

ARE YOU READY FOR THE RAPTURE?
(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Introduction:

1. In his book, “On Borrowed Time: 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Come in 1988,” Edgar Whisenant predicted that Christ would return to rapture His saints on Tuesday, September 13, 1988 at 11 a.m. C.D.T.
 - a. When the Lord didn’t return on Tuesday, he moved the date to Wednesday, then Thursday and finally Friday.
 - b. In an interview with “Christianity Today,” he explained, “The evidence is all over the place that it is going to be in a few days anyway.”
 - c. Whisenant’s book sold 3,000,000 copies so he became a prophet who made a profit.
2. A bumper sticker reads “In the Rapture, this car will be driverless.”
3. In “The Late Great Planet Earth,” Hal Lindsey wrote: “Astounding as man’s trip to the moon is, there is another trip which many men, women, and children will take some day which will leave the rest of the world gasping. Those who remain on earth at that time will use every invention of the human mind to explain the sudden disappearance of millions of people” (135).
4. Does the Bible teach Christ will soon come to “rapture” his saints?

Discussion:

- I. **PREMILLENNIALISTS TEACH JESUS WILL SECRETLY RETURN TO SNATCH AWAY THE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE A TIME OF TRIBULATION.**
 - A. People will be going about their work in the usual way but the saints will suddenly disappear.
 1. Cars, trains and planes will crash when their drivers are taken.
 2. People will be taken from homes, businesses, schools, etc.
 3. Chaos will result and frantic searches will be made.
 - B. The word “Rapture” is not even found in the Bible!
 1. It comes from Latin meaning “to snatch away.”
 2. In English it refers to being carried away with love or joy.
 - C. There are several prominent points in the premillennial “Rapture.”

1. In the last days, great tribulation will take place on earth.
2. Before it begins, the Lord will secretly snatch away his saints.
3. The righteous dead will be raised - the first resurrection.
4. After seven years, the Lord will come with His raptured saints.
5. The martyrs of the Tribulation will be raised - the second resurrection- to join the returning saints.
6. Christ will then reign for 1,000 years on earth - the millennium.

D. Three different Greek words are used for the second coming.

1. Parousia means coming, presence or advent.
2. Epiphaneia means appearing, manifestation or brightness.
3. Apocalupsis means revealing or a revelation.
4. Premillennialists argue they refer to three different comings of the Lord but they are used interchangeably (1 Th. 4:15; 2 Th. 2:1; 1 Th. 3:13; 2 Th. 2:8).

II. THE PRINCIPAL PASSAGE PREMILLENNIALISTS PRESENT AS PROOF OF THE RAPTURE IS 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18.

A. Paul was writing to reassure the saints that Christians who died before the return of Christ would not lose their reward.

1. When the Lord comes, He will bring “those who sleep in Jesus” with Him.
2. The living saints will have no advantage over the those who have died for the dead will be raised before the living ascend.
3. When the saints together meet the Lord in the air, they will “ALWAYS be with the Lord” - not just for seven years!
4. Paul is only answering a question concerning those who die in the Lord before Christ’s second coming - non-Christians are not under consideration in this context.

B. The Bible teaches that “ALL” will be raised at the same time on the Last Day:

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28,29).

“I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15).

III. THE BIBLE TEACHING OF THE SECOND COMING DOES NOT INCLUDE

THE RAPTURE.

A. Jesus will come again as promised (John 14:3; Acts 1:9-11).

B. His coming will be sudden and unexpected:

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven but My Father only” (Matt. 24:36).

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming” (Matt. 24:42).

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2).

C. When Christ comes all will be aware of it:

“For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first (1 Thess. 4:16).

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so. Amen” (Rev. 1:7).

D. The dead will be raised and changed:

“...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52).

E. The Judgment will take place (Matt. 25:31-46).

F. The kingdom will be delivered back to God:

“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

G. This earth will then be burned up (2 Pet. 3:7, 10).

Conclusion:

- 1. Neither the word nor the concept of “the Rapture” is found in the Bible.**
- 2. The saved will experience rapture in the true sense in Heaven.**
- 3. Let us prepare to meet the Lord (Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Mt. 10:32; Mk. 16:16).**

