

# OpenTheo

## When Will The Rapture Be?



### When Shall These Things Be? - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the topic of the rapture and when it will occur according to various views. He explains that Christians need not be afraid of death as they will either be caught up alive or resurrected from the dead. The different views on the tribulation period and God's wrath are also explored, along with the idea of two stages of the coming of Christ. Gregg emphasizes that there is no compelling reason to disagree with what Paul and Jesus said about the resurrection, and Christians throughout history have generally believed in one stage of the resurrection.

### Transcript

As the last three sessions have been about the subject of millennialism, the next three, I believe, will be three, will be about the subject of the rapture of the church and the resurrection of the dead. This subject is actually in the minds of most popular thinkers, probably a more interesting controversy than the matter of the millennium. Most people just figure, well, when Jesus comes back, I don't really have a preference whether we have a thousand-year reign on earth, the peace and prosperity as the premillennialists think, or if it's the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness as the amillennialists think.

In terms of my actual expectations, I could be happy with either. I can't think of any emotional reason to get concerned about whether amillennialism or premillennialism is true in terms of my future expectations. It may have something to do with present theological positions on things.

But when it comes to the actual future and possibly the short-range future, many modern Christians are concerned about the rapture, in particular, the timing of the rapture. By the rapture, we mean the time when living saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air without seeing death. Perhaps this interests us so much because of the whole universal unpleasantness of death.

We know that every generation that has lived so far has ended their tenure here on earth by experiencing death. Unless we happen to live in that generation that will be

raptured, we too will die. While Christians needn't be afraid of death, most people would like to live in that generation that will not die, but that will be caught up alive and never have to go through that otherwise universal human experience of death.

Perhaps that is why the rapture captures our imagination so much. But also another reason it does is because many people see the rapture as a means of escape from some really horrendous things that are anticipated to occur near the end of the age before Jesus comes back. To some people, the rapture is nothing else but an escape from what they call the tribulation, a seven-year period of horrendous circumstances and conditions on the earth which will be very unpleasant, virtually intolerable, very ugly for those who are here to go through it, according to the theory.

And therefore, Christians hope, in many cases, hope to escape it. And the only escape from that which would be a worldwide tribulation would be an escape from this world. And to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and to leave this world at that point sounds very attractive to those who think that the tribulation may be in our near future.

So there are a number of reasons why the subject of the rapture is of particular interest to many Christians in thinking about eschatology, and some get very, very emotional about their particular view of the timing of the rapture, much more so than you'll find, for example, Christians getting emotional about their view of the millennium. There's much more at stake emotionally in your view of the rapture. Are you a pre-tribber, a mid-tribber, a post-tribber, a pre-raptor? These are all four popular views, each differing from the others as to when the rapture will occur.

Now, you may have noticed that most of those had to do with the trib, pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib. That is to say, they presuppose there will be a tribulation, a seven-year tribulation at the end of time before Jesus comes back. The pre-trib rapture, or pre-tribulational rapture is the fuller term, holds that before the tribulation occurs, the church will be raptured, will be taken out of the world to escape the full seven years of hell on earth that they anticipate being the seven-year tribulation.

On this view, the rapture occurs seven years prior to the actual end of this age, that when Jesus comes back to earth to judge, the church will have already been gone for seven years because the rapture will occur before, by a space of seven years, before the actual second coming of Christ to earth. In the rapture, the pre-tribulationist believes, Jesus will come partially back from heaven, but not all the way back to earth. He will come and we will meet him in the clouds.

And depending on who you talk to, we will either remain in the clouds with him for the duration of the seven-year tribulation, and then come the rest of the way down with him, and come to earth with him at the end of the tribulation. Or else, after meeting him in the clouds, we will turn around and go back into heaven with him, and be there for seven years, and then come all the way to earth with him at the end of the tribulation.

Whichever view is taken, that is, the view that the rapture hangs us in the clouds for seven years, or takes us back to heaven for that seven years, the pre-tribulation rapture is a view which, if true, guarantees that we will miss the entire seven-year tribulation.

The mid-tribulation rapture view also believes there will be a seven-year tribulation, but holds that the rapture will not come at the beginning of the tribulation, but in the middle of it. And on this view, the first three and a half years of the tribulation is not quite as bad as the second three and a half years. That is, the seven-year tribulation is divided in half by a less terrible and a more terrible half each.

The first half only involves, perhaps, persecution of believers, but the second half is the pouring out of God's wrath on the earth. And since God has not appointed the church to wrath, it is argued that God would rapture the church before that part of the tribulation begins, and that places it three and a half years into the tribulation, and of course, therefore, three and a half years from the end of the tribulation also. That's called the mid-tribulation rapture view.

Of the various views, I think it is the least widely held, but I don't know for sure about that. That's my impression from reading books and talking to people. There are people who believe in a mid-tribulation rapture, but it does not seem to be quite as widely held as either the pre-trib or the post-trib position.

The post-trib position is that the church will be here for the entire tribulation, will undergo a time of testing at the hands of the Antichrist, martyrdom probably, and will be here when God pours out his wrath. But the post-tribulationist believes that when the wrath of God is poured out, God will distinguish between the Christian and the non-Christian. That God will pour out his wrath on the non-Christian, but the Christian, though living in very unpleasant times, will not be a direct recipient of God's outpoured wrath.

The Christian will be protected from the worse and more direct effects of God's outpoured wrath, and therefore, the Christian will go through the entire tribulation and the rapture will occur right at the end of the tribulation, just before Jesus descends all the way to earth. He'll catch up the church to meet him in the air and they'll turn around and come back with him. We will turn around and come back with him to earth right there on the spot.

That is the three major views that have been around for a long time, since 1830, of the rapture. When does it occur? All of them, of course, are positioning the rapture in a relationship to a seven-year tribulation, either before or after or in the middle of that tribulation. There is a new view that has arisen, a man named Marv Rosenthal.

Are all three of those dispensational? In the Darbian sense of classic dispensationalism of the past 170 years or so, approximately, only the pre-trib rapture is truly dispensational in the classic sense. However, those who hold a mid-trib rapture often hold to a large

number of dispensational views also. Sometimes it's just a modification of classic dispensationalism and it retains more dispensationalism than it rejects.

A mid-tribulationist usually is a believer in dispensationalism in all respects, except for the pre-trib rapture, they hold a mid-trib. That is sometimes the case with a post-tribulationist too. A post-tribulationist often is premillennial, believes in a seven-year tribulation, and may believe other dispensational things too, but they reject the pre-trib rapture.

So that's a good question. Are all those views dispensational? Only the pre-trib rapture is truly the dispensational view. The mid-trib and the post-trib are perhaps modifications on the pre-trib view and the dispensational view.

There is now also another modification. This is presented most popularly in a book by Marv Rosenthal called *The Pre-Rapture of the Church*, and another book that's recently come out, I think it's called *The Sign*. Can anyone confirm this? There's a big publicity on a book, I think it was called *The Sign*, that's out.

Big, thick book, and it also presents the same view as Marv Rosenthal presented in his book. They call it *The Pre-Rapture of the Church*. They say, well, it's not quite mid-tribulationist.

It's later than that, but it's before the end. And according to Marv Rosenthal, it's not the last three and a half years of the tribulation that we find God's wrath poured out. It's only in the last half of that, the last 21 months of the tribulation, Marv Rosenthal says, is when the wrath will be poured out.

And we will be here for the first three quarters of the tribulation, but it's that last quarter, the last 21 months of the tribulation, that we will not be here for. And so that's called a pre-wrath rapture of the Church. Now, one thing that many of these views have in common, well, first of all, one thing they all have in common is they believe there will be a seven-year tribulation.

This, we will find in a later lecture, is disputable. Perhaps there will be, perhaps there won't be. The Bible does not clearly teach that there will be a seven-year tribulation, but some believe it does.

And so we will examine the biblical evidence on that at a later time. But let us, for the sake of argument, just accept the view that there will be a seven-year tribulation. Each of these views accepts that proposition.

And the thing where most of them agree with each other is that there is a distinction between the time of the rapture and the time of the actual second coming of Christ to earth. Only the post-tribulationist view does not separate these two events. That is to say, the post-tribulationist believes the rapture occurs the same day, probably the same

hour, as Jesus comes down all the way to earth.

The Church just meets him in the air and turns around and comes down with him. That's the post-trib view. But apart from the post-tribulational view, the other three, the pre-trib, the mid-trib, and the pre-rapture view, all have one thing in common, and that is that there is a gap between the rapture of the Church and the second coming of Christ to earth.

The way they would describe it usually is that the second coming of Christ is in two stages. The first stage, Jesus doesn't come all the way down. He just comes down to the atmosphere and he calls the Church up to meet him.

Then he either stays there for a while or else he goes back to heaven for a while. But the second stage of the second coming is when the Church comes with him, having previously been raptured, and the Church comes back all the way to earth with him, and that's his judgment coming. The way Darby and dispensationalists have usually explained this is that the two stages of the second coming are the rapture and the revelation.

These are the two words that dispensationalists use for the two stages. When Jesus comes for the saints and calls them into the air, that's the rapture. When he comes back with the saints and judges the earth, that's the revelation.

So you have these two words, the rapture and the revelation, in dispensational nomenclature refers to the two aspects or phases or stages of the second coming of Christ. But as I said, three of the four views we just mentioned actually separate the rapture from the revelation, the rapture of the Church from the judgment coming of Christ to the earth by some space, either 21 months or 42 months or seven years. And so it's a matter of fine points.

And usually it all boils down to just the way they understand the book of Revelation. Some fine points of the book of Revelation make the difference between mid-trib, pre-wrath, or pre-trib rapture view. The post-trib view also, of course, has the use for the book of Revelation, but bases its views on some other passages as well, and so does the pre-trib.

The question we need to ask ourselves, and in this lecture I'd like to address, is does the Bible teach that the second coming of Christ will be in two stages, or is it all one event? Is there one event that includes the rapture of the Church, the resurrection of the dead, the return of Christ to earth, the end of this present world, and the creation of the new heaven and earth, all this happening at one time? Or does the Bible break these down into separate issues like you could put on a timeline? Dispensationalists have been well known throughout history for their timelines. In fact, it's become a distinctive of the dispensational system that they often will send speakers around to churches with huge

banner-sized timelines that show, and sometimes they have a smaller version printed in their books, showing from the creation to the fall, showing all the different dispensations, and in particular, they focus on the period of the end times, where you've got the rapture at this point, you've got the tribulation here, in the midst of the tribulation you've got the Antichrist doing something or another, and then you've got these trumpets, and you've got these vials of breath poured out, and then you've got the return of Christ to the earth with the saints, and you've got the setup of the millennial kingdom, at the end of that you have Satan released for a little while, then you have the fire from heaven comes down, there's the great white throne judgment, then you've got the new heavens and new earth. These timelines are necessary for understanding the dispensational system.

I shouldn't say necessary, I suppose someone with a good conceptual way of thinking could picture it without the timeline. But dispensationalism is so complex, it has so many events happening at different times and different stages, all of them prophesied in the future, that it's easy to get mixed up, which comes where, and what accompanies what, and what comes before that, and so forth. And so the dispensationalism, with its great complexity of end times scenario, has resorted to complex timelines, and I can show you a few of them in dispensational books if you have never seen one, to give you samples.

I didn't put one in our notes, I probably should Xerox one and put it in our notes so you'd see what one of those looks like. But the reason they need these timelines is because it's so complex. The amillennial system, and the view that is virtually, well no, I'll just say the amillennial system because post-tribulationism isn't always amillennial.

But the amillennial system teaches that this last event is a very complex single event. It's not a series of things stretched out over 1,007 years or more. It is one day, the day of the Lord, the day of Christ, the day of God.

According to Scripture, in the day of the Lord, in the day of God, in the day of Christ, the dead will be raised, all the dead. The rapture of the church will occur. Christ and his church will return to earth, will judge the world, will destroy the present earth and replace it with a new heavens and new earth, all on one day, the day that Jesus refers to as the last day.

And so throughout history, the church has had a very simple eschatology about most of these events. The churches throughout history believe all these things essentially happen at once, or within the space of a few minutes or hours. On the same day, there's a day of judgment.

And on that day, all these things occur. The dispensations have broken it down into many different pieces and spread them out from one another over periods of years, which of course makes it a very complex timeline, requiring that someone illustrate. It's interesting that God never gave such an illustration or graph or a chart in the Bible to help us understand the prophetic picture.

Apparently, he didn't think that the prophetic picture was that complex as needed that kind of visual aid. But actually, a person who doesn't have these charts in mind or this complex in mind, I believe can just read the Bible and get a very simple eschatology. The Bible speaks about an event called the coming of the Lord.

And it says, at the coming of the Lord, the dead will rise. At the coming of the Lord, the earth will be dissolved. There'll be new heaven, new earth.

At the coming of the Lord, the rapture of the church will occur. At the coming of the Lord, the wicked will be judged. At the coming of the Lord, all these things occur.

And you'll always find in scripture they happen at the coming of the Lord. But even the coming of the Lord is broken up into small pieces and spread out over many years by the system that is called dispensationalism. Let's talk briefly here about the distinctives of the dispensational scheme, about the resurrection of the church and the rapture of the church.

The reason I want to do this is I don't want to just pick on dispensationalism. I mean, there are other views I disagree with also, and I'm not spending as much time debunking those. But the reason is those views are not as widely held.

Dispensationalism is the only view that many Christians have ever heard, and it is probably the dominant view in the thinking of most Christians, and therefore it justifies a closer examination since in critiquing and analyzing the dispensational scheme, we will be discussing something that will be relevant to the thinking of most evangelicals. It would not be so if I at this point decided to critique the post-millennial scheme, which is held by a much smaller number of people. I could do so and be interested in talking about that, but it would be of less interest to the body of Christ generally, I think.

And on the rapture question, it is the dispensationalists primarily that have a distinctive view, because they invented it. They invented the distinction between the rapture and the second coming of Christ. Here are the distinctives of the dispensational scheme.

A, there are two phases or stages of the second coming, the rapture before the tribulation and the revelation after the tribulation. B, in the first stage, Christ comes for the saints. In the second stage, he comes with the saints.

C, the rapture occurs with the first resurrection, that is, the resurrection of the church saints. The lost will be resurrected after the millennium. So there are two resurrections.

The righteous are raised before the tribulation at the rapture. The wicked are not raised from the dead until long after, not only seven years, but a thousand and seven years later at the end of the millennium. D, the church is thus removed before God pours out his wrath for seven years on the earth and is taken to heaven to receive her rewards and to participate in the marriage supper.

E, those in the tribulation who become believers will therefore not be part of the church having missed the first resurrection. This is important to the dispensationalists because they have to keep the church separate from Israel. And they believe that the church is, in fact, a parenthetical entity, that God stops dealing with Israel briefly when they crucified Christ and he began to work with the church in the meantime until he began to work with Israel again.

And the tribulation is a time when God can work with Israel again. And God, you know, he can only do one thing at once. He can't have deal with the church and with Israel at the same time.

So he's got to get the church out of there and the church age. And then he can deal with Israel again in the tribulation. So it's very important that we understand that the church is a multi-ethnic entity that is in the dispensational system.

Forever distinct from Israel, in fact, dispensationalists say the church will be God's eternal heavenly people and Israel will be God's eternal earthly people. Isn't that something? Israel will be God's eternal earthly people in the new earth. The church will be God's eternal heavenly people in the new heaven.

So this distinction between the church and Israel goes on into eternity, according to dispensationalism. It's pretty wild, I must confess. I mean, none of this is in the Bible.

I mean, you cannot find one line of scripture that says those things. But it is argued that this is the literal interpretation of scripture. And so we must look at it and see what it is.

And in the course of this study, in the next three sessions, I'm going to look at every scripture that provides an argument for a pre-tribulation rapture. We're going to execute the scriptures, not with a mind to rob, kill and destroy, not with a mind to maim or hurt or break things or kill people, but with the mind of just trying to analyze in the context what each scripture is saying and see whether it is saying or not saying what the dispensationalist makes of it. That's all I want to do.

Now, these are the distinctives of the system. You see, even if a Gentile gets converted during the tribulation, after the church has been raptured and you've got the seven-year tribulation, if a Gentile gets saved and turns to Christ, he will not be part of the church. He will be like Ruth or Rahab, a Gentile who becomes part of the remnant of Israel.

So that in eternity, those Gentiles who get saved in the tribulation are more like proselytes to Israel. The church has had its day. The church has come and gone and is sealed and closed.

No more one will be in it. It's a different dispensation. The church age ends at the rapture and the tribulation begins something else.

So even if a Gentile gets saved during the tribulation, he's not part of the church according to dispensationalism. Yes, well, they believe that the temple will be restored and there will be a sacrificial system in the tribulation until the middle, when Antichrist, they say, will put an image of himself in the temple, defiling the temple and all devout Jews will flee from Jerusalem to probably the rock city of Petra. And there they will use that as a base of operations.

By the way, there's not one line in Scripture about the Jews ever fleeing to a rock city of Petra. There is such a city, but it's not ever mentioned in any line of Scripture that Jews of any time will flee there, much less in the tribulation. I have no idea where this idea comes from, but it's almost universally held among dispensationalists.

But anyway, the idea is that when the Antichrist sets up his image in the temple, the Jews will flee to the rock city of Petra. And then there's the second part of the tribulation, which is much worse. And the remnant Jews become evangelists.

According to Hal Lindsay, they become like 144,000 Jewish Billy Graham's. And they convert more people to Christ in the second half of the tribulation than the whole church did during the 2,000 years of its history. Now, this I mean, you laugh because it sounds like I'm being sarcastic.

I'm saying it's in all sobriety. This is what they teach. To me, frankly, today, with my perspective of how I understand the Scripture now, it does seem like a joke.

It really does, because you can't find any of that in Scripture. This idea that the 144,000 in the book of Revelation will convert a bunch of people. You don't read anywhere in the book of Revelation of the 144,000 converting anybody.

They might, but they might not. But they are mentioned twice, and in neither case does it call them evangelists. It doesn't say that they evangelize people.

It just indicates that they are sealed and they're saved, period. All the rest is made up to fit a scenario that the dispensationalists think will happen. Which is why, by the way, you have to keep having new dispensational books written by dispensationalists about what the tribulation is.

There's novelizations of it. There's non-fictional, alleged non-fictional books written about it. And each one has a little different slant.

Well, not each. There's many who agree with each other, but there's several different slants as to what's going to happen. Because there's so much implied in the system that is not in the Bible, it leaves a lot of room for guesswork, and that's basically what most of it is, guesswork.

Now, where did this idea of a two-stage coming of Christ come from? Where did the idea

come from that the second coming of Christ will not be one event, but two events at separate times, two stages, a rapture and a revelation at a later date? Well, the first hint of it came from a Jesuit priest named Emanuel Lacunza. He wrote a book in 1812. That's just a few years before Darby came out with his views in 1830.

Just 18 years before Darby published, a Jesuit priest, Emanuel Lacunza, wrote a book and said there would be a 45-day interval between the coming of Christ for the saints and His coming in judgment upon the earth. This is the first time anyone knows of that there was a gap of any kind put between the rapture and the judgment coming of Christ, and that gap was said to be 45 days. Where did he get that? He got it from a verse, a single verse, in Daniel, the very last verses of Daniel, Daniel chapter 12, and it says there, actually verses 11 and 12 of Daniel chapter 12, very difficult verses to understand.

In Daniel 12, 11 it says, And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. That's 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1,335 days, but you go your way till the end, for you shall rest and will arise in your inheritance at the end of the days.

Now, he says there is a gap, or there is a period referred to as 1,290 days, but then it says, Blessed is he who waits for the 1,335 days. There is not any information given in the entire book of Daniel, or for that matter in the entire Bible, as to what happens, or what is the difference between this 1,290 days and the 1,335 days. It is a difference of 45 days, and he says it's going to be this long, and he gives the smaller number.

It says, And blessed is he who waits until this long, which is the larger number. But there is not one clue in all of Scripture that says what that 45 day difference means, what it's significance is. I do not even know the answer.

I don't claim to know the answer. I don't know what that 45 day difference is. Some dispensationalists believe that that's how long it will take God to judge the earth when he comes.

He will come after 1,290 days, but it will take 45 days for him to actually go through the process of judging everybody. Since the judgment includes the review of the whole life of many billions of people, I say God's pretty tricky to be able to do that in 45 days anyway. But if he's in eternity, then that should be no problem.

The only problem is if he's in eternity, why would it take 45 days? I mean, there's just no way to really make sense of it with the information we're given. However, Emmanuel Lacunza said that 45 days is the distance between the rapture of the church and the judgment coming of Christ. So it's about a month and a half that there will be a gap there.

Now, a short time after this, in 1826 and 1827, an evangelist in Great Britain, Edward

Irving, translated Lacunza's work from Spanish and he taught something similar. However, he extended this interval from 45 days to three and a half years. So Edward Irving, in 1826 and 1827, again only about three or four years before Darby published, said there will be a two-stage coming of Christ, but the gap between the first and second stage will be three and a half years.

This would agree, of course, with the modern mid-tribulational view. Then, of course, came Darby. And Darby, in 1830, John Nelson Darby incorporated the two-stage belief into his new dispensational system.

But he extended the length of the interval to seven years. So Lacunza had 45 days, Edward Irving made it three and a half years, and Darby made it seven years, and thus Darby was the first to suggest a seven-year tribulation and a pre-trib rapture before that seven-year tribulation. Sorry, it says 1930 in your notes.

I need to fix that in the next edition. It's 1830. Thank you very much.

If you see other typos, please alert me so I can fix it. Now, many people think that both Edward Irving and John Nelson Darby were influenced in their belief in a two-stage theory by a prophetic utterance given by a Scottish girl named Margaret MacDonald, who was in a charismatic meeting around the same time, 1830, and her prophecy was written down, and you can in some books find it. I've read her prophecy, and she does talk about a secret coming of the Lord for the saints.

She does not clearly talk about a two-stage second coming, but the very fact that she talks about a secret coming for the saints is thought to imply there'd be a second additional coming with the saints that would not be secret, but would be a judgment appearing. And this has given rise to the idea of the secret rapture. The rapture will be one of those things where you wake up one morning, and all the Christians are gone, and you're there, and a lot of the airplanes don't have pilots in them anymore, even though they're in flight at the moment, and a lot of automobiles on the freeway don't have drivers anymore because they've been raptured, and it's just sudden, and no one knows where they went.

Oh, there's all kinds of notions out there about how the world will try to explain the sudden and mysterious disappearance of all these Christians, and probably someone's going to say UFOs took them, or whatever. All these speculations have arisen upon the assumption that the saints, at some point, quietly, secretly, and suddenly, are just going to disappear, leaving the majority of the planet Earth around to wonder where they went. I've lost track of the number of times people have called me on my radio program and said, well, how do you think they will explain the disappearance of the Christians after the rapture? I said, I don't know if they're going to have any time to do any explaining.

But we'll just have to look at that. I don't know that anyone's going to have to come up with any explanations, because I think it's going to be clear when the rapture occurs, it's going to be the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. It doesn't sound like a quiet, secret snatch to me.

It sounds like it's pretty visible and noisy. But anyway, we'll talk about that. Today, there are mid-tribulation rapturists who believe, like Irving, in an interval of three and a half years.

But most dispensationalists are pre-tribbers, who follow Darby in making the interval seven years. There's also the new view of Marv Rosenthal called the pre-wrath rapture, placing the rapture later in the tribulation than the mid-tribulationists do, 21 months later, but still finding an interval of 21 months between the rapture and the revelation of Christ from heaven. So here's how this view developed, and where it came from, and who its founders were.

Now let's look at the Scripture. Once again, it doesn't matter who taught what, so much as it matters what is taught in the Scripture. And so, there are essentially two passages in the Bible that speak of the rapture.

And pre-tribulationists would usually say there are three. So we'll look at all three, but there are only two that I believe are relevant to the rapture. In 1 Thessalonians 4, we have the principal passage, and it is the passage from which the word rapture is coined.

In 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 13 through 18, Paul said, But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep. He means those who have died, Christians who have died. Lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus. 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Therefore comfort one another with these words. Now we can see here, first of all you probably did not see the word rapture in the passage, and yet I said this is the passage from which we get the word rapture. I was right and you're right.

It is the passage from which we get the word rapture, and you're right in saying it's not there in the passage. In fact, the word rapture is not found in the Greek Bible or in the English, but it is found in the Latin Bible in this passage. Not rapture per se, but raptus.

The word raptus or raptura, another form of it, is a Latin word that means caught up or snatched away. And you can see in verse 17 it says, those who are alive and remain shall be caught up. The Greek word there is translated in the Latin Bible with the Latin word raptus or raptura, which has been Anglicized for rapture.

And therefore we call the catching up of the living saints, not the dead ones. The dead in Christ rise first, but then the living saints are caught up in the air. We call that the rapture of the church.

It has simply come to be called that, just like the Trinity has come to be called the Trinity, even though we don't have that word Trinity in the Bible either. It's a concept for which theologians have given an apropos label. And we don't have any problem with that, I hope.

Okay, there's another passage. Please keep your finger at 1 Thessalonians, because we'll come back to it. But another important passage on the rapture is 1 Corinthians 15.

In 1 Corinthians 15, verses 51 through 54, Paul wrote, Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep. Once again, he means die.

We won't all die. But we shall all be changed. We won't all die, but we'll all be changed.

Those who do and those who don't die will all undergo a change. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So, when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. Now consider this passage and the one in Thessalonians. The only two places in the Bible that speak of what happens to the living Christians when Jesus comes back.

There are other places that talk about what happens to dead Christians. There are many other passages about the resurrection of the dead. But these are the only two passages that speak directly to the issue of, well, what about people who aren't dead when Jesus comes? What happens to them? 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 are the only passages in the Bible that speak directly to that.

But they don't say the same thing. In 1 Corinthians, we don't read of being caught up in the air. We just read of being changed.

Constitutionally changed. Mortal bodies become immortal bodies. Corruptible or subject to decay bodies become incorruptible or not subject to decay bodies.

It is the constitutional change that occurs in our bodies at the time that Jesus comes that

1 Corinthians 15 points out, without mentioning being caught up in the air. On the other hand, 1 Thessalonians 4, talking about the same event, does not talk about the change that will occur in our bodies, but only the fact that we'll be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. So these two passages give us different details of the same event.

One is the motion, being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The other is the promotion, being glorified into immortal bodies. Now you might say, well, how do we know they're both about the same thing? Well, it's pretty clear.

Both of them talk about the time when the dead Christians will rise. Both talk about the Lord coming and about the raising of the Christian dead. And both statements, after telling what will happen to the Christian dead, mention what will happen to the Christian living.

That's very clear, of course, in 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 16 and 17. The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain will be caught up. A contrast between the dead Christians and the living Christians and what will happen to them.

Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says, in verse 51, we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. The ones who do and the ones who don't die will all be changed. And in verse 52, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, by the way, trumpets in both passages too, the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible.

That's the dead Christians. And we, apparently meaning those who are not the dead, will be changed. So, there's the dead and there's the others in both passages.

So, we would have to say that both passages are telling us what will happen to living Christians and dead Christians when Jesus comes back. Now, what do these passages tell us about the relationship of the rapture to the tribulation? One of the key burning issues with Christians is, what is the chronological relationship of the rapture to the tribulation? Is the rapture before, after, or in the middle of the tribulation? Well, one thing you might notice by reading these two passages is that neither passage mentions the tribulation. In fact, neither of them are in books of the Bible that talk about the tribulation.

The tribulation, so-called the seven-year tribulation, is not mentioned in the book of 1 Thessalonians. If it is, it's very veiled because it doesn't say so anywhere in it. And the book of 1 Corinthians, likewise, doesn't mention anything about the tribulation, which tells us something very important, namely that there is not one passage in the Bible that depicts the rapture of the church in a context relating it in any way with the tribulation.

Now, that means, of course, that you cannot find a passage that says something like, the rapture will occur before the tribulation, or after the tribulation, or in the middle of the tribulation, simply because the rapture is never mentioned in any passage or in any book

of the Bible that even talks about the tribulation. And for that reason, in deciding when the rapture will happen, we have to link it with other things that it is linked with. Now, what is it linked with? Well, there are two very important things it's linked with, and we'll talk about that in a moment.

But I also want to point out that while neither of these texts mention the tribulation, also neither of them mention an interval between two stages of the coming of Christ. We do have here the classic text on the rapture, but neither of them give us any information about a two-stage coming of Christ, that this rapture will happen at some interval before the actual second coming of Christ. It's not mentioned.

Another thing they both have in common, and this is the most important of all, is that they both link the rapture to the resurrection of the believers. That is, they both mention that the resurrection of the believers will happen at the same time, or just immediately prior, to the rapture of the living believers. Both passages state this.

That is going to be our best clue in deciding when the rapture occurs. But before we look at that clue more closely, I want to turn you to one more passage, which many people think is in fact about the rapture. And whenever the rapture is discussed by pre-tribulations, they always use this verse as one of the rapture passages.

I'm saying that it doesn't necessarily describe the rapture. But that is John 14, verses 2 and 3. John 14, verses 2 and 3. Jesus said to his disciples in the upper room, in my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also. Now, the fact is, Jesus said he's going to come again and receive us to himself.

Some people think that means he's going to rapture us up into the sky. Well, I do believe he is going to do that. But he doesn't say so here.

He just says, I'm going to receive you to myself. See, some people think that what he's saying is, I'm going away to my Father's house. I'm going to prepare some mansions there.

And once I finish preparing these mansions, I'm going to come back to you and take you up into heaven to these mansions. And receive you unto myself to them means he's going to take them up into heaven. And that's the rapture, when he comes.

But that is not clearly stated. We have to import that idea. First of all, Jesus does not say that his Father's house is in heaven.

Nor that the many mansions that are there are what he is preparing. Nor that they are in heaven. Now, let me just point out to you something.

We don't have time to go into this in detail. But in scripture, what is God's house? Well, the assumption of many is that it's heaven. I would simply say, search the scriptures for yourself and decide if that is true.

You'll find many references to the house of God or God's house in the Old Testament as well as the New. In the Old Testament, invariably, God's house means what? The temple, which was not in heaven but was on earth. God's house was the temple.

Or prior to that, the tabernacle was called the house of God, God's house. In the Old Testament, the house of God is uniformly applied to the tabernacle and the temple. It is never applied to heaven.

Now, do a similar search in the New Testament. What is the house of God in the New Testament? The church. The church is his house.

We are made of living stones. The church is made of living stones. We are living stones.

Our bodies are his temple. And the church corporate is his temple. But the church also is on earth.

And it is always called the house of God. There is no place in the Bible that we know of where the house of God is a term referring to heaven. Certainly, the Bible says that God is in heaven, but it does not say that heaven is his house.

His habitation is on earth with men. In the Old Testament, in the tabernacle slash temple. In the New Testament, it's in the spiritual temple.

It's called the body of Christ, the church. That's the house of God. I could multiply passages for you, whether it was in Ephesians 2, verses 19 through 21, or 1 Peter 2.5, or 1 Timothy 1.15, or we could go on and on, Hebrews 3.6, and many other places speak of the house of God is the church.

The people of God. You'll never find a contrary statement in the Bible. Now, that being so, when Jesus said, in my Father's house, some people believe he's talking about heaven, but if he is, it's the only place in the whole Bible that heaven is so called.

And there's no reason that Jesus should be using it uniquely here. My Father's house is where the Father dwells. He dwells in his people.

And, in case anyone wonders about this, when he says, in my Father's house are many mansions, mansions is an unfortunate translation. It's only translated that way here. The word is mone, in the Greek.

And the Greek word there is actually the noun form of the verb meno, which means to stay or to abide. So, the verb to abide or to stay, in its noun cognate, is mone, which means an abiding place, a staying place, a habitation. Some people call it a room.

Some translations call it a room for some weird reasons. The King James and the New King James translated it as mansions. It's a strange translation of the word mone.

But, interestingly, the word mone appears in one other place in all of Scripture. And that is later in this same chapter. Twice in the whole Bible, mone appears, and both are in John 14.

The second occurrence is in verse 23. John 14, 23. I urge you to do your own research to see if what I'm saying is true.

Many of these things I'm saying I found by my own research. Some of them I heard someone else say, and I researched to see if they were right. But you don't have to trust me.

There are Greek books. There are interlinears. There are lexicons.

You can do your own research and see if I'm telling you the truth or not. I hope you will, because then you can prove it to yourself. But in John 14, verse 23, Jesus said, He answered and said to him, The word home there is mone.

The only other occurrence in the New Testament of that word besides verse 2 of the same chapter. He says, we will make our mone. What's the Father's and Jesus' mone? It's the believer.

The believer who loves Jesus and keeps his commandments. God and Jesus come and make their home or their mone in him. In other words, the mone is not where we live.

It's where God lives. An abiding place. Every believer is an abiding place of God.

The church corporately is the house of God. And Jesus said, Which we know to be the church. Are many mones, which we know to be us.

The mone of God, according to John 14, 23, is the man or woman who loves Jesus and keeps his commandments. The Father loves him and comes and we make our mone, Jesus said, with that person. And in the Father's house there are many mones.

And the word appearing only twice in the Bible, both in the same chapter. We might well expect that it means the same thing in both occurrences. So that his statement, in my Father's house there are many mansions, is not a statement about heaven.

It's a statement about where God dwells. He dwells in a house of people. He has many dwelling places.

Each person who follows Christ is one of those dwelling places. Corporately, the whole body of believers is the house of God. It's not a statement about heaven.

Now, when Jesus said, I will come again and receive you to myself, I certainly believe he's talking about coming back from heaven. But he doesn't say he's going to take us up into the house or the mansion or the... He just says he's going to receive us to himself. Well, where is he going to be? Here.

He's coming here. The Bible says this. He didn't say, I'm going to come and go away again.

He's not going to come. And when I come, I will receive you to where? Heaven? No, to myself. Or as Paul put it in 1 Thessalonians, that where he is, so shall we ever be also.

We will ever be with the Lord. Where is he going to be? As I understand it, he's coming back here so he can be here. He wouldn't need to come back just to gather us to heaven.

He could just call for us from there. The Father apparently did that when Jesus called him up to heaven. We don't have any reason to believe that God the Father came down to the clouds to call Jesus up.

He could do that from anywhere. And if Jesus just wanted us to change our residence from earth to heaven, he could call us without coming down. But the fact of the matter is, he's coming down because he's coming again.

Here. This is where he's coming to. Therefore, to say, I will receive you to myself, doesn't mean I'm going to receive you into the clouds or into heaven.

There's no mention of the rapture. It's just that when Jesus comes back, we'll be with him again. He'll receive us again to be in his presence.

The rapture will occur at that time, but this verse doesn't comment on that fact. I just remembered a moment ago, there is another passage that is sometimes thought to be about the rapture. It is not about the rapture, but it's often applied to the rapture, so I might as well point it out to you.

And that's in Matthew 24 and the parallel in Luke. In Matthew 24, probably a very recently familiar passage to you. It says in verse 36, Matthew 24, 36 and following, But of that day and hour no one knows.

No, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away.

So also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field. One will be taken, and the other left.

Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken, and the other left. Now this statement, one will be taken and the other left, is often thought to be a reference to the rapture.

And therefore we see there we have another biblical reference to the rapture. However, I dare say there is no mention of the rapture here. The rapture is when the living saints are caught up into heaven.

True, someone is being taken somewhere here. But who is being taken? And into what condition are they being taken? Well, you notice that in verse 39, it says that in the days of the flood, the people who did not go into the ark did not know what was going on until the flood came, and what did the flood do to them? It took them all away. So shall it also be when the Son of Man comes.

One will be taken, and the other left. One will be taken, and the other left. Who was taken? If Jesus is making a direct likeness of whatever He is talking about to the flood that came and took them, that is the wicked, away, then He is talking about the destruction of the wicked.

He is not talking about the rapture of the Christians. Now if I say this, some people think that I am suggesting a rapture of the unbelievers. I don't think this passage is about a rapture of anyone.

It is not anyone being caught up anywhere. It is like the flood did not rapture anyone. Those who were taken away in the flood were taken from this life, as it were, not geographically so much as just that their lives were taken.

They were taken out of this world, as it were, by death. They were destroyed in the judgment. And so also, Jesus says it will be in the day that He comes.

Some will be taken. Others will not be taken. There is a parallel to this in Luke, and an interesting sequel to it.

In Luke 17, beginning in verse 34, Jesus says, I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed. One will be taken, and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together.

One will be taken, and the other left. Two men will be in the field. One will be taken, and the other left.

And they, that is the disciples who were listening to Him, answered and said to Him, Where, Lord? There is a good question. A whole bunch of people have been taken. Where? Where are they being taken to? Now, you would expect Him to say, Well, you silly disciples, don't you know they are taken into heaven? This is the rapture of the church.

They are taken up into the sky, into the clouds, off into the Father's house to join Him in their many mansions. Now, this is what a dispensationalist would say about it in most cases, but actually, Jesus' answer was quite different. When He said, One will be taken, one will be taken, one will be taken, the disciples said, Listen, where are you talking about? Where are they taken to? Where, Lord? His answer is, Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

That statement is actually a proverb taken from Job 39, verses 27 through 30. It talks about the eagles. Wherever there are carcasses, eagles will be gathered.

Or some would say vultures. But the point is that the birds of prey and the carrion-eating birds swarm where there are corpses. Now, the question is, Where, Lord? Where will they be taken? And the answer is, Wherever there are vultures, wherever there are eagles swarming, that's where they are.

That's where their corpses lie. Those who are taken are not Christians raptured into heaven. They are the wicked who are taken out of this life.

They are killed in the judgment of God. Discriminately, God can kill one person and leave the other person alive. But the point he makes is to quote, he quotes a proverb taken from Job, that where the corpses, the eagles will be gathered.

In other words, if you really wonder, I mean, if you really have any reason to try to want to find them, it shouldn't be too hard. Because wherever corpses are, you'll find the telltale sign of vultures or eagles. And therefore, you should be able to find them if you want to.

And he's speaking ironically, I believe, but the point is, his comment suggests that they're dead. Those who are taken are killed. Now, I realize that's a fast pass over that passage, and certainly an opposite interpretation of what many have thought yesterday.

That was Luke 17, 34, to the end of that chapter. Right, and when the flood occurred, no one was saved and the wicked were destroyed. So also, when Jesus returns, the righteous will be spared, and the wicked will be destroyed.

And we have that stated in many other passages of Scripture as well, including Revelation and 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians and other places too. Yes, the ones who are taken in that passage refers apparently to those who are killed in judgment. They're not raptured or taken somewhere, they're just killed.

And that's, they're taken in the same sense that the wicked were taken in the flood, taken out of his life, taken in judgment. Now, having looked at these passages that actually don't talk about the rapture, that sometimes are thought to, let's go back to the passages that do. 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.

One thing I observed about both of these passages is that both of them apply the rapture to the same time, chronologically, as the resurrection of the saints. The dead in Christ, 1 Corinthians 15 says, the dead in Christ shall rise first. I'm sorry, that is not Corinthians, that's the Thessalonian passage.

The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up. In 1 Corinthians he says, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. So, here we have the change, the rapture, the catching up to meet the Lord in the air is linked in very, very close, probably immediate proximity with the resurrection of the believers.

Now, no one disagrees on this point that I know of. I'm not aware of any school of theology that disagrees with this. The dispensational view would agree with this.

The amillennial view, the postmillennial view, they all agree with this. Namely, that the rapture occurs at the same time as the resurrection of the saints. Now, where the difference of opinion comes in between these camps is the question of when is the resurrection of the saints.

There can be no question that the rapture accompanies it, but the question is when is the resurrection of the saints that the rapture accompanies. Here, classical theology has always said the resurrection of the saints is at the same time as the resurrection of the unsaints. All people are resurrected at the same time on the last day when Jesus returns, and therefore the rapture occurs at that time as well.

That's a simple answer that the Church has held for centuries and centuries because it's the simplest way to answer the question, apparently the most biblical, unless you import a lot of strange things. But the dispensationalists have historically imported a lot of rather strange things, things that were never taught in the Church before and are not found in the Bible. One of those is the idea that the resurrection of the saints, in fact, does not occur at the same time as the resurrection of the wicked.

And amazingly, neither the resurrection of the saints nor the resurrection of the wicked occur at the second coming. I hope I didn't lose you. It's easy to get lost with this kind of complex theology.

You've got a separation in time, in dispensationalism, between the resurrection of the saints when the rapture also occurs and, on the other hand, the resurrection of the lost. But the resurrection of the saints occurs seven years before Jesus comes back, and the resurrection of the lost happens a thousand years after Jesus has come back, at the end of the millennium. So you don't have anyone really rising from the dead when Jesus comes back.

Although Paul and Jesus indicated that at the second coming, which is when the

resurrection would occur, of all people. But in dispensationalism, neither resurrection actually occurs at the second coming. You've got seven years from the first resurrection of the righteous to the second coming.

That seven-year gap is the tribulation. And the resurrection of the righteous and the rapture happens before the tribulation. Then you have, after the second coming, a thousand-year millennium, at the end of which the wicked are raised.

Now, on what basis could it be argued that there are, in fact, two resurrections as opposed to one? In your notes, I've got this question in reverse. I talk about the evidence for one and then the evidence for two. I want to take the reference to the evidence for two first.

On what basis in Scripture can one argue for two resurrections? Well, one argument is that Paul, from time to time, speaks of looking forward to making it to the resurrection. Like in Philippians 3, he says he hopes to attain the resurrection from the dead. And it is argued that from the dead means from the midst of the dead.

That is, of all the dead bodies, some will be resurrected out of that realm. And other dead people will remain. That would mean there would be a first resurrection of Christians.

And apparently the rest of the dead would live another time. However, Paul's wording in Philippians 3 does not require that this interpretation be taken. To be resurrected from the dead simply means that once he has died and been in the state of the dead, that he wants to be resurrected from that condition.

And he wants to be resurrected with the resurrection of reward and righteous and eternal life. And he strives toward that. But his wording itself does not... You would have to have some stronger evidence that there are two resurrections before you could make that doctrine out of his wording there.

It's too ambiguous. There is then the language of the passages we're looking at in 1 Thessalonians and in 1 Corinthians. First of all, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 specifically says, the dead in Christ, verse 16, shall rise first.

Now notice he just says the dead in Christ. And they rise first. Some dispensations have said that proves that the dead who are not in Christ must rise second.

The dead in Christ are raised first. And at a later date, the dead who are not in Christ are raised in a second resurrection. But Paul's words cannot be made to mean this in the context.

Because when he says first, he doesn't mean before the dead wicked are raised. He means before the living in Christ are raised. The contrast Paul makes is not between the

resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the lost, but rather between the resurrection of the righteous dead and the rapture of the righteous living.

And with reference to these two events, the resurrection of the dead happens first. The dead in Christ rise first. Then we who are alive and remain in Christ are caught up.

There is no comment that at some later date, he is comparing this event with some later resurrection of the wicked. Now, some might say, but he doesn't mention the resurrection of the wicked. Exactly.

Just my point. He's not writing to wicked people. He's writing to Christians.

He wants them to not grieve over the righteous dead and their own selves if they die. He wants them to not be like others who have no hope. Christians can look forward to something.

If they die, they will be raised. The dead in Christ will be raised. Now, does Paul also believe that the wicked will be raised? Of course.

But that's not what he's discussing right now. He's talking to Christians about their attitude and their hope with reference to death. Their hope is to be resurrected.

If they die in Christ, they can anticipate being raised. And if they don't die, they can be raised anyway and raptured. But it's not in his purview to discuss the resurrection of the wicked.

Though we can find out from other passages whether or not Paul believed the wicked would rise at the same time. We'll look at that in a moment. The other passage, you know, the dead in Christ will rise first, that doesn't tell us that the dead who were wicked will rise second or in another time.

That's talking about the dead in Christ rising before the living in Christ. And the wicked are not even in the view there. The other passage that is thought to teach this is 1 Corinthians 15.

In particular, verses 22 and following, because it says, For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order. Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming.

Who are going to rise at his coming? Well, none according to dispensationalism because the righteous are seven years before his coming. But since the coming is in two stages, at the first stage that coming, which is the rapture, which is really before Jesus comes back, the dead in Christ rise. Those who are his will be raised at his coming.

It does not mention the wicked being raised and therefore it is argued the dead who are not saved will be raised later still. However, Paul does not say that. He says, here is the

order of resurrection.

Everyone is going to be resurrected, but everyone in their own order. Christ first, then those who are Christ's at his coming. He should have then said, and then later still after the millennium, those who are not Christ's.

Since he is endeavoring to give a full order of what order people will be raised in, he should go on and talk about the rest. But he is not interested in talking about the dead who are not in Christ at this point. What comes after Christ raises his own? Well, verse 24, then comes the end.

So we've got three events in this picture. The resurrection of Christ, next the resurrection of the saints, and then the end. That's the end of it all.

Now, I personally believe that we can show that Paul believed that the dead who are not Christians will rise at the same time as the dead who are Christians. I'll show that in a moment. But the fact is that Paul is not talking to non-Christians or talking about non-Christians in these passages.

He's talking to Christians about their blessed hope. Their blessed hope is that they, because they're in Christ, will experience a resurrection into life. And he's telling them when it will happen.

He is not addressing the separate question of whether the wicked will be raised at the same time or at another time. And because he does not address it, it cannot be thought that he's teaching anything particular about that. Not here.

Elsewhere perhaps, but not here. So these passages that talk about those who are his that is coming, or the dead in Christ who rise first, are not statements about two resurrections. They're just statements about resurrection.

And in context, he talks about the believers. Because that's who he's talking to. That's who he's really talking about.

The other place where it is thought to teach that there are two resurrections is, of course, Revelation 20 and verse 5 and 6. We looked at this the other day. Where it says, this is the first resurrection. Therefore, those who take this to be a physical resurrection of believers, in contrast with the resurrection of the lost at the end of the millennium, would see this as a clear teaching that there are two resurrections.

One of the righteous, which is the first resurrection, and one of the unrighteous, which is the second or last resurrection. And these are separated by great distance from each other in time. But we have already discussed in some detail the meaning, at least possible meanings, probable meanings, of Revelation 20.

And in that discussion, I pointed out that the best evidence comparing Scripture with Scripture is that when John speaks of the first resurrection, he is in fact talking about not a physical resurrection of saints at all, but he's talking about the rebirth, the born-again experience, which Paul and Jesus both speak of as coming from death into life. It's a spiritual resurrection. That's the first resurrection that we have.

We've already received that when we became Christians. There's a second one we look forward to after we die. Our bodies will be resurrected.

That's the first and the second resurrection. Not, as the dispensationalist thinks it means, a first resurrection involving the saints only, and a second resurrection of the same type, but involving the unbelievers. How do I know that the dispensational view is not to be preferred on these passages? Well, once again, we have to go with what Jesus and Paul said.

Not just what some obscure passage in Revelation says by itself. We need to have the clear statements of Jesus and the clear statements of the apostles understood so that we can interpret accurately the unclear and ambiguous symbolic statements in the book of Revelation, not vice versa. Well, look with me in some of these verses I showed you the other day.

Please bear with me as I show you again. John 5, John chapter 5, verse 24 through 29. John 5, verses 24 through 29.

Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. I want to jump down to verse 28.

Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation. Now, does this look like a statement about the first resurrection or the second resurrection? In verse 28 and 29, when all who are in the graves come forth, is this the resurrection of the righteous or is it the resurrection of the wicked? Well, it sounds to me like both are there. It says, all in one hour, an hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will come forth.

Some of these come out to the resurrection of life because they are righteous. Others come out to the resurrection of damnation or condemnation because they are not righteous. It looks to me like a general resurrection of all people, good and bad, at one time.

And he says this with reference to an hour that is coming. Now, what's interesting about this is that this passage in John provides the best key to understanding John's other

writing on this subject in Revelation 20. For he said, this is the first resurrection in reference to the second.

This passage is better than any other in the whole Bible for telling us what the first resurrection is because notice, Jesus said in verse 25, Most assuredly I say to you, the hour is coming and now is. Now, that resembles almost verse 28, do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming. The difference is, verse 28 simply says the hour is coming.

Verse 25 says the hour is coming and now is. Why the difference in wording? Well, let me just suggest this. For Jesus said the hour is coming, he's distinctly talking about something future.

What is that in verse 28? The resurrection of the dead, bodies from the graves come forth, all of them and go to judgment. That is an hour that is coming, it's future. But he says in verse 25, the hour is coming and now is.

Which means that the statement he's about to make in verse 25 is future and present. This statement he's about to make applies to something future and it applies to the present as well. And what is the statement? Verse 25, the dead hear, most assuredly I say to you, the hour is coming and now is.

When the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. Now, in what sense is that future, the hour is coming, when the dead hear and they live? Well, that's explained in those verses following, verses 28 and 29. The hour is coming when the dead in the graves will hear his voice and come forth, physically resurrected.

That's the hour that is coming version of verse 25. But what about the now is part? In what sense could it now be said that the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear live? Well, that's explained in verse 24. Where he said, most assuredly I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but has passed from death into life.

They were dead, but now they live. Why? Because they heard his voice. That's now.

In other words, in verse 25, Jesus talks about two resurrections. The one that is the hour to come and the one that now is. The hour is coming now is.

When what? Dead people hear his voice and come to life. That's a resurrection. Is it not? It's a dead person comes to life.

That's a resurrection. Jesus speaks of two of them. One now, one later.

Which one is first? The one now. What is that? Verse 24. People who are spiritually dead hear the gospel.

They receive it. They hear it. They come to life.

They're born again. That's the first resurrection. What's the hour that is coming? He gives that in more detail in verse 28.

The hour is coming. He doesn't say now is in verse 28. The hour is coming.

When those who are in the graves, physical bodies, been buried in graves, they come out. What does Jesus teach? Two resurrections. But only one physical resurrection.

At the end of time, all bodies, good and bad, come out of the graves together. Not a separate resurrection of the righteous. The first resurrection Jesus speaks of, and which John records here and also in Revelation 20, is when spiritually dead people come to spiritual life in responding to the gospel of Jesus.

So, there are two resurrections. But one is spiritual, has already been experienced by the Christian, now is. The other is an hour that is to come.

And that's when all the dead will be raised. So, there's one physical resurrection. That means that when the dead in Christ will rise, the dead who are not in Christ will rise also.

And that means the rapture occurs when everybody else rises. The dead in Christ, the dead not in Christ, and the rapture all occur, resurrecting, being caught up, whatever, at the same time, according to Jesus. Now, what about Paul? Is he agreeable with Jesus? Yes, he is.

Acts 24, verse 15. Paul is on trial before Felix the governor, who is not all that acquainted with Jewish theology or Christian theology. And Paul is on trial because the Jews are saying he's teaching heresies.

His defense is, well, I'm not teaching heresies. Even what I believe, they believe, in the sense that the crux of my belief is the resurrection. And that's the crux of theirs also, in terms of their eschatology.

He says in verse 15, I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Now, he didn't say there's going to be two resurrections of the dead, one of the just and another of the unjust. But there will be a resurrection of the dead.

This resurrection involves whom? The righteous or the wicked? Both. One resurrection, both categories. Jesus said it, Paul said it, why should Christians say otherwise? There is no compelling reason to disagree with Jesus or Paul on these matters.

And those who do disagree with Jesus and Paul have to convince themselves that they don't disagree with them and have to find ways to make Jesus and Paul not mean what they say. In other words, not take them literally. The Amillennialist is much more literal in these passages.

It says, I think Paul meant it, he said it, he meant it, I take him literally. Jesus said what he meant, I take him literally there too. Dispensationalists do not take these verses literally.

They have to sandwich them in between other concepts and shoehorn them into a system that is artificially made up by a man 160 years ago, which does not fit the scripture, which is why no one ever saw it in the scripture before 160 years ago. It's not there. It's human origin and it's taken the world by storm, it's taken the church by storm, but it doesn't make it any more true just because a lot of people have followed it.

Most people do so without ever hearing anything else. What did the Jews believe about the resurrection? Is that what you're going to ask? There is resurrection, yeah. Yeah, no indefinite article is in the Greek, so there is no resurrection, or there is a resurrection.

There will be resurrection. But he says that his belief is the same as his critics' belief on this. He said, I have the same hope about this they have.

And did the Pharisees believe in a pre-trib rapture and a resurrection of the righteous? A thousand years removed from the resurrection of the lost? No. No, the idea of a general resurrection was believed by the Pharisees, by Jesus, and apparently by Paul, who agreed both with Jesus and with the Pharisees on this point. You're right.

Pressing the word A might be challenged on the basis that the letter A, the indefinite article, does not exist in the Greek language. But at the same time, Paul's view is the same as that of the Pharisees and that of Jesus. Therefore, we can say that Paul, Jesus, and we assume all Christians in the early church believed the same way as most Christians in history have, namely that there's a general resurrection, the rapture happens along with it.

And when is that? That is at the second coming of Christ. Okay, now there's more we could say, but we've said some of it before when we talked about the millennium and the first resurrection. We only have about ten minutes left in this class, something like that.

And I want to say positively, when will the rapture be? And we can use the passages we've looked at, as well as a few others, to answer that question probably beyond question. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, we can say this much. The rapture will be at the parousia.

That is, at the second coming. To place it seven years before the second coming is artificial, is unscriptural. Or to stretch out the parousia, to include two stages, is incredibly artificial.

There is absolutely nothing in scripture to tell us of this two stage. By the way, in our next two classes, we're going to look at all the arguments for a two stage coming. There are 19 arguments that I will give you.

And in one class, I'm going to argue for the rapture, pre-trib rapture. Because I was a defender of it at one time. I'm going to give you the most solid defense for pre-tribulation rapture that anyone could ever give from scripture.

I'll give you 19 solid arguments, it is thought, that show there's a pre-trib rapture. Then in the following session, I'm going to go through and re-examine every argument in context. That's what we have to do.

We have to see the strongest case for the rapture before we know whether we've really dealt with it or not. But let me just say, there is no place in the Bible that speaks of a two stage parousia. But in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, Paul specifically says this.

In verse 17, we who are alive and remain will be caught up. Well, when does this happen? Look a few verses earlier. It says, in verse 15, For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain.

The same expression. We who are alive and remain are the ones who get caught up to meet the Lord in the air. He also says, we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord.

The parousia. The catching up of those who are alive and remain happens at the parousia. When Jesus comes, and that's clear enough even in verse 16, For the Lord himself will descend from heaven.

That's the coming of the Lord. He's descending from heaven. It is the parousia, according to verse 15.

And it is when the resurrection takes place in verse 16. And therefore, it is when Jesus comes back. And so the scripture teaches.

In 1 Corinthians 15, 52, We were told it happens at the last trump. Now some people want to make that the seven trumpets of revelation. The seven trumpet judgments.

And it's at the last. That is the seventh trumpet. The rapture occurs.

And that would make it post-trib or mid-trib. But the fact of the matter is that Paul probably wrote this before John saw the vision on Patmos. And Paul probably had no clues about the seven trumpets.

Any more than John did before he saw the vision. And for that reason, Paul probably isn't thinking of the seven trumpet judgments. Now God might have been.

And therefore, we couldn't rule that out. But it is more likely that Paul is just saying this is the last signal. The last warning.

The trumpet warning. When Jesus comes, he comes with a trumpeter before him. At the

end, it's the last trump that anyone's going to hear.

And it'll be at that point that the rapture occurs. According to 1 Corinthians 15, 52. Here's a very important passage.

1 Thessalonians, excuse me, 2 Thessalonians 1, verses 6 through 8. This certainly tells us when the rapture occurs. 2 Thessalonians 1, verses 6 through 8. Paul says, Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Would it not be agreed by all Christians that the rapture of the church is the end of our striving, the end of our struggle here on earth? It is when we enter into our rest. Christians will enter into the rest from their struggles and torments and tribulations in this world when Jesus raptures the church out of the world. That's when we enter into our rest.

But Paul says, God is going to repay tribulation to those who trouble us and give you rest. When? Seven years before Jesus comes back at the beginning of the tribulation? No. He's going to give you rest when he comes in flaming fire with his holy angels and judges the world.

This would have to be the judgment coming of Christ. It is said to be when we will enter into our rest, not before. Paul, if he believed we'd enter into our rest seven years before, he could have been far more comforting by saying so.

But he indicated that his belief was that we enter into that rest when Jesus comes back in judgment with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance and so forth. This is not a secret rapture. This is an event that accompanies the judgment of the world when Jesus returns, it seems to me.

Okay, what else? Well, we'll be raptured at a time that the Bible calls the day of Christ. Now, the dispensationalists make a distinction between the day of Christ and the day of the Lord and the day of God, but the Bible makes no such distinction. In 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 8, it says that Christ will also, God will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ is the day of Christ. It's the day of our Lord. The day of the Lord and the day of Christ are the same thing.

It's here, given its more expanded expression, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's the day of Christ and the day of the Lord. And God will confirm the church with his presence until that day.

What does it say in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 6? It says, being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you, that is in the church, will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. That day of Christ, that day of the Lord, that day of God, is in fact the day when the rapture will occur, and God is working on us until that time. In 2 Corinthians 1 verse 14, we are told that we are your boasts, Paul says to the church, as you are also ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The day of the Lord Jesus is the day that God will confirm us until the end. He will complete the work in us until then. We will have our rewards and our boasts and our glories at that time, the day of the Lord.

That is the day of the appearing of the Lord. It is also referred to as the day of God, but it's called the day of the Lord in 2 Peter. It is the day when the elements melt with the firm of heat, and the earth is burned up, according to 2 Peter 3 verses 10 through 13.

It's the end of the world. It is when Jesus comes back that the church looks forward to its consolation and its vindication. One last point, and that is that the Bible clearly teaches that the resurrection of the saints, and therefore the rapture of the church, occurs on what Jesus called the last day.

We saw this before a couple of sessions back in John 6, 39, and in the same chapter three more times, John 6 verses 39, 40, 44, and 54. In all these verses, Jesus said he would raise his people up on the last day. He also said in John 12, 48, that he would judge the wicked on the last day.

We might as well be literal here. Why not? The last day is the last day. The wicked will be judged.

The righteous will be raised, whether dead or alive. The dead in Christ shall rise. The living in Christ shall be caught up.

The rapture, therefore, occurs at the perizia, at the last trump, at the judgment appearing of Christ, on the day of Christ, or the day of the Lord, which Jesus calls the last day. And that's pretty much the last word on when the rapture occurs. It occurs at the second coming of Christ, when all these other events occur.

Now, we will have two more sessions looking at the arguments for a preacher of rapture, giving them and then critiquing them, but those will have to take two additional sessions, so we'll stop at this point.