

## When will the Rapture take place?

-There is little doubt in Christian Theology that Christ will return for his Bride (Church), the only debate is the timing.

### A). Eschatology

The study of the expectations of the end of the present age, human history or the world itself and how it all relates to life and the afterlife.

### B). Hermeneutics

The study of the methods, techniques and foundation of interpretation. In theology it is concerned with the principals of interpreting biblical scripture.

It's considered an art and a science. Science because it has rules for interpreting scripture and art because it requires discernment to know which rules to apply to a given text to find its intended meaning. Basically, there are 4 types of interpretation:

- 1). Literal: interpreting according to the "plain meaning."
- 2). Moral: seeks to establish principles by which ethical lessons may be drawn.
- 3). Allegorical: i.e. a story that uses symbols to convey a hidden message.
- 4). Anagogical (mystical) seeks to explain biblical events as they relate to or prefigure the life to come.

### C). Exegesis vs. Eisegesis Interpretation

**Exegesis:** critical interpretation of the biblical text to discover its intended meaning (i.e. "reading out of the text what the original author meant to convey").

**Eisegesis:** the practice of interpreting a text by reading one's own ideas, agendas or biases into it, rather than the text's intended meaning. i.e. (1). Isolating a passage from the original meaning, (2). Taking a passage out of context, (3) Reading into the text what the interpreter wishes to find or thinks he/she finds there. This is how false doctrines are created.

D). **Comparison of Christian millennial teachings** (See chart attached) \*

E). **Dispensations of the Time in the Bible** (Dispensationalism)- See chart attached\*

\*Both play a major role in the understanding of the Rapture debate.

### **E). Where did the doctrine of Dispensationalism first appear?**

-John Nelson Darby's theory which interprets biblical prophecy through a series of distinct dispensations or periods in God's plan. It is known for:

- It's literal interpretation of the Bible
- It's distinction between Israel and the church and\*,
- It's focus on Israel's role in God's plan.

-Before Dispensationalism, the understanding was that there is one people of God\*. It was called "Covenant Theology." But Darby taught that God had a distinct and unique plan for Israel and a distinct and unique plan for the church.

-Dispensationalism is built on the idea that throughout history God has worked and saved people in different ways\*\*

-The Secret Rapture came out of the framework of Dispensationalism.

\*Those opposing Dispensationalism argue that Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28 that we are all one in Jesus Christ

\*\*Detractors say that the bible tells us that God does not change (Malachi 3:6 "For I am the Lord, I change not") and He saves people the same way throughout time.

### **F). Who was John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)?**

-He was a minister in the Church of Ireland and later became a member of the Plymouth Brethren. He began promoting a Secret Rapture theory after attending the same Powerscourt Bible Prophecy meeting in 1830 where the pastor of a 15-year-old girl named Margaret McDonald gave her testimony of having had visions of a Secret Rapture of believers before the appearance of the Antichrist. Darby later visited the girl in her home and shortly afterwards started promoting this theology.

-Darby later made speaking tours in the U.S. and Canada from 1859 to 1874. He became very popular in the U.S. through the Bible Conference Movement.

-The writings of Darby greatly influenced Cyrus Scofield (1843-1921) who incorporated this doctrine in the notes of his Scofield Reference Bible.

-The establishment of the dispensationalist bible institutes and colleges such as the Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924 further contributed to the spread of Dispensationalism.

### G). **The Debate**

Scripture supporting Darby's theory of  
A Secret Rapture

Scripture refuting a Secret Rapture

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

Matthew 24:40-42

Revelation 16:12-15

Luke 12:39-40

John 15:20

Luke 21:34

Daniel 3:16-28

2 Peter 3:10-12

Matthew 25:31-32

Revelation 3:3

Matthew 13:24-30

Revelation 3:10

Mark 13:9

Revelation 16:15

Luke 21:10-12

Those who object to Darby's theory of a Secret, Pre-tribulation Rapture argue that if the Pre-trib rapture fails to materialize the following will happen:

-People will become disillusioned and not only lose faith, but will actually leave the faith which will be the fulfillment of the end-time "falling away from the faith" prophecy found in the following scriptures:

Acts 20:29-30, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, and 2 Peter 2:1-3.

-People will not be prepared spiritually or otherwise for the times ahead and that would be a fulfillment of the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Matthew 25:1-13.

-People will not recognize the "mark of the beast" when it comes because they believe that they will be raptured before the mark of the beast is thrust upon the world. And this would be part of the great deception. Colossians 2:8

-Christ warned us that the end times would be as in the days of Noah when people were lulled into a false sense of security. And this doctrine is doing the same thing to Christians today. Matthew 24:37-39.

-They further contend that prior to Darby and Scofield there was never a pre-trib theology espoused by the Christian church, and that Darby claims that 1,830 years after Christ's resurrection he received the revelation.

### H). **Final Debate**

-Does the timing of the Rapture matter or should we claim the Ephesians 6:11-18 as our mantra?

-Didn't we learn in last week's lesson that this is our true enemy, not each other?