

IS THERE A RAPTURE?

- Many theological concepts deny a rapture altogether.
 - Amillennialism cannot have a rapture because there is nothing in the future except the Second Coming followed by the eternal state. Any reference to the rapture in the Scripture is considered to be the Second Coming.
 - Postmillennialism cannot have a rapture because Christians are necessary to build/advance the Kingdom.
- Only premillennial theology (i.e.: Jesus returns to establish the millennium) believes in any kind of rapture.
- The Bible speaks about a rapture in clear terms: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
 - The word **caught up** is ἀρπάζω [harpazo] and means *to snatch away*.
 - Not every use of the word is in reference to the rapture, but every use of the word is a reference to being *snatched up*.
 - It is used in Matthew 13:9 to speak of the seed which the devil snatches away.
 - It is used in Acts 8:39, where the Lord **caught away** Philip, and the Ethiopian eunuch **saw him no more**.
 - What we learn from this passage:
 - The passage gives instructions about **the dead in Christ** (v. 16).
 - The rapture occurs immediately after the **dead in Christ** are resurrected from the dead (vv. 16-17).
 - Those who **believe that Jesus died and rose again** and who are alive will be **caught up**, along with the resurrected dead in Christ, and **meet the Lord in the air** and will forever be **with the Lord** (v. 17).
- The English word *rapture* is never used in the Bible but has been used by theologians to describe the event detailed in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
 - Our English word *raptor* is related, because these birds *snatch up* their prey.

DO OTHER PASSAGES TEACH THE RAPTURE...AND DOES IT MATTER?

- Most pretribulational premillennial theologians see the rapture in many other passages of the Bible, including Matthew 24:37-42, John 14:1-3, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Titus 2:13, Revelation 4:1, and many more.
- In each of these passages, I see things that are *similar* to the rapture, but are *not* the rapture. *Things similar are not the same*. Using these passages to teach rapture theology causes subtle problems in the doctrine.

- The fact that 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 is so clear removes any need for any other passage to make a rapture theology a necessity.
- Since we have to deal with every passage of Scripture, one Scripture is plenty to require a rapture theology.

WHY I TEACH A PRETRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE

- Because there is a rapture, the timing of the rapture is a necessary discussion.
- Because there is only one clear teaching about the rapture, a *theological* conclusion must be *deduced* from other clear material.
- What we know:
 - That Daniel's 70th week (the Tribulation) is future, and that it is decreed for the nation of Israel.
 - That the Tribulation concludes with the Second Coming of Christ, at which time Jesus returns to the Mt. of Olives (Zech. 14:4) and establishes His millennial reign.
 - That the "first resurrection" takes place at the Second Coming (Rev. 20:4).
 - That the Hebrew Scriptures only speak of *one* resurrection (Dan. 12:1-2), but the book of Revelation speaks of *two* partial resurrections.
 - This being the case, the presence of *another* partial resurrection is not prohibited by any passage of Scripture. Therefore, the *rapture resurrection* does not have to be at the Second coming.
 - That the dispensation of grace was a mystery, kept hidden in God (Eph. 3:9) until it was given to Paul (Col. 1:25).
 - Begin a mystery, it was not previously prophesied (Eph. 3:5).
 - Not being prophesied, we cannot read about it in the prophecies (Eph. 3:8 – *unsearchable*).
- What we conclude:
 - The rapture cannot be the Second Coming – one is in the air and one is in Jerusalem.
 - The church (a mystery) cannot be Israel, and the tribulation is about Israel, not the church.
 - Jesus' prophecies about tribulation are for Israel and could not have been about the church (which was a mystery).
 - Paul tells us to find comfort in the teaching of the rapture (1 Thes. 4:18). There would have been no comfort for Paul to provide information of a rapture if the rapture was the Second Coming. Rather, Paul would need to give *warning* of an approaching tribulation.
 - The church, being a mystery, will be removed as mysteriously as it was begun, and Daniel's 70th week will commence *after* this mystery age of "neither Jew nor gentile" shall end.