

4/20/23 Questions

Reminders:

- Please read and consider our discussion questions on your own prior to the Gathering on Thursday.
- Bring your Bible and a copy of these questions with you on Thursday night.

[What is the Rapture?](#) by Dr. David Jeremiah

Assignment: Watch video, read blog, and answer questions independently prior to our Gathering.

The Meaning of Rapture

“Caught Up” – According to Dr. David Jeremiah, the Greek word *harpazo* occurs fourteen times in the New Testament with four variations of meaning, each of which contributes to our understanding of what Paul is describing in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with [the dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

First, *harpazo* can mean “to carry off by force.” Christ will use His power to remove living and deceased believers from the last enemy, death.

Second, *harpazo* can mean “to claim for oneself eagerly.” Christ purchased us with His blood, and He will return to claim those who are His.

Third, *harpazo* can mean “to snatch away speedily.” The Rapture will occur “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Fourth, *harpazo* can mean “to rescue from the danger of destruction.” This meaning supports the idea that the Rapture will save the Church from experiencing the terrors of the seven-year Tribulation.

- 1) Consider the four variations of the meaning of *harpazo* in the New Testament. How can the consistency of all four meanings bring encouragement and comfort to those who are continually told “rapture” isn’t in the Bible?

Dr. Jeremiah reminded us that the Bible is one quarter prophetic. (Some scholars would say nearly one third.) For every prophecy concerning Jesus’ first coming, there are eight about his second coming.

- 2) God is pulling out all the stops to warn people of the end. What does that say about His heart for all mankind?

- 3) The enemy is also pulling out all the stops to keep people blinded about the nearness of the end. What evidence do we see of this?

Who goes up? – In our last week’s video, Pastor Tom said that all believers alive at the time of the rapture will be caught up. This week, Pastor Jeremiah said the same thing. Yet some teach that only those who are watching and longing for His appearing or those who are righteous enough (as if we can ever be righteous enough on our own) will be raptured.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 says, “Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them...”

- 1) Do you see anything to differentiate those who will be taken: rapture watchers versus could-care-less Christians? Or the faithful versus the wayward?
- 2) Why would this error in teaching, that only the “good kids” will be raptured, be considered works based?
- 3) In 1 Corinthians 15:50-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and John 14:3, who does each passage say will be taken in the rapture?

Two-Part Event

- 1) What is the difference between the appearing and the arrival (1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 19:11-14)?
 - a. In relation to the tribulation, when will each happen?
- 2) If the purpose of the tribulation is to bring judgment on an unbelieving world and to turn Israel back to God, then what is the purpose of the rapture?
 - a. Can you think of verses to support this reason?

Rapture Verses

The best means of arming yourself with knowledge of the rapture is to become familiar with the Bible’s teaching on the topic. Three New Testament passages offer the best insight into the rapture: 1 Corinthians 15:50-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and John 14:3.

- 1) In which verse did Paul call the rapture “a mystery”?
 - a. What does “mystery” mean in this sense?
- 2) Which passage describes the order of those who are alive and those who are asleep in Christ being raised and caught up?
- 3) Discuss why John 14:3 is considered a rapture verse.
- 4) Jesus says in John 14:1, “Let not your heart be troubled.” How can the promise of His coming bring peace as we watch our world implode?

- a. How does the word “let” show that we have a choice in how we respond to all the craziness that’s happening?
- 5) In 1 Thessalonians 4:15, by whose word does the teaching on the rapture come?
 - 6) In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, who will come for the alive and asleep believers?
 - 7) In which passage are we told what sound to listen for?
 - a. How is the sound described?
 - b. Who will hear it?

**Other teachers have different perspectives than Dr. Jeremiah on this and believe there will be three distinct sounds.

Consider a time of in-depth study on these three passages. Look for differences and similarities. Talk through them with a friend.

Why the Rapture Could Happen Today

- 1) The rapture is a **signless** event. This is called the doctrine of _____.
 - a. Things _____ happen but nothing _____ happen.
- 2) The rapture is a **surprise** event.
 - a. According to Matthew 24:36-39, who knows when the rapture will occur?
- 3) The rapture is a **sudden** event. In verse _____ of _____ (book), “twinkling” likely refers to the amount of time it takes for light, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, to be reflected on the retina of one’s eye. In less than a nanosecond, the Lord will call believers to Himself.
- 4) If the rapture were to happen today, do you feel you are ready to meet Jesus face to face?

Lives Interrupted

Dr. Jeremiah concluded with the following three impacts the coming rapture can and should have on our lives. Discuss how:

- We can live with expectation.
- We can live with dedication.
- We can live with preparation.

Bonus Discussion

While Dr. Jeremiah was discussing the dead-in-Christ coming back with Jesus, he made a statement I don’t recall ever hearing. He said that we will all see heaven together for the first time, both the alive and dead in Christ. Is this something you’ve heard, that believers who have already died are not yet in “heaven proper” but in another place? Could this be why Jesus told the criminal on the cross,

“Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise (Luke 23:43),” rather than with Him in heaven?

Truthfully, I don’t know the answer to any of this, but I can’t wait to get there and find out.