

Beginning Apologetics – The End Times

The Rapture III and Purgatory Intro

October 25, 2009

“Learn to explain our faith *clearly*, to defend it *charitably*, and to share it *confidently*.”

I. Questions from Last Class

II. The Rapture – Introduction

A. Eschatological Formulations and their problems(?)

1. There are four main approaches to eschatology prominent among Christian denominations today:

- a) *Post-tribulation Premillennialism*
- b) *Pre-tribulation (or Dispensational) Premillennialism*
- c) *Post-millennialism*
- d) *Amillennialism (The Catholic Church’s formulation)*

B. What is the “Rapture”? The Rapture is a term taken from 1 Thessalonians 4:17:

- 1. “Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord.”
- 2. From the Latin verb here used, *rapiemur*, has come the idea of “the rapture,”

III. Problems with the Dispensationalist View of the Rapture

A. A Faulty View of the Church

1. The view that the Church is a make-shift measure benefiting the Gentiles is *unbiblical*.

- a) *The Church is the Body of Christ (Eph 5:23; Col 1:24)*

b) *The Church is the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2; Rev 21:14 and Eph 2:19-22)*

c) *The Church is the Kingdom of Heaven*

d) *The Church is the Bride of Christ the Jesus marries at the end of time*

e) *Jesus promised to be with His Church until the end of time*

2. This view that the Church is just a passing phase until the Kingdom of Israel is restored

a) *is found nowhere in Scripture.*

b) *Contradicts clear Biblical evidence that the Kingdom of God is the Church*

c) *Prominent Dispensationalists teach that the Church is the false religion that will align itself with the Anti-Christ (the Whore of Babylon of Rev 18)!*

B. A Faulty View of Israel – Dealt with this in Questions at the beginning

C. A Faulty Reading of 1 Thessalonians 4

1. 1Thess 4 is the linchpin of the Rapture for our separated brethren.

2. Remember 1 Thess 4:17 - Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

3. Read the verse: “...together with them...” With who? Read verse 16: For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

4. This passage is teaching about the resurrection of the dead at the Second Coming of Christ; some were apparently concerned that those who had died before the Second Coming would miss out on Christ’s triumphant return.

5. NO ONE GETS “LEFT BEHIND”.

D. A Faulty Reading of 1 Thess 4 – Part II

1. “Who makes the U-turn?”

a) *The Greek word for “meet” is apantesis (ap-an’ -tay-sis).*

b) *Refers to the practice of prominent citizens going out to welcome an approaching dignitary and escorting him into the city.*

c) *The citizens leave, meet the dignitary, and return with him to the city. The citizens make the u-turn.*

d) *This is the way the word is used elsewhere in Scripture:*

(1) Matt 25:6: “At midnight, there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' “

(2) Acts 28:15: “The brothers from there heard about us and came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us.”

e) *So when 1 Thess 4:17 says both the dead and the living in Christ will rise to “meet” (apantesis) Christ in the Clouds, they are meeting Christ to escort him back to his destination: earth!*

f) *Who gets “Left Behind”? NO ONE.*

E. A Faulty Reading of Matthew 24:38-41- Death with this in the questions

F. No Record of this view In History

1. Why isn't this “secret Rapture” taught by the early Church fathers, or the Bible?

2. Scripture never refers to more than one coming

3. The Church Fathers always teach one future coming of Christ

G. Jesus’ public ministry is accomplished!

1. John 19: 28, 30: ²⁸ After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst."
³⁰ When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

2. Jesus said this on Calvary. If “It is finished”, what does He need to come back to do for 1,000 years?

3. The Church condemned millennialism in 1944; the CCC repeats this condemnation (CCC 676).

H. Overlooking Revelations 13

1. What happens in Rev CH. 13 (See Rev 13:7-8)
2. The Anti-Christ wages war on the saints...*on Earth*. In the Dispensationalist view, The rise of the Anti-Christ is *after the Rapture*...so who's the antichrist supposed to fight?

I. Misunderstanding of Suffering

1. The Rapture supposedly drags the righteous away to *spare* them the trials of the Tribulation.
2. But...Suffering is a great *privilege* of the followers of Christ!
 - a) *Colossians 1:24 - Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking¹⁴ in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church.*
 1. *Romans 8:17-18 - ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us.*
3. Think of the examples of:
 - a) *The early martyrs*
 - b) *The millions of saints tortured by Communists in the last century*
 - c) *Those suffering for their faith in The Sudan right now*
4. The thinking that the Rapture will spare Christians from suffering is *escapist*.

IV. Conclusion