

Prophecy In The News

Week One Hundred Forty

Prophecy In Chaos: I Missed The Rapture Again! Why It makes Me Mad Very Controversial

There is probably no topic in Bible prophecy that engenders more controversy than the Rapture of the Church. Scholars with more degrees than a thermometer duke out with those with even more degrees on the topic starting with the early church fathers all the way up to current times with no apparent end in sight. It divides people on so many levels with people not bringing it up in conversations with even their spouses over it's existence. And when you find those who agree it will happen, the divides get even wider with it happening before the Tribulation, at the half way point of the Tribulation all the way to the end of the Tribulation. To be certain, talk about the Rapture is just a tad provocative. And now, it became a viral topic on social media this week because of a rumor that it would happen on September 22nd (news flash – it didn't.).

Let's Make An Assumption

For argument's sake, let's say that the Rapture is a real thing and see if we can find out why people are obsessed with setting a date for it. In the recent Rapture craze apparently someone postulated that the actual day of the Rapture of the Church would be September 19th of 2023. His name is Tyler and he posted a rather lengthy video citing his evidence which hinged on a variety of things, such as the Feast of Trumpets, the Morning Star, the new moon, Satan, and the Jubilee year. As the famous quote from *The Princess Bride* goes, truly he has a dizzying intellect. However, he's not the first person to do this and use a lot of high brow logic. Back around 1988 a former astronaut made his case for the Rapture happening in 1988 and when it didn't happen then came out with a revision saying it would occur in 1989. As of this writing, he was and still is wrong. Time has funny way of weeding out bad theology from good theology, at least on this point. Sadly, it is having the usual consequences, but on a much, much larger scale.

We Could Spend A Lot Of Time On This

I can and have spent a great deal of time teaching on the subject of the Rapture of the Church having taught a class on it that spanned 12 weeks. And it looks like I need to create videos from those notes as there are those in Christian circles that sadly try to set dates for something I believe should not have a set time pinned on it. Suffice it to say, the mockery of all of Christianity always follows when a failed prediction comes and goes. Our friend Tyler is yet another date setter in a long line of them going back to the infamous William Miller who said that the Rapture would take place between 1843 and 1844. Actually he was talking about the Second Coming of Jesus but let's not split hairs on this, he was a date setter of the highest kind. And his theories also led some historians to label his prediction as the Great Disappointment since his teachings happened during The Second Great Awakening, a widespread revival that arose in the 19th century. Which leads me to my main point – I missed the Rapture and I'm very mad about how it is giving Christianity and Christians another black eye.

A Famous Quote

There is saying that has many variations and it goes something like this: *A lie can travel half way around the world before the truth puts on its shoes.* As usual, the attribution and exactness of the quote is a debate for others, but for now the adage rings true on the feelings about the Rapture. In our current media frenzy where anyone can create an instant buzz on social media, a lie can literally go viral and travel around the world before the truth can get out to refute it. And then the lie can be supported by an army of supporters so quickly that any arguments against it are useless. But in the digital age, so can the mockery of the truth which can rage on for weeks in the maelstrom of public consciousness. As this quote from Jonathan Swift, the 17th/18th century Anglo-Irish essayist, satirist, and political writer attests. Swift wrote:

“Besides, as the vilest Writer has his Readers, so the greatest Liar has his Believers; and it often happens, that if a Lie be believ’d only for an Hour, it has done its Work, and there is no farther occasion for it. Falsehood flies, and the Truth comes limping after it; so that when Men come to be undeceiv’d, it is too late; the Jest is over, and the Tale has had its Effect...”

Why Am I Mad?

Simply put, these false predictions are the fuel for people who hate or at the very least dislike all things Christian. And with digital platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and the like, these fabricated diatribes against the Bible and those who follow it get a foothold in the zeitgeist of humanity and cause a great deal of damage to the truth found on its pages. I won’t go so far as to say that the injury is irreparable, but it does make proselytizing more of an uphill battle than it needs to be. Rather than bemoan yet another erroneous prognostication which I predict will happen again and again ironically making me a true prophet on this issue, the best thing we can do is to use instant media attention for our cause before another lie manifests in the arena of ideas. Much like the Apostle Paul did in the famous Areopagus sermon recounted in **Acts 17:16–34**, we should start now to get the truth out about the Rapture including a refutation of these date-setting teachings and those who espouse them.

But Don’t Cast Your Pearls Before Swine

Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. (Matthew 7:6, NKJV)

Jesus gave this sage advise to His disciples and it is summed up concisely in this quote from an article found on [gotquestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/pearls-before-swine.html) (see <https://www.gotquestions.org/pearls-before-swine.html>) : *The command not to cast your pearls before swine does not mean we refrain from preaching the gospel. Jesus Himself ate with and taught sinners and tax collectors (Matthew 9:10). In essence, the instruction in Matthew 7:6 is the same that Jesus gave to His apostles when He said, “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town” (Matthew 10:14). We are to share the gospel, but, when it becomes apparent that the gospel is not welcome, we are to move on. We are responsible to share the good news; we are not responsible for people’s response to the good news. Pigs don’t appreciate pearls, and some people don’t appreciate what Christ has done for them. Our job is not to force conversions or cram the gospel down people’s throats; there’s no sense in preaching the value of pearls to swine. Jesus’ instruction to His apostles on how to handle rejection was to simply go elsewhere. There are other people who need to hear the gospel, and they are ready to hear it.*

This doesn't mean we aren't to get into the digital fray, but we shouldn't waste our time trying to convince the mistaken punditry when they have no respect for us and only want to snort and pull us down to their pigpen world of mudslinging. If those we engage are what I call intellectually honest and really want to discuss things to see if there is truth to be gleaned even if it goes against what they currently believe, take the time to chat. A few good examples of this are when Jesus talked with Nicodemus, which I call Nick at Night in **John 3** and when He talked with the women at the well in **John 4**. Both were in need of Bible clarification and both really wanted to know what Jesus thought.

Know Their Hearts

That's a pretty tall order when getting once more unto the breach with folks online. Who do we answer and spend our time with and who we need to leave alone? I believe only Holy Spirit can help us discern this as He will lead us into all truth. Jesus told us He would be His voice of wisdom to us after He left and Holy Spirit will indeed give us this help. Just like we read in the Gospels when Jesus rebuked and rebuffed the Pharisees because He knew their hearts or true intentions, it's not wrong to reply to someone on social media, but let Holy Spirit help us pick and choose between the engagements that will bear fruit and those that come from barren branches found on a tree of lies and will only have us wasting our time. Jesus knew the hearts of both the intellectually honest and those of the intellectually dishonest and rejoined in kind. If there is any time in history that this skill and wisdom is needed, it is our time.

Yes, I Am Mad

These folks who I presume did so from pure hearts and predicted the Rapture would occur in September need to pause and reflect on how they missed it and how they can avoid this mistaken theory for future prognosticating. If we have the opportunity to help them, we should, but only if we are led to by Holy Spirit and only out of a heart of love. My anger for the harm they have done is palpable but I and you who share my feelings need to use those feelings and turn it into useful energy to make sure that people don't go down this road again, and to get the truth out there ahead of the next false predictions. The same digital sword that harmed our Christian witness can also be a scalpel of good in the hands of a skilled surgeon. Let us prayerfully construct our responses and be salt and light in a dark and misled world that needs truth. And, in time, that truth will set them free.