

GNITN

The Rapture The Blessed Hope or Blessed Nope

Week 1

The Rapture Backlash

The Poor Rapture

Nowadays it is vogue to be against the doctrine of the Rapture of the church. The various disagreements are all over the map. One of the strongest of these is that the teaching of the Blessed Hope was made up in 1830 one John Nelson Darby. Prominent evangelical figures like the late Pat Robertson have maintained this criticism for decades and many are espousing it again. Even people who supported the doctrine are casting it away, people like Kent Hovind and Kirk Carmeron. Noted theologian Michael Brown also ditched the teaching about the Rapture after teaching it in seminaries for decades. So I wonder why the Rapture is being dogged on now? I'm not totally sure, but the Bible talked about it in this famous passage of the Bible:

*15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. ([1 Thess 4:15-18](#), NASB)*

So many people in Christian circles debate over many things. They argue about how long the worship will go and how short the sermon should be. They can't agree on the color of the carpet for the new building or even whether they should add a carport. Why should we even believe that there will be agreement on something like the Rapture?

Prophecy Is Important

Believing in prophetic events helps change the way Christians live. At least it should. There are at least three ways prophecies change the way we live. The first way is we become more evangelistic. It really makes sense when you think about it. If you believe that Jesus is waiting until the gospel is preached unto the ends of the earth to return, you'll do your very best to make sure everyone you know and will know hears the good news. And we become more missions minded. As mentioned above, reaching the whole world is priority number one if we believe in prophecy and sending missionaries to everywhere we can be part of that plan. We'll give more to these causes and help them to get to the field as quickly as we can. Lastly, we will live holier lives as we see in this verse:

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. ([1 John 3:2-3](#), NKJV)

We will live lives worthy of Christ and not worthy of an increasingly unholy world. We'll ask Jesus what we should think, watch and hear instead of the most influential talk show host. We won't lower the bar so we are just above the lowest standard of holiness, but we will press ourselves to live as close as we can to being like Jesus.

Things Are Not Just Repeating Themselves

I'm sure you've heard people say that prophetic teaching is all a bunch of scare tactics. We've always had earthquakes, famines and wars, they say. Every generation has had an antichrist like a Hitler and future generations will have one as well. But if you study scripture closely enough you can see that the events just ahead of us are way different than anything that has happened before. And that includes the Rapture of the Church so previous prophecies are important for future ones. The more we see how God's prophecies were accurately fulfilled the easier it is to build trust for not only future ones, but belief in all of God's word. If you are willing to believe in the first coming of Jesus, believing in the second coming is not a stretch. And believing in scriptures like **John 3:16** is not a big stretch at all.

The Bible Was Just Written By Men

It's important to realize that many of the criticisms of the Rapture are based on people who think it was dreamed up by just people. But the Apostle Peter addresses this with this verse:

... for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. ([2 Pet 1:21](#), NASB)

For those who say that fallible men wrote the Bible, the standard is much higher than that. To prove that prophecy comes from God we look at Isaiah who many see as the prince of Bible prophets. He tells us that God is at the heart of all prophecy. And He will accomplish all He predicts:

*9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 **Declaring the end from the beginning**, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure' ([Isaiah 46:9-10](#), NASB)*

If you want to point out prophecies in the Old Testament, the Book of **Isaiah** is a great place to start. His prophecies about Jesus are well known even outside of the Christian world. In this portion of scripture Isaiah clearly points out that God declares the beginning to the end. He is the author of events past, present and future and in His mercy, He lets us in on what to look for. And with every accurate prophecy fulfillment God proves He is the Almighty God.

The Bible Authenticates Itself

Not just in **Isaiah** but like all other holy books, with every fulfilled prophecy in the Bible it proves its divine origin. Going back to **Isaiah**, there are more than 1,000 Bible prophecies and 500 of them have been fulfilled in a literal manner. This is why we believe that those remaining 500 prophecies will also be fulfilled literally, too. If we focus on prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus, we see that He fulfilled all 109 prophecies about Him being the messiah. While I could list them all, here are 8 of them:

- 1) He would be born of a virgin woman, without a human father ([Isa 7:14](#))
- 2) He would be born in Bethlehem ([Micah 5:2](#))
- 3) He would come out of Egypt ([Hosea 11:1](#))
- 4) He would have a healing ministry ([Isaiah 61](#))
- 5) He would be called a Nazarene ([Isaiah 11:1](#))
- 6) He was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver ([Zechariah 11:12](#))
- 7) He was betrayed by a friend ([Psalm 41:9](#))
- 8) He was slain between two thieves ([Isaiah 53:12](#))

What Are The Odds?

A science professor by the name of Peter Stoner has [calculated](#) the odds of just 8 of the prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person. He concluded that the odds are 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That's the number 1 with 17 zeros after it. That is 100 quadrillion, about 10 times the size of our national debt. Have you ever pondered the odds represented by this phenomenal number? Let's try and illustrate this. If we fill the state of Texas knee deep in silver dollars with one of those dollars having a black checkmark on it. Then take 10,000 bulldozers and let them just kind of mix up the silver dollars really, really, good for 10 years. Next, we blindfold a guy and turn him loose in that sea of silver dollars. The odds that on the first draw he would reach down and pick up one of those silver dollars with the black checkmark on it is 1 in 10 to the 17th power! Fulfilled prophecy is impressive, indeed. Now let's address one very persistent argument against the Rapture.

The Rapture Is Not In The Bible

*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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. ([1 Thess 4:17](#), NASB)*

While it is true that the actual word "rapture" isn't in the Bible, the term is. Just like the words "nuclear bomb" isn't in the Bible, the description of such a bomb is in there so the event of the Rapture is very clearly described. Look at the scripture above. I highlighted the phrase "**will be caught up**" since in the Greek this is really one word, "*harpizo*" which means "*to be snatched.*" In the Latin the word for *snatched* is the word "*raptus*" which is where we get the modern English word "*rapture.*" So, the term IS in the Bible. It's just a matter of when and how, not if it happens. Before we finish, I'll move onto an issue for those who actually do believe in the Rapture and that is the temptation to set dates for when it will happen. Last year we had a South African minister who set two dates for when it would happen, obviously both came and went and no one was caught up in the air. This man even did a Zoom call leading up the very second for the first date and when the clock struck midnight everyone was still in the meeting.

And About That Timing

If you have ever been in a class of mine this will sound more than vaguely familiar. If you want to set a date for the return of the Lord, stop it now! You are not supposed to know and I speak with authority of Jesus on this:

³⁶ *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

⁴² *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

⁴³ *But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.*

⁴⁴ *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. ([Matt 24:36, 42-44](#), KJV)*

⁶ *And another time when he appeared to them, they asked him, "Lord, are you going to free Israel from Rome now and restore us as an independent nation?"*

⁷ *"The Father sets those dates," he replied, "and they are not for you to know. ([Acts 1:6-7](#), TLB)*
Jesus said we wouldn't know when it would happen not once, not twice, not three times, but four times. When He says something once, we should take note and if He says it a second time it should stand out, but if He goes out of His way to say it three times it probably because He

knows we are prone to set dates and we shouldn't. And notice in Acts when they brought it up again after Jesus ascended. The angels scolded them for asking a question they should have already known the answer to. Unfortunately, whenever someone sets a date for the Rapture it only disappoints saints and it also makes it difficult to witness to unsaved people who once again have a reason to be critical of the Bible and those who follow it.

This Is Good News

The Rapture should be good news. And it is when taught properly. As we will see in future lessons, those who believe in the Rapture are not escapists or lazy. They are some of the most evangelical believers on the planet. And rather than living in fear of the Tribulation they are working to make sure as many people as they can avoid it. And Jesus actually gave us the best advice ever for when the prophetic birth pangs get stronger and stronger when He told His disciples and by extension us this:

²⁸ *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. ([Luke 21:28](#), KJV)*

I like how it reads in a few other translations as well:

Now when these things begin to occur, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption (deliverance) is drawing near. ([AMP](#))

²⁸ *So when all these things begin to happen, stand straight and look up! For your salvation is near." ([TLB](#))*

When all this starts to happen, up on your feet. Stand tall with your heads high. Help is on the way!" ([MSG](#))

It is easy to get depressed when we see the world spinning out of control and when we know how bad things will get. And when the Blessed Hope is denied by other believers. But Jesus anticipated such despair and told us to keep our eyes on the really good news. Don't panic, seeing Him face-to-face could be just around the corner!