BCC Course on Biblical Eschatology

Week 14 = The Rapture Explained

I.) The Rapture Explained Scripture Preparation

Read: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

II.) The Rapture - "What is it?"

1.) Rapture Defined:

A.) The Rapture primarily refers to the snatching away of deceased and living Christians to meet Jesus in the air.

B.) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: 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 will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

2.) The **Rapture** could be the most discussed issue in eschatology

A.) Popularity linked to books and movie:

- A Thief in the Night
- Hal Lindsey, Late Great Planet Earth
- Left Behind book and movie series

B.) Discussions of the Rapture often become emotional

- People love it or hate it

3.) The Rapture can be a test of Someone's maturity level. Signs of immaturity:

A.) 1.Mocking the idea of a Rapture

- Think the whole discussion is stupid.
- But the Rapture is explicitly taught in the Bible.

B.) Over-focusing on the timing of the Rapture

C.) Calling a rapture view heretical or linking it with cults

D.) Viewing the timing of the Rapture as a test of orthodoxy

4.) Various Rapture Events in the Bible

A.) Enoch (Gen. 5:24)

B.) Elijah (2 Kings 2:11)

C.) Apostles (John 14:3)

D.) Jesus (Acts 1:9, 11)

E.) Phillip (Acts 8:39)

F.) Paul (2 Cor. 12:2, 4)

G.) Church (1 Thess. 4:17)

H.) Two witnesses (Rev. 11:11-12)

I.) Jesus or Church (Rev. 12:5)

5.) The Rapture should be understood in relation to:

A.) Daniel's 70th Week

B.) The Day of the Lord

C.) The Rapture primarily involves the church's relationship to the Day of the Lord

D.) The Church seems to be promised rescue from the Day of the Lord.

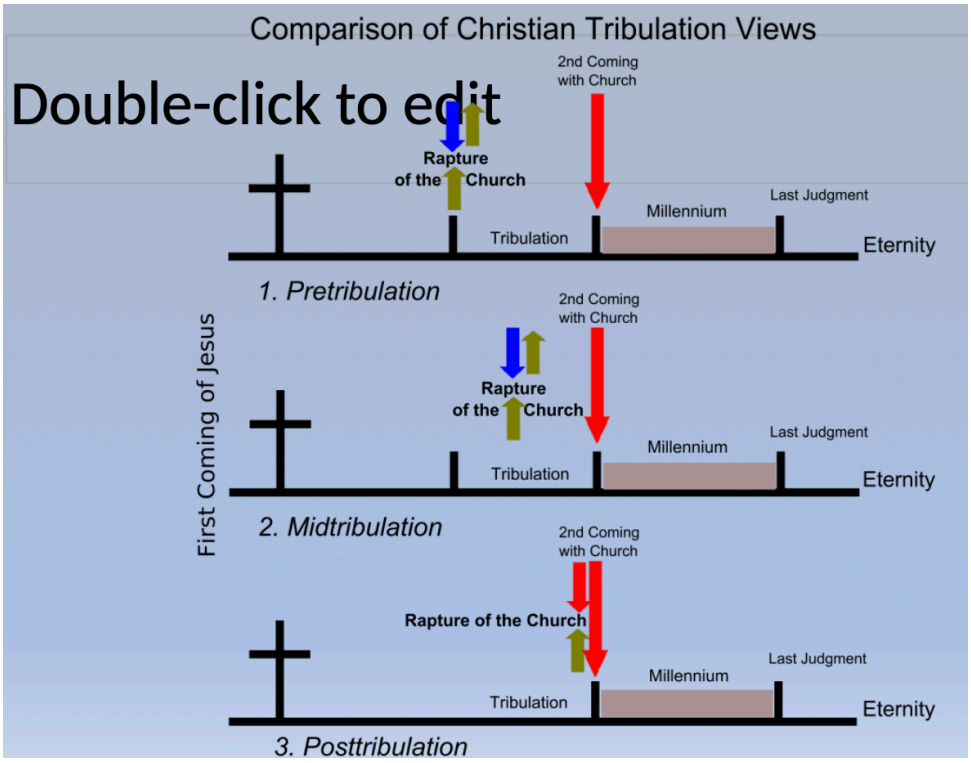
6.) Timing

A.) Understanding the Rapture involves piecing together information from several Bible texts.

B.) No one verse solves the timing issue.

- I Thes. 4:16-17

7.) Translation:
   A.) The Greek word from which we get the term 'rapture' (*harpadzo*) appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, translated 'caught up.'
   B.) The Latin translation of this verse used the word *rapturo*.
   C.) The Greek word it translates is *harpazo*, which means to snatch or take away.
8.) Effect on the Dead & the Living:
   A.) Do they go to Heaven for awhile?
   B.) Or do they come right back down to earth?
9.) I Thes. 4:14-17's Description:
   A.) The return of the King to earth in victory? (posttribulational view)
   B.) Or a **rescue mission** or **evacuation** to whisk the church to heaven before the Day of the Lord? (other rapture views)
      - Thus, the Rapture is an explicit teaching in the Bible.
      - But when does the Rapture occur?
10.) 4 Main Rapture Views:
   A.) Pre-tribulational Rapture: Church will be rescued prior to the entire 7-year Tribulation Period.
   B.) Mid-tribulational Rapture: Church will be rescued at the mid-point of the 7-year Tribulation Period.
   C.) Pre-wrath View: Church will be rescued sometime after the middle of the 7-year Tribulation Period
   D.) Post-tribulational Rapture: Church will go through the entire Tribulation Period.



III.) The Rapture Explained Discussion Questions

1.) What do you think of the idea of "The Rapture"?
2.) What does the doctrine of the Rapture mean to you personally and for your hope as a Christian?
3.) What would you say to a Christians who says, "I don't believe in the Rapture!"