

Questions We Have:

## What about the Rapture?

A very common belief that is accepted by the vast majority of evangelicals and denominations today is the concept of the "Rapture." Getting the idea from 1 Thes. 4:17, "*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.*"

The theory of the rapture was popularized by Tim LaHaye's "Left Behind" books and movies. The majority of religious authors accept the idea of the Rapture. This has major political implications with Israel today and the land they hold.

### A. Just what is "Rapture?"

1. The word "rapture" literally means to *seize* or *snatch*
2. The word rapture is **not** found in the Bible

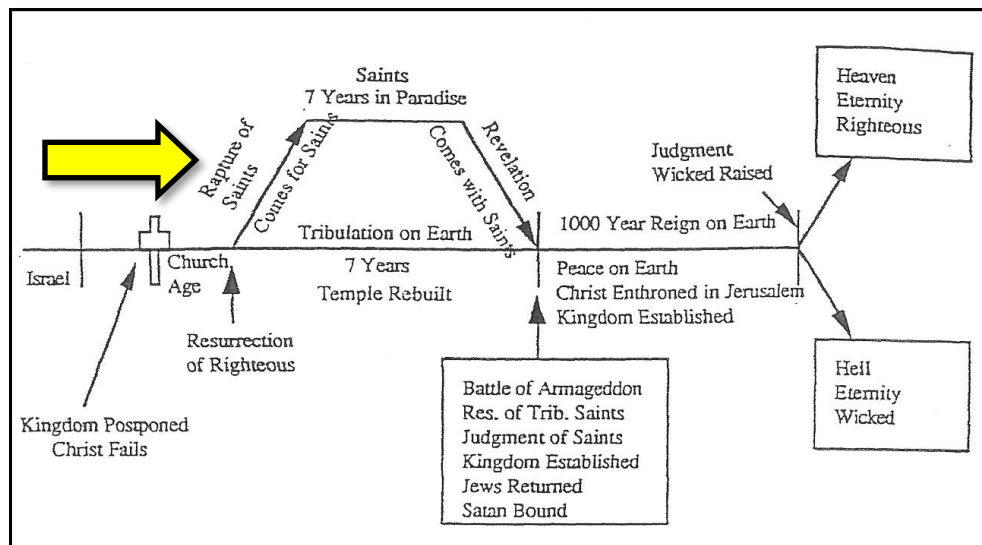
Hal Lindsey pictures it this way: *There I was driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy—cars going in all directions...and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild. I think we got an invasion from outer space.*

Robert Strong: "The sudden and possible secret coming of Christ in the air to catch away from the earth the resurrected bodies of those who have died in the faith and with them the living saints"

- The rapture theory believes that Jesus comes secretly and the righteous dead are raised and the living righteous are caught up to be with the Lord in the sky for a period of seven years.
- During that seven years, Satan is released and tribulation fills the earth until Jesus returns and defeats the devil in the battle of Armageddon, at which time Jesus will reign for 1,000 years in Jerusalem, upon David's throne. When that is completed, there will be a general resurrection of all dead and the judgment will take place.
- Daniel 9, Revelation 20 play heavily in this thinking

### B. The Concept of the "rapture" is part of the Premillennial Teachings

1. Premillennial—"pre" before; "millennial" thousand. Christ comes BEFORE the 1,000 year reign
2. Postmillennial- "post" after; "millennial" thousand. Christ comes AFTER the 1,000 year reign



## The Key Components of Premillennialism

- Jesus came with the intention of establishing an earthly kingdom
- The Jews rejected Jesus and had Him crucified
- An alternative plan, a spiritual kingdom, the church was established—called the “church age”
- The church age will last until the earthly kingdom is established
- Jesus will return in the sky, the righteous dead will be resurrected and the living righteous will be raptured up— this is the RAPTURE
- Satan will be released for seven years and tribulation will fill the earth
- Jesus will return to the earth, the battle of Armageddon will be fought. Satan will be defeated, and Jesus will reign on earth for 1,000 years in Jerusalem. The Jews will hold the promise land
- After the 1,000 years, the wicked will be raised and all will go to judgment

### - **Three major observations about the Premillennial picture**

Jesus failed His mission (what assurance is that that He won't fail again?)

Multiple resurrections take place

The literalness of certain Revelation passages

### **The Problems with the Premillennial Theory**

1. Jesus completed what He came to do (Jn 19:30; 17:4)
2. Jesus is currently King (Acts 2:36; 1 Tim 6:15; Mt 28:18)
3. The kingdom is established (Rev 1:9; Mark 9:1; Col 1:13)
4. Daniel's timetable doesn't fit beyond Rome and the first century (Dan 2:36-44; Luke 2:2)
5. Israel got the land promised to them (Josh 21:43-44; 23:14)
6. The church was prophesied (Eph 3:2-6, 10-11)
7. The kingdom is spiritual not physical (Jn 18:36; 2 Cor 10:4)
8. Misunderstanding of the style of writing in Revelation (1:1); the timetable (1:1, 3; 22:12); specific audience (1:4, 11; 22:16)
9. Christ's return is not a secret (1 Thes 4:6; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 1:7; Mt 25:31)
10. Christ does not return multiple times (Heb 9:27-28)
11. Wicked and righteous are raised together (Jn 5:28-29; 6:39-40, 54; Acts 24:15; Mt 13:24-30; 36-43; 47-50)
12. Christ delivers the kingdom to God at the end and then His reign ends (1 Cor 15:24-26)

#### **Not Mentioned in Revelation 20**

- Second coming of Christ
  - Bodily resurrection
  - Christ on earth
- Revelation 20 is the answer to the prayers of the martyred saints in ch. 6

#### **Literal or Figurative in Revelation 19 & 20**

Marriage supper of a lamb (19:9)  
White horse (19:11)  
Eyes of fire (19:12)  
Sword comes out of mouth (19:15)  
Angel standing in the sun (19:17)  
Eat the flesh of kings (19:18)  
Animals and kings assemble for war (19:19)  
Angel with chain (20:1)  
Satan in prison (20:7)  
1,000 years (20:7)  
Fire comes down from Heaven (20:9)  
Lake of fire (20:10)

### **What about 1 Thes 4:13-18?**

Edwards: *"The resurrection of the believers is not a separate event, but they participate in Jesus' resurrection; they will be raised up with Jesus (2 Cor 4:14)."*

- Nothing is said about the wicked, a return to earth
- The intention is to remind brethren that the righteous dead are not forgotten
- This passage is to comfort...not confuse