

Revelation 3:10 : the Greek verb tereo

Rev 3:10

10 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will **keep you from** the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

The Greek verb for “keep” here in the expression “I will keep you from the hour of testing” is *tereo*

That verb is also used by John in his gospel, chapter 17 verse 15 and this passage is highly informative for interpreting Revelation 3:10

John 17:15

"I do **not** ask You to *take them out* of the world, but to **keep them from** the evil one.

First, we have the same author for both passages – the apostle John.

Second, the subject of the verb in John 17:15 is God – God the Father, just as the subject of *tereo* in Revelation 3:10 is also God – God the Son.

Third, the same preposition “ek” follows “tereo” in both verses.

Forth, and most significant, John 17:15 includes a contrasting statement: “I do not ask You to take them out of the world”

The Greek word for “take” here is a different word, not *tereo* but *airo*.

Airo means

To lift up and carry (away) - 'to carry (away), to carry off, to remove, to take (away).
(from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain.

As you can see, *airo* would be a very appropriate word to use in Revelation 3:10 were it speaking of the Rapture. In the Rapture, the Lord will remove us from the earth and carry us away to heaven.

But John does not use the verb *airo*. Instead, he uses the verb *tereo*.

Tereo means

NT:5083

(a) "**to watch over, preserve, keep, watch,**"

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words,)

To retain in custody

To cause a state, condition, or activity to continue:

For a definite purpose or a suitable time

To keep unharmed or undisturbed

Of holding on to something so as not to give it up or lose it

Of being protective: to keep someone from someone or something

To persist in obedience

(BDAG)

So Revelation 3:10, the b part, is saying "I will also keep you unharmed. I will guard you, and protect you from the hour of testing. I will keep you in safety and watch over you. You will remain in My custody until the appointed time for your deliverance."

1 John 5:18

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God **keeps** him, and the evil one does not touch him.

NASU

The passage that explicitly describes the Lord taking us at the Rapture is 1 Thessalonians 4:17

1 Thess 4:17-18

7 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

NASU

The Greek verb here is not *tereo*. It is

NT:726

1. *harpazo* (ἄρπάζω , NT:726), "to snatch or catch away," is said of the act of the Spirit of the Lord in regard to Philip in Acts 8:39; of Paul in being "caught" up to paradise, 2 Cor 12:2,4; of the rapture of the saints at the return of the Lord, 1 Thess 4:17; of the rapture of the man child in the vision of Rev 12:5. This verb conveys the idea of force suddenly exercised, as in Matt 11:12, "take (it) by force"; 12:29, "spoil" (some mss. have *diarpazo* here), in 13:19, RV, "snatcheth"; for forceful seizure, see also John 6:15; 10:12,28-29; Acts 23:10; in Jude 23, RV, "snatching." See PLUCK, PULL, SNATCH, TAKE (by force).

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

To seize or carry away by force

Harpazo is also used in 2 Cor 12:2-4

2 Cor 12:2-4

2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows — such a man **was caught up** to the third heaven. 3 And I know how such a man — whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows — 4 **was caught up** into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

NASU