

Doctrine of the Rapture Theory

The System

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson

1. The term rapture is not found in the New Testament per se. Rapture, the noun, is not found in Scripture, but the idea is plainly there.
2. For example, when Paul speaks in 1 Thessalonians 4 about individuals being caught up to meet him, meet the Lord in the air.
 - *1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*
3. The term that is used is a term which is rendered in the Latin vulgate by the Latin word *rapeo* which means "to seize or to catch." And it's the word from which we get rapture. That comes from the Latin verb *rapeo*.
4. To affirm that the term rapture is not in the New Testament as if to make a doctrinal point out of it, is thoroughly false, and only reveals a person's ignorance of the New Testament.
5. We are going to take the term as being a biblical term, though the term itself is not mentioned. It is the reference to what is meant by being caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

The Scriptures

Stanford E. Murrell

6. It is not uncommon for those who teach Dispensational theology and the Rapture theory to dismiss those who disagree with them as being "ignorant." That is an *ad hominem* approach which is an appeal to personal considerations rather than an argument. It is on the level of the preacher who put in the margin of his notes on a text he was preaching from, "Shout here, weak point."
7. The truth of the matter is that multitudes of competent Greek scholars, such as Dr. R. C. Sproul, reject the teaching of the Rapture on grammatical, historical, and logical grounds.
 - Grammatical Grounds. The word "meet" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is a very important word. The word is "apantesis" (ap-an'-tay-sis) and refers to "a (friendly) encounter." When the King of king returns to earth the second time for all who believe (Hebrews 9:28), He should be met.

- Historical Grounds. There is nothing in the text that says the church will meet the Lord and disappear for seven years. That is the fabrication of Dispensational teaching and is not found in any historic creed of Christendom, nor has this novel doctrine been discussed at any church council. There is good reason. None of the Church Fathers thought of the Rapture nor did any of the Reformers, many of whom were brilliant Greek and Hebrew scholars.
- Logical Grounds. The Rapture theory introduces a third coming into Christian eschatology.

The Virgin Birth

1st

The Rapture

2nd

The Second Advent

3rd

8. Because the Rapture theory teaches a secret, silent coming of Christ, this aberrant teaching must be challenged by Scripture.

- First, the only “secret” coming of Christ talked about in Scripture was spoken of by Christ and His counsel was, “believe it not!”

Matthew 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

- Second, the angels said that Jesus would return in the same manner in which He went away, slowly, visibly, and bodily – but not secretly or suddenly.

Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

- Third, the Bible says Christ will return the second time, not in stages or phases, but the second time for all that believe.

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

9. In addition to teaching that the Rapture is a secret coming, The System teaches it is a silent coming, and then The System appeals to one of the noisiest passages in the Bible! There will be a shout, and the voice of the archangel.

- *1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

10. There is nothing secret or silent about the return of the Lord for it is the day of the great resurrection and the day of a great transformation of our bodies.

- *1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*