

“The Rapture!”

Lesson 33

INTRO:

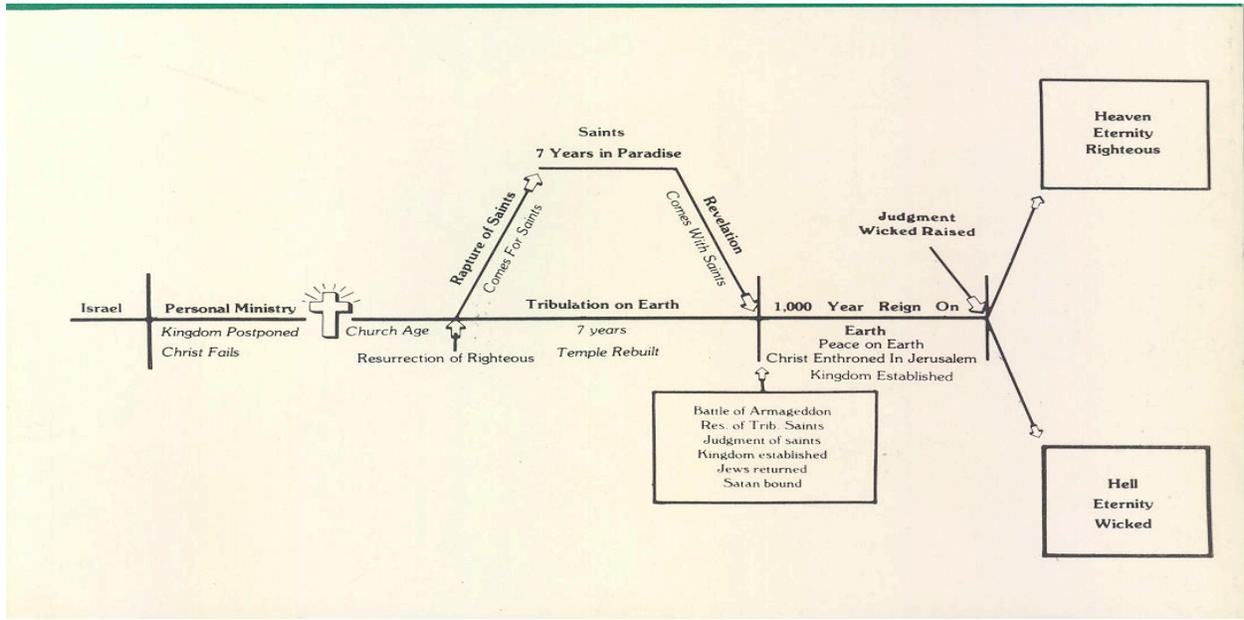
- A. We've probably all seen the bumper sticker which said "When The Rapture Occurs, This Car Will Be Without A Driver!"
- B. "Someday, a day that only God knows, Jesus Christ is coming to take away all those who believe in Him." (**The Late Great Planet Earth**, Hal Lindsey, p. 126).
 - 1. What a beautiful promise. Yet, Mr. Lindsey and others have turned this beautiful promise into a false doctrine which becomes a part of the false theory of Premillennialism.
- C. "A million conversations will end mid-sentence. A million phone receivers will suddenly go dead. A woman will reach for a man's hand in the dark and no one will be there. A man will turn with a laugh to slap a colleague on the back and his hand will move through empty air. A basketball player will make a length-of-the-floor pass to a teammate streaking downcourt and find there is no one there to receive it. And no referee to call it out-of-bounds...Think of the countless homes where, 'in the twinkling of an eye,' only clothes will remain in the chair where a believer sat moments before. Consider the passengers aboard airplanes with a Christian crew. Many believe that the Rapture will result in titanic chaos as Christian auto and bus drivers, train engineers, pilots and others suddenly vanish. The Rapture just may create the greatest freeway gridlock in history! The world will somehow have to come to terms with millions of missing Christians. The ensuing outcry of sorrow, loss, and confusion will make the Rapture a well-publicized event, dominating the media for weeks and weeks." (**Rapture Under Attack**, Tim LaHaye, p. 40)
- D. Word Definitions:
 - 1. Millennialism - Millennial: refers to 1000 years. This is used in connection with the theory of Christ reigning on earth for 1000 years.
 - 2. Premillennialism - "Pre": before. This term is used in connection with the time of the return of Christ in the Millennial Theory. (This implies that He will return before the 1000 year reign.)
 - 3. Rapture: "The word rapture is from rapere, found in the expression 'caught up' in the Latin translation of 1 Thess. 4:17." (R.M. Miller, **The Lion and The Lamb on Planet Earth**, p. 119).
- E. The Importance of the Rapture:
 - 1. "Examine the prophecies of this mysterious happening -- of the 'Rapture.' Here is the real hope for the Christian, the 'blessed hope' for true believers (Titus 2:13-15)." (**The Late Great Planet Earth**, Hal Lindsey, p. 127).
 - a. If this theory be true there is no event in the future that is more important to the church.
- F. The Time of the Rapture:
 - 1. This is where many among the millennialists are divided.
 - 2. Generally there are three ideas as to when the Rapture will occur in relation to the tribulation:
 - a. Post-Tribulation Rapture Theory - the Tribulation happens BEFORE the Rapture.

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- b. Mid-Tribulation Rapture Theory - the Rapture comes at the half-way point of the Tribulation.
- c. Pre-Tribulation Theory - the Rapture happens before the Tribulation begins. (By and large this is the most common!)



I. THE RAPTURE THEORY ‘PROOF’ TEXTS AND WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH ABOUT THE RAPTURE.

A. 1 Thess. 4:16-18

- 1. The Millennialist's Teach:
 - a. A Mysterious Appearance. "The world will not know what has happened..." "...only the Christians see Him - it's a mystery, a secret." (ibid., p. 131).
 - b. A Mysterious Disappearance. "When the living believers are taken out, the world is going to be mystified." (ibid, p. 113).
- 2. Examining The Context:
 - a. How will the Lord appear? Silently and mysteriously? **NO!** (Note v. 16)
 - 1) Three announcements will tell of the Lord's coming:
 - a) "a shout",
 - b) "the voice of the archangel",
 - c) "the trump (trumpet) of God".
 - b. It will be a Visible Coming. **2 Thess. 1:7**.
 - b. Also based on 2 Thess. 1:7, they say Christ is coming **for His saints** (parousia) in the Rapture and then He's coming **with His saints** (epiphaneia) at the second coming.

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- a. However, **2 Thess. 2:8** does not allow for such. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the **brightness** ('appearance'- NASB) (parousia) of His **coming** (epiphaneia)."
 - 1) Both terms appear in this passage and they both are talking about the same event.
4. It will be forever.
 - a. The millennialists say the Rapture is only for 7 years.
 - b. **1 Thess. 4:17**
 - 1) The millennialists want us to interpret the Bible literally and yet here is a good example of their misapplication of verses.
 - a) "We shall always be with the Lord" is not 7 years.
- B. The millennial theory teaches the church was not prophesied in the Old Testament.
 1. The theory says the "*kingdom*" was prophesied.
 - a. God planned the "*kingdom*".
 - b. Jesus came to establish the "*kingdom*", but the Jews rejected Him.
 - c. This rejection prevented His purpose to fulfill the divine plan, so He left a substitute -- the church instead.
 2. This theory, if the church is an afterthought, reflects on the wisdom and foreknowledge of God.
 3. **Ephesians 3:9-11**
 - a. The church was the fulfillment of God's "*eternal purpose*"; not an afterthought or a substitute.

II. THE RESURRECTION AND BEING "CAUGHT UP" WITH CHRIST.

- A. The Events Of The "**Last Day**" Include:
 1. **Resurrection. (John 11:24).**
 2. **Judgment. (John 12:48).**
 3. **Both the Righteous and Wicked are present at the judgement. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).**
 - a. **John 5:28,29**
- B. Those who are "**Caught Up**" when He is revealed will (2 Thess. 1:7-10):
 1. Have rest, relief v. 7
 2. Glorify the Lord v. 10
 3. Marvel at Him v. 10.
- C. These are the things that will be evident at the Lord's return: (**1 Peter 1:3,4**):
 1. An inheritance;
 2. Incorruptible;

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3. Undefined;
4. Does not fade;
5. Reserved in heaven.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Some have tried to figure the time table for the rapture and have set dates when the rapture was to begin.
 1. Edgar C. Whisenant created quite a stir that some of us might remember.
 - a. His book, **"88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be In 1988"** predicted Jesus would come back and snatch His own people away sometime between September 11th and 13th.
 - b. Either the Lord had no people in this area or else the prediction was false.
 - c. The latter is true -- there was no rapture in 1988.
 2. Hal Lindsey also tried to find the date for the rapture.
 - a. In his book he commented on Jesus' statement in Matthew 24:34 and said, "What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs -- chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948 (the date he assigned as the birth of Israel, erh), all these things could take place." (**L.G.P.E.**, Page 43).
 - b. That, too, adds up to 1988 -- but this is 2020 and none of the things mentioned in Matthew 24 have occurred.
 - c. One simple answer to it all is that the signs of Matthew 24 happened a long time ago when Jerusalem was destroyed by the power of the army of Rome.
- B. When is Christ coming?
 1. This is not the question for us.
 2. The question for us is: Are we ready?
- C. If we are looking for His coming, we will be ready each minute and every day of our lives.