

FAQ: "Where Do Dead Christians Go?" – Lesson 5

With Introduction to "The Judgment of the Believers' Works" – Lesson 1

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What are the "pillars of the rapture" according to the provided text?

The "pillars of the rapture" are the foundational events upon which this belief is built. They include:

1. **The Death of Christ:** Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.
2. **The Resurrection of Christ:** Jesus's victory over death, rising from the grave.
3. **The Revelation of Christ:** Jesus's future appearing and return.

Who are the "participants of the rapture" and what happens to them?

The participants of the rapture are believers in Christ, divided into two categories:

1. **Dead Believers:** Those who have died in Christ will rise first. Their bodies, regardless of their condition (e.g., from shipwrecks, cremation), are considered Christ's eternal possession and will be reclaimed and beautified. They will be reunited with their souls, and a glorified body will meet a glorified spirit, becoming an eternally glorified person made in the image of Christ.
2. **Alive Believers:** Those who are still living at the time of the rapture will be "caught up together with them" (the resurrected dead believers) in the clouds. This "snatching up" or "plucking out" is described as an irresistible and instantaneous force, happening "in the twinkling of an eye." At this moment, living believers will be instantly transformed into glorified bodies, just like the resurrected body of Christ, snatched from the grip of Satan, the fallen world, and the coming wrath of God.

What is the significance of "meeting the Lord in the air" during the rapture?

"Meeting the Lord in the air" signifies a key event in the rapture. The word "meet" (ἀπάντησις - apantesis in Greek) is often used to describe people rushing out to meet a dignitary or a king and escort them back. However, the speaker clarifies that this does not mean believers will immediately return to Earth to establish the kingdom. Instead, the believers will be "rocket-ed through space faster than the speed of light," indicating a movement heavenward, where they will "always be with the Lord." The clouds are also significant, often associated with divine appearances and God's glory (Shekinah glory). This meeting is a rescue operation, taking believers to the "safe place of his Father's house."

What is the "judgment of the believer's works" (Bema Seat Judgment) and how does it differ from other judgments?

The "judgment of the believer's works," also known as the Bema Seat Judgment, is a separate judgment specifically for believers in Christ. Its purpose is to evaluate believers' faithfulness and glorification of God through their actions (works) during their earthly lives. This judgment determines eternal rewards and has **nothing to do with salvation**, as believers are already saved. This stands apart from the Great White Throne Judgment, which is for unbelievers at the end of time. The text notes various opinions on when the Bema Seat Judgment occurs, but emphasizes its importance for believers to prepare for now by doing works that will earn rewards in heaven.

Why is preparation for the Bema Seat Judgment important for believers?

Preparation for the Bema Seat Judgment is considered crucial for believers because it determines their rewards in eternity. The speaker stresses that believers should "spend your time doing things doing works on the earth which will allow you rewards in heaven." This is presented as a motivating factor, drawing parallels to Paul's desire to "run the race to win." The aim is not self-indulgence but to honor God by giving one's very best, knowing that Christ will evaluate their work. This preparation reflects a commitment to glorifying the Lord and seeking His approval, desiring to hear the words, "Well done."

What motivated Paul in his ministry, and how does this relate to believers today?

Paul's ministry was driven by three main motivations:

1. **Christ's Judgment (for rewards):** Paul was motivated by the knowledge that Jesus was coming back to evaluate believers' works and give rewards. This encouraged him to faithfully serve.
2. **Christ's Love (compelling):** The love of Christ "compelled" or "constrained" Paul, locking him into service out of deep affection for the Lord.
3. **Christ's Work (complete/transformational):** Paul was motivated by the proven effectiveness of the Gospel—that Christ's work was complete, and people were genuinely transformed.

These motivations are presented as a model for believers today, encouraging them to be equally driven by the anticipation of Christ's return and rewards, His compelling love, and the power of the Gospel to transform lives.

How does the concept of the rapture offer comfort to believers?

The rapture passage in 1 Thessalonians 4 is described as a "comfort passage" and a "pastoral passage." It reassures believers about their loved ones who have died in Christ, emphasizing that they will rise first and will not miss the rapture. The overarching message is one of hope for a glorious reunion with Christ and other believers. Death is not a final goodbye for Christians, but a

"see you later." This hope contrasts sharply with the "frightening despair of final partings and hopelessness" experienced by those without faith, filling Christians with "hope for a glorious reunion" and enabling them to live free from the fear of death.

Will animals be raptured or be present in heaven, and why is this question often raised?

The text directly addresses the common question of whether animals will be raptured or are in heaven. The speaker states that he doesn't believe animals will be raptured with believers. Regarding their presence in heaven, he suggests that the Bible indicates God will provide believers with "the greatest happiness" and "as he sees fit." He avoids being dogmatic, acknowledging differing opinions among pastors. The question is often raised due to believers' responsibility as caretakers of God's creatures and their emotional attachment to pets. While specific answers are elusive, the general principle is that God's provision will ensure ultimate happiness, potentially overwhelming any earthly concerns about animals. The mention of "the lion will lie with a lamb" is noted as a "millennial reference" rather than a direct answer about pets in heaven.