

Christ in Prophecy

Rapture 1: “*The Meaning of the Rapture*”

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Dr. Reagan: Hello! I am Dave Reagan, Senior Evangelist for Lamb and Lion Ministries and this is my associate Dennis Pollock. We welcome you in the name of Jesus our blessed hope. We would like to talk with you for just a few minutes about a very important prophetic event that we believe is going to occur at any moment. It is called the Rapture.

Dennis Pollock: Now this is the first in a series of programs that we are going to present about the Rapture. In the process we are going to consider a number of questions concerning this important event. Our concern today is: What is the Rapture? What does this mysterious term mean? And in our next program we'll talk about how the Rapture relates to the Second Coming of Jesus. And in the following program we will focus on the most controversial question concerning the Rapture, and that is: When is it most likely to occur? Will it happen before the horrible seven year period of time which the Bible calls the Tribulation? Or will it occur in the middle of that period? Or could it possibly be delayed until the end of the Tribulation?

Dr. Reagan: But first we want to clearly define the meaning of the Rapture. Now, folks I know as a matter of fact that this is an essential thing for us to do, because I am convinced that most Christians do not have the foggiest idea as to what the term Rapture means. And I speak from experience, from personal experience. You see I was born into a Christian family, I grew up in the church attending every time the door was open and yet at the age of 30, after 30 years of church attendance I had never even heard of the Rapture. If you had asked me to define the word I probably would have said it's a feeling you get when your girlfriend kisses you. And if you had asked me to identify Gog and Magog I would have probably said they were a comedy team. I am telling you folks I knew absolutely nothing about Bible prophecy. What about you Dennis? I know you grew up going to church from the earliest age, did you hear much about the Rapture?

Dennis Pollock: Well, it is a funny thing Dave, it's not that I remember hearing about the Rapture, we heard a lot of teaching about the end times but it was mostly the scary stuff, like the Battle of Armageddon.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, I know what you mean. Well, folks I am sorry to say that I think our experiences are typical of most lifelong Christians today. Most Christians have received little if any teaching about the Rapture, and the result is that this important prophetic promise is at best a sort of fuzzy concept that really doesn't mean very much. In fact if we were to go out on any street in America today and ask people to define the Rapture, well I suspect we would get answers like the following:

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me sir, are you a Christian?

Person in Park: Well, yes I am as a matter of fact.

Dr. Reagan: Well I thought so from that tie you are wearing there. Let me ask you just a quick question okay.

Person in Park: Yeah, speed it up make it quick.

Dr. Reagan: Alright, what is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The Rapture? Well now let's see. The Rapture, the Rapture, um, don't help me, don't help me, just give me another moment to think here. The Rapture.

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me sir, could I ask you a quick question?

Person in Park: Sure.

Dr. Reagan: Are you are Christian?

Person in Park: Yes I am.

Dr. Reagan: Then let me ask you a question: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: Could you give me a clue?

Dr. Reagan: It's in the Bible.

Person in Park: It must be in the Old Testament, I have never heard of it. You see I am a New Testament Christian. The Rapture, the Rapture, come on, come on, I know this term, I know it. Um, don't help me, just give me a little more time to think here. The Rapture, the Rapture.

Dr. Reagan: Hey guys, can I ask you all a quick question?

Person in Park: Are we going to be on TV?

Dr. Reagan: Well, maybe.

Person in Park: Cool, yeah, fire away.

Dr. Reagan: Are you Christians?

Person in Park: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: I thought so from those shirts you are wearing. Well my question is this: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The what?

Dr. Reagan: The Rapture?

Person in Park: I don't know. Just a minute.

Dr. Reagan: I think they are having some sort of pow-wow here, I don't know for sure what we are going to get out of this. Oh, okay, okay, you got it?

Person in Park: Is it some type of Rap music?

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me, are you folks Christians?

Person in Park: Well yes we are.

Dr. Reagan: Do you mind if I ask you a Biblical question.

Person in Park: Well we are in church every Sunday go ahead. What's the question?

Dr. Reagan: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The Rapture, I tell you what, my wife is the real Bible expert and I think I am going to let her answer this.

Person in the Park: Okay. Um, just give me a minute, I know I have heard that term before, um, oh I think I know, isn't that when Jesus went up on the mountain and revealed His coming glory to His disciples? You know, the Transfiguration, isn't that also called the Rapture?

Dr. Reagan: Let me conclude this series of interviews by asking you, what is the Rapture? How would you define it? How would you describe it to someone who had never heard of it? Where would you find it in the Bible? Would you look in the Old Testament, or the New Testament? Would you go to the gospels, or would you go to the epistles? My colleague, Dennis Pollock is waiting for me back at the studio and I would like to ask him to launch our study of the Rapture by showing you where the concept can be found in the Scriptures. Folks, this is very important because I have even heard pastors deny that the Rapture can be found in the Bible. So Dennis it is all yours.

Dennis Pollock: Thank you, Dave. The central passage in all the Bible concerning the Rapture is one written by Paul. It is found in 1 Thessalonians 4, beginning with verse 13. "But we do not want you to be uninformed brethren about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and

rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep 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 shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall 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.”

Dr. Reagan: Now Dennis, if that is one of the key passages in all of God’s Word about the Rapture, you’re reading of it just raises an important question. And that question is; where in the world is the word Rapture? I didn’t hear you say the word Rapture when you read that.

Dennis Pollock: Okay, well here’s the thing Dave, it doesn’t appear in the English translations. The word rapture comes from the Latin translation in which it appears as raptural the word appears in verse 17 where the English translation say, “caught up, or taken away, or taken out”. Now rapture is a short hand term for these phrases. But it is Biblical term right out of the Latin Bible and it is certainly a Biblical concept. Now the word in Greek is harpazo and I think that it is interesting to note where this word is used in other New Testament passages. One of the places is in the tenth chapter of John where Jesus says, “I give my sheep eternal life, and no one is able to snatch them out of my hand.” Now the word snatch in this verse is the Greek word, harpazo, the same word that is used in 1 Thessalonians 4 for caught up, it means literally to be violently or forcefully snatched or grabbed out of a situation. So Jesus is telling us that no one will be able to snatch us out of His hand, but Paul tells us that Jesus will snatch us out of the earth one day. Another place we find this word is in the story in Acts where Philip baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch, you remember what it says happened right after the eunuch was baptized? The Scriptures tell us that the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away. Now that word caught is the same Greek word harpazo that Paul uses in writing about what Jesus will do for the believers when he snatches us from the earth. In Philip’s case it was a horizontal snatching, he went to one place on the earth to another. But the Rapture of the Church will be a vertical snatching, we will go from earth to heaven in one forceful snatch. Now in another place in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul describes himself as being caught up into Heaven where he heard inexpressible words which he could not

repeat his phrase is caught up into Heaven. Can you guess what Greek word is used there? It is our old friend harpazo, the same word that is used for the Rapture. Paul was forcefully snatched from the earth. Only in this case it was an individual situation and temporary because Paul came right back down to the earth. But at the Rapture you will have the whole church caught up and it won't be temporary, it will be forever, praise the Lord. So the idea of the Rapture is clearly a Biblical concept, even if you don't find the word in your English Bible, the concept is clearly there. In a way it is like the word trinity, it is not found, the word trinity is not found in the English Bible, but the word represents a Biblical concept for sure.

Dr. Reagan: Well, that is certainly true Dennis. Let me just make a point here about this, and that is it seems like what you are saying right now is that the word Rapture is a Biblical word right out of the Latin Bible, and it is certainly a Biblical concept. Right, that's the point. Now could you just summarize for us the concept of the Rapture? You have read it in detail but just give it to us in a brief summary.

Dennis Pollock: Alright, what is the Rapture? Basically this passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 says that one day Jesus will appear in the heavens. His appearance will be accompanied by the blowing of a trumpet and the shout of an archangel. The dead in Christ, that is those who died believing in Jesus will be resurrected from the dead and will rise to meet Jesus in the sky. And those who are alive in Christ that is the living Christians will follow the resurrected dead to meet the Lord in the air.

Dr. Reagan: What a fantastic promise! The dead in Christ will be resurrected and those who are living will be translated. Boy, that is something else.

Dennis Pollock: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: Just think of it Dennis this means that there is going to be a whole generation of people who will not die. The people who are alive at the time the Lord comes they will not experience death.

Dennis Pollock: That's right. And you know there is an old saying that you and I grew up hearing which is that the only two things that are sure in life are death and taxes. But in reality only taxes are inevitable.

Dr. Reagan: Boy, you can say that again, I mean you can say it again. Now Dennis this passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 is not the only one in the Bible that speaks about the Rapture is it?

Dennis Pollock: No, as a matter of fact Jesus himself referred to the Rapture in His teachings. And there is another very important passage about it in the writings of Paul.

Dr. Reagan: Could you share those with us now?

Dennis Pollock: Certainly, Dave. The first is a passage where Jesus himself talked about the Rapture. It is one of the most comforting Scriptures in God's Word. It is found in John 14 beginning with verse 1, Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places, if it were not so I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Dr. Reagan: Now once again folks, we have the very same imagery. Jesus appears in the sky the living and dead in Christ go up to meet Him and return to Heaven with Him. One thing that is clearly emerging from these passages is that the Rapture is an event that is separate and apart from the Second Coming of Jesus, because in neither of these passages in John 14, or 1 Thessalonians 4 is there any mention of Jesus returning to Earth, something that will occur at the time of His Second Coming.

Dennis Pollock: That's right Dave, and we're going to explore the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming in greater detail on our next program. Let's look now at another reference to the Rapture in the writings of Paul. It is found in 1 Corinthians the 15th chapter and beginning with verse 51 Paul says this, "Behold I tell you a mystery we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be

raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on immortality.”

Dr. Reagan: Hallelujah! What a glorious passage. What incredible hope we have as Christians Dennis.

Dennis Pollock: Amen. And Dave now you understand why Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians the second chapter in the ninth verse, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has the mind of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Dr. Reagan: I tell you every time I hear that verse, I just get goose-bumps all over. And you know what the very next verse in 1 Corinthians 2:10 it says, “God has revealed those things that we can not even imagine, He has revealed them to us through the Word by His Spirit.” Isn’t that wonderful? Now Dennis how about just summarizing once more for us know the fundamental elements of the Rapture.

Dennis Pollock: Alright Dave. Jesus will appear in the sky, a trumpet will be blown and an archangel will shout. The dead in Christ will be resurrected and will rise to meet the Lord in the sky, and those of us who are believers who are living will also be caught up to meet the Lord in the sky.

Dr. Reagan: Tell you what folks I would like to do something different at this point in our program. And that is I have learned as a teacher over many years that the best way in the world to learn something is to reinforce it visually. So I would like to step over here for a moment to our illustration board, and show you these points about the Rapture in a visual sort of way. The very first thing that we need to keep in mind about the Rapture is that Jesus is going to appear. So the key word here is appear and that is a very important word because Jesus does not come to the earth at this time, he simply appears in the heavens. The second thing that is going to happen is a trumpet will be blown and that will alert all believers both living and dead that the time has come for this great event. Third an archangel will shout and then the dead in Christ will be resurrected, this will be one of the greatest miracles in the history of mankind. Think about it for a moment, those bodies that have been burned and are just ashes will come back together, those bodies that have dissolved in the ocean will come back together. There

will be a great miracle of resurrection as Jesus resurrects those bodies and they go up to meet Him in the sky. And then the fifth point of the Rapture is that the living in Christ, those who are alive at that time will be translated. Now I know that sounds like a rather strange word, what it means is that the living will be taken up to meet the Lord in the sky and on the way up they will be radically and fundamentally changed. It's like changing a text from English to Russian or Russian to English. We will be translated, we will be changed and our fleshly bodies will become spiritual bodies, they still will be tangible bodies but a different type of body they will no longer be mortal bodies they will be immortal bodies. We will have a glorified body like the one that Jesus had after His resurrection. So once again five points: Jesus appears, the trumpet is blown, the archangel shouts, the dead in Christ are resurrected, and the living in Christ are translated. Now let's go back up to point number three, the archangel shouts. Dennis do you have any idea at all what that archangel is going to shout?

Dennis Pollock: Well, Dave the Bible doesn't tell us, but my best guess would be the Bridegroom cometh. Now I say that for two reasons, first the Bible presents the relationship between Jesus and the Church of that of a bridegroom to His bride, the Church is called the Bride of Christ. Also Jesus told a parable that is recorded in Matthew 25 in which He compared His return for His Church to that of a Bridegroom coming for His Bride. And in the parable there is the shout, "Behold the Bridegroom." You see folks, in the time of Jesus an engagement was followed by a waiting period of nine months to a year. Thus during a three month period of time between the ninth month and the end of a years time the Bride had to be continually ready for the Bridegroom to come at any moment. He would try to surprise her, he would come with his wedding party and when he arrived at her house someone in his entourage would shout, "The bridegroom cometh."

Dr. Reagan: Well that is beautiful imagery Dennis. Tell me something do you think the whole world will hear that shout?

Dennis Pollock: Well, Dave I tell you what, I don't think so. I think that it is more likely it will be like Paul's experience on the road to Damascus when Jesus spoke to him. Now, all around him heard a rumble but only Paul heard the words.

Dr. Reagan: Well then tell me Dennis who will hear that shout, “The Bridegroom cometh?”

Dennis Pollock: Well the ones that will hear it will be the ones that Jesus is coming for. Those who have been truly born again, that means they have put their hope and their trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Dr. Reagan: Well, Dennis if someone watching wants to do that, if they want to put their hope and their trust in Jesus as their Lord and their Savior, what do they do? How do they do this?

Dennis Pollock: Well, what they need to do Dave is they need to pray and receive Jesus Christ. They can pray with me, you can pray with me right now. I want you to say this, “Lord, I believe in you, I believe you are the Son of God, I believe you died on the cross and rose from the dead. I am a sinner Lord, forgive my sins, I repent of my sins come into my heart and make me a new person. And I’ll trust you and live for you for the rest of my days. In your name I pray Jesus, amen.”

Dr. Reagan: Amen. Now Dennis I am sure that there are many of our viewers out there who are wondering right now is that really all you have to do in order to be born again, in order to be saved? To say a simple prayer like that. Aren’t there some works you’ve got to do?

Dennis Pollock: Well, a lot of people would think so, but the truth is that people are always finding it difficult to believe that they can be born again, spiritually without performing works. But the only work to do to make salvation possible has already been done by Jesus on the cross. Salvation is a free gift of God for us to receive through faith in Jesus.

Dr. Reagan: Well, all I can say to that Dennis is praise God for His loving kindness and His grace. Folks, if you prayed that prayer with Dennis let me encourage you to seek out a Bible believing and Christ exalting church where you can manifest your faith in confession of Jesus in baptism. Also would you write us and tell us about your decision for Jesus so that we can send you some follow-up materials on how to grow in the Lord.

We will also tell you how to look for a church where you can begin to grow in the Lord. Well, that is it for now, we want to invite you to be with us again for our next program when we will focus on the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming. Until then this is Dave Reagan and Dennis Pollock speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

Person in Park: The Rapture, the Rapture, the Rapture, the Rapture.

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me Ma'am could I ask you a questions?

Person in Park: Sure.

Dr. Reagan: Are you a Christian?

Person in Park: Yes I am.

Dr. Reagan: I would like to ask you a Biblical question.

Person in Park: Alright.

Dr. Reagan: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The Rapture, the Rapture is the promise of Jesus, that one day very soon He is going to appear in the heavens to take His Church out of this world.

End of Program