

Objection #2) If this is true, shouldn't scripture indicate the theory of a post Millennial rapture more clearly? When does scripture speak of a Third Coming, since after all, He must return for a rapture? I would argue that the New Testament does strongly hint at a final return of the Lord before the final combustion of the universe.

The first piece of evidence is when Peter refers to the end of this creation as the Day of the Lord - to come as a thief in the night. Remember that in Matthew 24:43 Jesus describes Himself as a thief who will return at an hour unknown when there will be a rapture and unexpected destruction.

2 Peter 3:10

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

This is a strong indication that the Lord will be present before the destruction of the world. If that conclusion is right, that the Lord appears before the final combustion, and described with the rapture language of Matthew 24:43, then there is a separate reason to infer the rapture at the very end. Notice also here that as the whole Heavens and Earth are destroyed, or rolled like a scroll, there is also a gathering at the Rapture of those in Heaven. (Mark 13:27)

Below, Paul also makes it clear that Jesus will return to judge the world.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

Here Paul writes that in “that day” “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed” will be the end of unbelievers, and they will be sent into everlasting destruction away from God's majesty. This separation occurs on “that day” Jesus comes, not after a wait of 1000 years. At that time He will also be glorified before His saints and admired by them. But a final judgment such as this cannot take place until the end. Therefore we know that Paul speaks of Jesus' Coming as not just a time of eternal judgment for some, but the time of eternal judgment of Revelation 20. This Day is also Peter's “day of the Lord,” the combustion. So the passage above teaches a Third Coming at the time of the final destruction, the combustion of the universe.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7 above, believers rest together. Paul had already written to that church, in 1 Thessalonians, a vital prophecy about this issue.

1 Thessalonians 5:2,3

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Like Peter, Paul describes a “day of the Lord” which means a “sudden destruction” to the world. Can such an appearance and rapture take place at the Second Coming? We know from 2 Peter 3:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, and 2 Timothy 4:1, quoted below, that the appearing of Christ means the time of judgment. Moreover, would Paul describe the end of Tribulation this way, as a time of “peace and safety,”? (Is the tribulation like the peaceful normative conditions in Noah's day and in Sodom? (Luke 17:26-30)) Revelation shows the world in catastrophe and full of terror before Christ's return. (Revelation 6)

2 Timothy 4:1

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

Reading that verse alone we may think the judgment is to prolong life or end life at Armageddon, but other passages, such as 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, do not allow that interpretation. How could there be an eternal separation of saints and rebels, spoken of in Revelation 20 and above, if more souls were still to be born? Is it really possible for the rapture to be followed by the redemption of more Christians? Paul addresses all the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, saying that living or dead, at the resurrection and rapture, “we will be with the Lord forever.” (v.17) (Likewise Colossians 3:3,4 point to His appearing as our own glory.)

If this the Rapture is the time “we will be with the Lord forever,” then would only some be gathered? That is certainly not the portrayal in Revelation 20. If you say more souls would yet be born, when would the people born after the rapture be resurrected or raptured? As Revelation teaches, aside from the martyrs, there is one day for resurrection, when death and Hades give up their dead and are then thrown into the lake of fire. On that day, all believers in Christ will come together in joy.

2 Corinthians 1:14

“As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

In order to show that scriptures are not silent about a Third Coming we have quoted scripture to show that Christ comes at the time of the combustion of the world, that His appearing will be a time of eternal judgment, and that His appearing will be a time when all believers are gathered together to admire Him. We also remember that in Revelation 20 we are taught that when the world flees away from God, then all are resurrected and judged according to what they had done.

Let's move on to examining other ways in which a Third Coming is indicated by scriptures. Matthew 24:42-25:46 gives four parables for the return of Christ. All four show His return to be a time of judgment. So Christ does return again at the end of the Peaceable Kingdom, since that is the time of judgment. Moreover, the context of that passage (Matthew 24:40-42) seems to be the rapture at the end of the Age.

Matthew 13:37-42 draws a strong linguistic parallel between the gathering of the wheat and tares and the gathering of the elect in Matthew 24:31 by the use of similar verbs for "gather". Both passages also depict the angels as those who gather. The angelic harvest of souls is "at the end of this age," (Matthew 13:40) but the gathering of the elect in the controversial verse, Matthew 24:31, seems to be the same event and the two passages share the word "gather" to describe the salvation of the elect grain and their separation from the chaff which meets its fiery doom.

Another objection has a lot of weight for some: that the Coming of Jesus at the Rapture is with the last trumpet blast. (Given at our three major texts: 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, Matthew 24, and 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.) Readers may tie the sign of the trumpet to texts that definitely sound like the battle of the End Times for instance in Isaiah 27:13, and Zechariah 9:14. Furthermore the trumpet and the "cry of command" in some translations of 1 Thessalonians 4:16, sound like preparations for war, and the Battle of Armageddon is the ultimate war. Readers are right to point this out. Is the Lord's Coming not in a context of battle? But there is also a war at the end of time. The nations have at that time gathered against Israel and the universe is about to be utterly destroyed, so a commanding shout is in order.