

Lesson #7: The Rapture

Introduction: "It is common today to see bumper stickers with slogans such as: "In case of Rapture this car will be unoccupied." The term Rapture stands for the so-called coming of a millennial reign of Christ on earth. The word Rapture comes from the Latin, RAPARE, which means to "take away" or "snatch out." It is taught by many who endorse the theory that Christ at his second coming will silently remove from this world the righteous - and this just before a terrible tribulation shall take place on the earth. This alarmist doctrine portrays quite a drama. Families will be shocked by the strange disappearance of a mother, father, or child. Driverless cars will collide in streets. A man and wife are in bed; she hears a noise, turns her head, and he is gone. Planes crash with no pilots found. The theorist continues by stating that the tribulation on earth will last for seven years during which time the Lord will pour out His wrath upon all those who have rejected Him. At the end of the tribulation, they say, the Lord will return to the earth with ten thousand of His saints and a great battle will be fought. They add that Christ and His army will be victorious and will then execute judgment upon the ungodly. Then, according to the theory, the Lord will usher in His Kingdom, an earthly reign of Christ on earth which shall last for 1,000 years." (Steve Rudds Web Site, www.Bible.ca.)

The conclusion of this suggested millennium will pose another great battle. This is supposed to involve a last-ditch effort of evil against good - to no avail, of course. Then they affirm that a second resurrection will take place; and all who remain from the time of Adam will be raised and shall receive their just desserts. When Jesus comes again, "every eye will see Him" (Re. 1:7). Jesus will not appear "secretly" to His saints, and "silently" take them from earth to be with Him for seven years.

Premillennial Position:

- Robert Strong says, "By the rapture is meant the sudden and possibly secret coming of Christ in the air to catch away from the earth the resurrected bodies of those who died in the faith and with them the living saints." (Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, p. 159)
- "*The Rapture* — The Lord's coming FOR his saints. *The Revelation* -- The Lord's coming WITH his saints and for Israel and the world." (W. E. Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, p.207)
 - Blackstone argues that I Thess. 4:13-17 "reiterates and emphasizes" that the dead in Christ shall rise first, when the Lord descends with a shout. Further he says the unrighteous are not mentioned and therefore have no part in the first resurrection.
 - Finally, he argues that Rev. 20:4-14 shows the first resurrection completed by the resurrection of the tribulation saints and the reign with Christ occurs before the rest of the dead are raised.
- "Some Bible teachers see the second coming in two phases. The Rapture of the church is the first phase and Christ's glorious coming in power to earth as the second" (LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, p.111).

Questions for Discussion (Biblical Position) – The Resurrection:

1. Concerning what two groups of people did Paul give instruction (1 Th. 4:13-15)?
 - Why might the Christians have concern for their Fellow-Christians who had died?
 - Does this context discuss what will happen to the non-Christian? Why not?
2. What will be the sequence of events at the coming of the Lord (1 Th. 4:16-17)?
 - In 1 Th. 4:17, the term "caught up" is "rapiemur" in the Latin Vulgate. From this Latin term, we get our English term "rapture." Will Christians be "raptured" (1 Th. 4:17)
3. Concerning what two groups of people did Paul give instruction (1 Th. 5:1-11)?
4. Most premillennialists believe 1 Th. 4:13-17 refers to the rapture of the church BEFORE the Tribulation period and 1 Th. 5:1-11 is referring to Jesus returning to earth AFTER the Tribulation period. Do the events of these

verses take place in two different timeframes (like Premillennialists believe) or do all these verses refer to events which will take place in the same timeframe? Please explain your answer.

5. What will happen to the non-Christians when “the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven” (2 Th. 1:6-10)?
6. What will happen to the Christian when “the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven” (2 Th. 1:6-10)?
 - Is this a description of two different days or the same day?
7. What will happen to “those who have done evil” when the “hour” comes (Jh. 5:28-29)?
8. What will happen to “those who have done good” when the “hour” comes (Jh. 5:28-29)?
 - Is this a description of two different days or the same day?
9. “When the Son of Man comes in His glory,” what will happen to the “goats” (Mt. 25:31-46, especially verse 46)?
10. “When the Son of Man comes in His glory,” what will happen to the “sheep” (Mt. 25:31-46, especially verse 46)?
11. When men are raised, what kind of body will they have (1 Co. 15:42-44)?
12. If the Premillennialist is correct, Christians with resurrected/spiritual bodies enter the kingdom of God on earth. Is that possible (1 Co. 15:50)?

Conclusions:

1. The Rapture Theory dethrones Christ, minimizes the church, and gives false hope to the Jews. It is from the imagination of man and not found in the Bible.
2. The key differences in the Biblical and Premillennial positions are:
 - Rapture theory says that Christ is not now reigning. The Bible says He is now reigning!
 - Rapture Theory says that at his coming will be the beginning. The Bible says that at His coming will be the end!
 - Rapture theory says that at his coming the kingdom will be set up. The Bible says that at his coming the kingdom will be delivered up.
 - Rapture theory says that when Christ comes God will give him the kingdom. The Bible says that when Christ comes he will give the kingdom to God.
3. May all people be ready when the Lord returns, for when he does all will be raised and all will be judged (2 Tm. 4:1). The good and evil will both be raised in the same very hour (Jh. 5:28-29).
4. There will be only one Judgment, not two or seven (Hb. 9:27). After death is THE judgment where we will ALL appear (2 Co. 5:10).
5. Mankind’s only hope is found in Christ! People must obey now or die without hope!