

I. INTRO: *Dispensationalism & The Rapture* by Daniel Ridinger

A. 2 lessons have been presented on the subject of *Premillennial Dispensationalism*.

B. The 1st lesson was entitled an *Introduction To Dispensationalism*. Premillennial dispensationalism is a method of interpreting the Scriptures. Its adherents believe that Jesus, at His Coming, will set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem & reign a literal 1K years. There are many different aspects to the D scheme of events. (Cf Chart)

C. The subject of the lesson last Sunday evening was *Dispensationalism & The Church*.

1. D contend that the church & the kingdom are 2 different, unrelated entities. They assert that Jesus *postponed* the est. of His kingdom because the Jews rejected Him.

2. They believe that the church was involved in God's *purpose*, but not His *eternal purpose*. Hence, they view the church as an *accident*, an *interlude*, an *afterthought*, a *parenthesis*, a *stop-gap* measure that God took until the kingdom can be established.

3. Furthermore, they believe that the church was not mentioned by the OT prophets. We noted, however, in last week's lesson that the church was involved in God's *eternal purpose* (Eph.3:8-11). [It was shown from the Scriptures that the church & the kingdom of Christ are one & the same, just different terminology (Mt.16:18-19). Thus, the OT prophecies relating to the kingdom are also prophecies about the church. The church is not an *afterthought* in God's scheme of redemption.]

D. *Something I omitted last week was the D view of God's relationship to the church & to Israel. They teach that God has 2 separate plans - one for the church & a different one for Israel. They also believe that God has 2 distinct destinations for them. The church will spend eternity in Heaven after the millennium while the Jews will spend eternity on earth following the millennium.¹

 +-----

I. WHAT IS THE RAPTURE?

A. Perhaps you have seen bumper stickers that read, *In case of the Rapture, this car will be without a driver. OR I will see you in the rapture.*

B. D advocate that the *rapture* is the 1st stage of Jesus' Coming. They believe the *rapture* is when the Lord will come for His saints suddenly & secretly.

1. They also aver that *first resurrection* mentioned in Rev.20 will occur at the same time.

2. When the *rapture* occurs, all the dead saints will be resurrected from the dead. All living saints will be changed.² Together they will be caught up, snatched away to meet the Lord in the air & remain with Him for 7 years.

3. The *rapture* will bring to an end the *church age* & will usher in the *tribulation*, a period when God's wrath will be poured out on earth like never before.³ Some refer to the last 3 1/2 years of the *tribulation* as the *great tribulation*. [During the *tribulation* period a number of things will happen: the "Antichrist" will arise. The Jews will make a covenant with him. The

Temple will be rebuilt & sacrifice reinstated. Many of those converted will be killed before the Lord returns.]

4. Jesus will come with His saints 7 years after the *rapture*. They call this the revelation. [This is the 2nd stage of Jesus' Coming in the D view. The *tribulation* saints will be raised from the dead. This is also referred to as the 2nd part of the 1st resurrection.]

C. Notice what some D envision what it will be like when the *rapture* occurs.

1. Tim F. LaHaye & Jerry B. Jenkins, authors of the *Left Behind* series, describe what it would be like on earth after the saints have been raptured: *On a 747 bound for Heathrow from Chicago, the flight attendants suddenly find about half the seats empty, except the clothes and wedding rings and dental fillings of the believers who have suddenly been swept up to heaven. Down on the ground, cars are crashing, husbands are waking up to find only a nightgown in bed next to them, and all children under 12 have disappeared as well.*⁴

2. Hal Lindsay in his book The Late Great Planet Earth describes the *rapture* as *The Ultimate Trip*. A portion of Ch. 11 is devoted to a fictitious dialogue by people left on earth as the rapture takes place. a. *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've got an invasion from outer space!* b. *It was the last quarter of the championship game and the other side was ahead. Our boys had the ball. We made a touch down and tied it up. The crowd went crazy. Only one minute to go and they fumbled--our quarterback recovered--he was about a yard from the goal when--zap--no more quarterback---completely gone, just like that.*⁵

D. Passages D use to corroborate the *rapture*.

1. Jer.30:7 [The *time of Jacob's trouble* is the same as *tribulation* according to D. But, notice some will be *saved out of Jacob's trouble*. The *saved out* ones refer to those who will be raptured.]

2. Mt.24:37-42

3. 1 Th.4:13-17

4. 2 Th.2:1-3

---Thus, the *rapture*, Jesus *coming for* His saints.

+++++

II. WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT THE RAPTURE?

- The word *rapture* is not found in the Bible. But, just because a term is not found in the Scriptures does not mean that the concept is wrong in & of itself.
- The *rapture theory*, however, is flawed in many ways. So, let's notice what is wrong with the *rapture* from a Biblical perspective.

A. Lord's Coming = Visible/Audible

1. D contend that the Lord's will *come for* His saints suddenly & secretly. They affirm that the unsaved will not see the Lord, but rather only the righteous dead & living. Thus, the Lord's *coming for* His saints will be an invisible coming to the lost.

2. This does not square with the Scriptures. Jesus' Coming will be both an audible & a visible coming.

- a. attended by a *trumpet* (1 Cor.15:52)
- b. a vocal coming (1 Th.4:16)
- c. accompanied by *flaming fire* (2 Th.1:7)
- d. *visible* to all people (Acts 1:10-11; Rev.1:7)

B. Lord's Coming = The End

1. D assert that the *rapture* occurs when the Lord will *come for* His saints. They will remain with Him for 7 years, after which time the Lord will *come with* His saints to set up an earthly kingdom & rule for 1K years. Thus, according to D the end of the world comes 1007 years after the *rapture*!

2. The Bible presents a different picture. It instructs us that the created order will be destroyed when Christ comes again (1 Pt.3:10-12).

3. The Lord's Coming will be the *last day*. Time will cease to exist & eternity will begin.

C. Lord's Coming = 1 Time Event

1. D believe the *rapture* is the 1st stage of Jesus' Coming. The *revelation* is the 2nd stage. Thus, the *rapture* is viewed as a component of Christ 2nd Coming. Too, they believe that the righteous dead will be resurrected at the *rapture*.

2. But the NT does not teach multiple comings of the Lord. There will be only 1 Coming of the Lord (Heb.9:28) [It is going beyond the doctrine of Christ, arguing from the silence of the Scriptures, to contend that Christ will come more than once.]

3. Also, the general resurrection will take place when Jesus comes again. All the dead, the righteous & the unrighteous, will be raised at the same time (Jn.5:28-29; Acts 24:15),

 ---The *rapture theory* should be rejected because there will be nothing secret about Jesus' Coming. When Jesus comes again it will be the last day, the end of the world & the beginning of eternity. All people will be assigned to their eternal destinies. The *rapture* is not taught in God's Word.

+++++
CONCL:

Preached: Oliver church of Christ, Rogersville, AL (10/20/02, PM)

¹William E. Cox Biblical Studies In Final Things (Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co, 1975, cc1966), p.47

²Premillennialism fact sheet, p.2

³Last Days, p.15

⁴Time Magazine "Apocalypse Now" by Nancy Gibbs, July 1, 2002, p.42

⁵Hal Lindsay The Late Great Planet Earth (Zondervan Pub. Co: Grand Rapids, MI 1970), pp.124-125