

END TIMES

What You Should Know What You Can Do

A Bible Study with Debbie Taylor Williams



End Times

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Watch the accompanying videos for *End Times* at www.debbietaylorwilliams.com/

The written and video materials are humbly shared with you not as one who is a scholar of eschatology nor as one intent on defending a certain position. Rather, I invite you to join me in reading the scriptures with fresh eyes and childlike wonder, praying the Lord enlighten the eyes of your heart.

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." Ephesians 1:18-19

The Rapture: Good or Bad Theology?

The title of an article, “Even Jesus Wouldn’t Buy “the Rapture,” caught my attention. I was curious. What did someone who didn’t believe in the rapture, believe? For starters the article stated, “the rapture concept is rubbish made up by a theologian in the 1800s;” adding, “The Bible doesn't mention rapture. It's proponents distort apostles' metaphors to cook it up.” Rubbish. Concept. Cooked up. The last paragraph concluded with, “it’s amazing how scriptures get misused,” and in summary, the rapture is “bad theology.”¹

So which is it? Is the rapture a man made concept and a bad one at that? Is it rubbish and bad theology? In this week’s study we are going to examine why there are Christians who believe the rapture is in the Bible and is good theology.

End Times: What You Should Know:

The Rapture of the Church is the next event on God's prophetic timeline.²
David Jeremiah

Because the Rapture is a part of end times discussion, we will look at the reliability of it in this week’s study. Let’s begin by examining the word “rapture.” The New Testament was written in Greek then translated into Latin and then into English.³ Where the word “harpazo,⁴” is used in the Greek, it is translated into Latin as “rapturo” from which we get rapture. Harpazo means “to seize, snatch, or seize away.”⁵ The same concept is found in the Old Testament in the word “lāqah” which means to take, lay hold of, seize, receive, snatch, take away.⁶

1. Record times in which the words “took, take, snatched, caught up” are used in the Bible.
 - a. Enoch. What does it say God did with Enoch?

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2014/07/06/opinion/parini-rapture-real/index.html>

² <https://www.davidjeremiah.org/age-of-signs/what-does-the-bible-really-say-about-the-rapture>

³ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/biblical-translation>

⁴ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g726/nasb95/tr/0-1/>

⁵ ibid

⁶ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3947/nasb95/wlc/0-1/>

Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.
Genesis 5:24

b. Elijah. What did the Lord do with Elijah?

When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind,
2 Kings 2:1

c. Philip. Who did what to Philip?

*When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and
the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.*
Acts 8:39

d. Paul. What was Paul's experience?

*I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.
Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.*
2 Corinthians 12:2

e. We who are still alive.

*After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the
clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*
1 Thessalonians 4:17

Do a search for the word "Rapture" in the Bible and you will not find it. Do a search for the word "Trinity" in the Bible and you will not find it. Those who hold to the reality of the Rapture use it to refer to 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,"

There are differing views regarding the timing of the Rapture. Some understand it to occur before God's wrath is poured out on the earth prior to His Second Coming. Others believe the Rapture will occur at mid-point of the Tribulation. Some believe the Rapture is a distinct event from Christ's Second Coming. Others view the Second Coming as a single event in two phases - the Rapture followed by Christ's return. There are additional views.

When differing positions seem confusing, what are we to do? May I suggest the following:

1. Keep in the forefront the gospel message with which we are entrusted. 2 Timothy 2:8, 11-12.
2. Don't wrangle about words. 2 Timothy 2:14.
3. Be diligent to present yourself to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15.

In other words, study the Bible. Know what you believe. Major in the majors, John 3:16.

2. Those who believe Jesus will come for believers before He pours His wrath on the unrepentant earth look to the following verses. Select from the words in parenthesis to fill in the blanks.

"For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who
("leaves us for" or "rescues us from")

the wrath to come." 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

"For God
("has destined us" or "has not destined us)

for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,"
1 Thessalonians 5:9

3. What is Paul's intended outcome for those to whom he has written in Thessalonica?

“Therefore

(“warn one another” or “comfort one another”

with these words. - 1 Thessalonians 4:18

4. Check the following that the Thessalonians or *you* would find comforting words:

_____to go through the wrath to come

_____to not be destined for wrath but rather meet Jesus in the air

5. An objection by those who do not believe in the Rapture of the church prior to the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21) is that Christians are not promised an easy life. We are told to take up our cross. We are told that in the world we have tribulation. The early church suffered persecution and Christians throughout the world have continued to suffer persecution. Revelation speaks of Christians martyred for their faith. How then can believers purport to believe they will be exempt from suffering? To answer this question, we return to Paul’s letter to the church at Thessalonica.

Check the verses that show Paul said believers would not suffer for their faith.

_____but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. 1 Thessalonians 2:2

_____For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, 1 Thessalonians 2:14

_____For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know. 1 Thessalonians 3:4

Paul never represented that believers were exempt from suffering persecution for their faith. His position was that they could comfort one another that the *wrath of God* was not going to fall on believers.

6. There is a final thought to those who do not believe in the “catching up” of believers (1 Thessalonians 4:17) to meet Jesus in the air” prior to the outpouring of God’s wrath during the Great Tribulation. (Matthew 24:21) If God’s heart is not to spare believers from His wrath, then why Revelation 7:1-4? Why Revelation 9:1-6?

Read the following then record God’s provision for His bond servants/believers.

“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.” 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:” Revelation 7:1-4

“Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.”

End Times: What You Can Do

As we read various passages in the Bible about the last days and end times, I pray you are in awe, as I am.

In this section of our weekly study, we ask, “What can we do?”

If you have not read Revelation, that is something you could do.

You can go back and review the passages we have studied and pray God enlighten your heart and increase your understanding.

You can contemplate if you are willing to suffer at the hands of non-believers for being a Christian.

Knowing you will meet Jesus either by natural death, your gathering to Him, or His return to earth, what might you do to be more holy and blameless? To delve deeper into what the Bible says about being blameless, study the Bible passages under **Digging Deeper** at the bottom of today's study.

1. What points or Scripture do you most want to remember from today's study?

2. What are your thoughts about the rapture?

3. What do you want to remember from the video?

Write a prayer to your Heavenly Father thanking Him for the Bible and that we can study it. Ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit. Ask Him to put in you an urgency to tell others how they can be saved.

Digging Deeper: Being Blameless

Although believers have the assurance that it is Christ who makes us blameless to stand before God, (Ephesians 1:4, Colossians 1:22) what do the following verses indicate we are to do and why is it important for us to do our part?

Acts 24:14-16

Philippians 1: 9-11

Philippians 2:13-15

2 Peter 3:13-14

Record additional thoughts, prayers, verses you want to study, memorize, or pray over in your *Prayers of my Heart* journal.

Please leave your comments about the study, what you are learning, and how it is impacting you on the End Times Online Bible Study page at www.debbietaylorwilliams.com/endtimes.

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Questions? We're here to help. Contact us at debbie@debbietaylorwilliams.com.