaven, and the earth is desolated

All of the elect and reprobates with their resurrected bodies will be present during the General Judgment. The elect will have glorified bodies, and the reprobates corrupted bodies. Hence just prior to the General Judgment, the bodies of the elect and reprobates will be resurrected and they will be raptured (taken up) to the intermediate heaven before the throne of Jesus Christ. The intermediate heaven is between the heaven above the earth and the heaven of God's home and is most probably outer space. St. Paul calls the heaven of God's home the third heaven: "I [was] caught up to the third heaven." (2 Cor. 12:2) Therefore the second heaven is the intermediate heaven (outer space) and the first heaven is the heaven above the earth.

After the elect and the reprobates with their resurrected bodies are taken up to the intermediate heaven, the old earth and its heaven will be transformed into a new earth and new heaven; hence the old earth and heaven are said to have "fled away." However, the earth and its heaven may literally flee away to a place where God will transform them into a new earth and a new heaven and then they will return to their former place:

"And I saw a great white throne and one sitting upon it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, great [elect] and small [reprobates], standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them. And they were judged every one according to their works. And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire." (Apoc. 20:11-15)

"Wonder not at this, for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." (Jn. 5:28-29)

St. Paul speaks of the order in which the dead bodies will be resurrected. First the bodies of the elect will be resurrected and then the bodies of the reprobates. And of the elect, first the bodies of the elect who died before the second coming will be resurrected and then the bodies of the elect who are alive during the second coming. And he teaches that those who are alive during the second coming will die and be resurrected in the "twinkling of an eye":

"For the Lord himself shall come down from heaven with commandment and with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead who are in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord."⁵ (1 Thes. 4:15-16)

⁵ St. Paul does not mean that the elect will always be in the air with Christ but that they will always be with Christ in body and soul, as we know that they will inhabit the everlasting earthly paradise forever in body and soul. (See Long Commentary: The Everlasting Earthly Paradise.)

“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.⁶ In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead [of the elect] shall rise again incorruptible; and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” (1 Cor. 15:51-56)

What St. Paul means by the word “sleep” when he says “we shall not all sleep” is the dead bodies of the elect that have been dead for some time and thus are decayed or decaying, sleeping in the grave and waiting to be resurrected.⁷ Hence he does not mean that the souls of the elect are asleep because their souls are alive in heaven with God:

Stabat Mater, Verse 20: “While my body here decays, / May my soul thy goodness praise, / Safe in Paradise with thee. Amen.”

However, the elect who are alive during the second coming will not sleep even though they will die. They will not sleep because as soon as they die and thus their souls separate from their bodies, they will be given back their bodies but in a glorified state and thus their dead bodies will not decay, will not go to the grave. Their bodies will go from death to everlasting life in the twinkling of an eye.

After the bodies of the elect are resurrected in a glorified state and raptured to the intermediate heaven before the throne of Christ, then the bodies of the reprobates will be resurrected in a corrupted state and raptured to the intermediate heaven before the throne of Christ. Jesus will then desolate the earth. Hence this is the second major rapture that occurs at the end of the world.

The General Judgment takes place upon the new earth

Just previous to the General Judgment, the elect and reprobates with their resurrected bodies are taken up to the intermediate heaven before the throne of Jesus Christ so that God can then desolate the earth and the heaven above the earth. God will transform the old earth and old heaven into a new earth and new heaven. He will then descend from the heaven above the earth with the elect and reprobates upon the new earth in Jerusalem and conduct the General Judgment. We know an earth exists during the General Judgment because after God judges the reprobates he casts them into the hell of the damned, which is in the center of the earth, and seals them in it forever:

“And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on his left. Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Mt. 25:31-34, 41)

We know that this is a new hell within the new earth because the old earth and thus the old hell fled away (were desolated) before the General Judgment:

⁶ Beware of the erroneous text which says “We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall *not* all be changed.” It contradicts the following text (Verse 52) that says “and we shall be changed.” The correct text is contained in the Peshitto, which says “we shall all be changed.”

⁷ See Long Commentaries: “The heresy that souls of dead men are literally asleep or cease to exist,” p. ##.

“And I saw a great white throne and one sitting upon it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, great [elect] and small [reprobates], standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them. And they were judged every one according to their works. And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire.” (Apoc. 20:11-15)

The damned are sealed in this new hell forever and thus can no more tempt and harass the elect and damage and corrupt the face of the new earth.

Some hold the allowable but what I believe to be the less probable opinion when all things are considered that the General Judgment will take place in the air:

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, General Judgment: “(2) *Place of the Judgment*: All the texts in which mention is made of the Parusia, or Second Coming, seem to imply clearly enough that the general judgment will take place on the earth. Some commentators infer from 1 Thessalonians 4:16, that the judgment will be held in the air, the newly risen being carried into the clouds to meet Christ; according to others the prophecy of Joel (3:1 sq.) places the last judgment in the Valley of Josaphat (q.v.).”

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

Original version: 5/2021; Current version: 6/2021

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