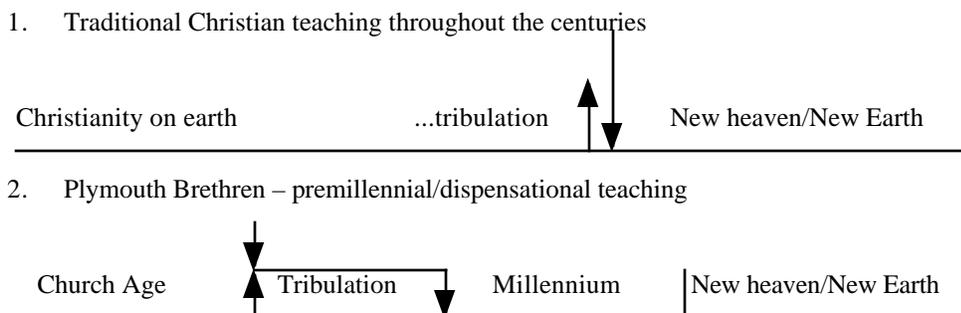


# RAPTURE

- I. Biblical usage of the word "rapture"
  - A. The Bible does not use the word "rapture"
    - 1. Not found in Biblical concordance
    - 2. Not found in Biblical dictionaries or encyclopedias
  - B. English word "rapture" derived from Latin word *rapio* (*rapere, raptus*)
    - 1. Meaning: to carry away, to be caught up, to snatch, seize, pluck, drag away, carry off, abduct, plunder, ravish, rape
    - 2. English word "rape" derived from this Latin root
  - C. English usage of word "rapture"
    - 1. General usage: "carried away with emotion, ecstasy, passion"
    - 2. Theological usage: "caught up in clouds to meet the Lord"
      - a. Recent theological origin
        - (1) Emphasized in premillennial/dispensational theology since middle of nineteenth century
        - (2) Not found as definition in Webster's Collegiate Dict.
      - b. Questionable choice of English word as equivalence for Biblical reference.
  - D. Singular Biblical passage that refers to being "caught up" at end time.
    - 1. I Thess. 4:17 - "we who are alive and remain shall be *caught up* together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air..."
    - 2. Greek word for "caught up" is *harpazo* - used 13 times in N.T.
      - a. translated "snatch" - Matt. 13:19; Jn. 10:12,28,29; Acts 8:39; Jude 23
      - b. translated "take by force" - Matt. 11:12; Jn. 6:15; Acts 23:10
      - c. translated "caught up"- II Cor. 12:2,4; I Thess 4:17; Rev. 12:5
    - 3. Contextual interpretation of I Thess. 4:13-18
      - a. Not an attempt to outline sequential events of final times
      - b. Context of concern, consolation, condolence, comfort
      - c. Paul explains
        - (1) the hope (confident expectation) of the Christian
        - (2) the resurrection of the body of the Christian
        - (3) the equal opportunity of those who have died and those who remain
        - (4) those remaining alive are "caught up"
        - (5) the comfort that Christians have in these realities

- II. "Rapture" in premillennial/dispensational eschatology and theology
  - A. The "catching up" of believers, the Church, was separated in time from the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth in the teaching of the Plymouth Brethren of Britain, creating a two-phase Second Coming of Christ.
    - 1. Rapture - Jesus' coming for His saints
    - 2. Revelation - Jesus' coming with His saints
  - B. Illustrations



- C. History of this interpretation
    1. Margaret MacDonald (1830) - personal prophecy in Glasgow
    2. Edward Irving (1832) - Scottish charismatic preacher
    3. John Nelson Darby - Irish lawyer and Plymouth Brethren leader
    4. James H. Brookes - American Presbyterian preacher
    5. Dwight L. Moody - Moody Bible Institute
    6. C.I. Scofield - Scofield Bible
    7. Dallas Theological Seminary (Chafer, Ironside, Ryrie, Walvoord)
    8. Hal Lindsey - Late, Great Planet Earth
    9. Popular interpretation of fundamentalist evangelicals
  - D. Variant opinions of the time of "rapture" among premillennialists
    1. Pre-tribulation rapture - church removed from tribulation
    2. Mid-tribulation rapture - church removed prior to severe tribulation
    3. Pre-wrath rapture - (variant of mid-tribulation rapture)
    4. Post-tribulation rapture - church endures tribulation
    5. Partial tribulation - faithful remnant of Christians removed at beginning of tribulation; others removed later
  - E. Elements of "rapture" in pretribulation, premillennial dispensationalism
    1. Two-phase second-coming
    2. Imminence - any time, any moment, soon coming
    3. Silent, secret, invisible disappearance of Christians
- III. Concluding observations concerning the "rapture"
- A. Affirming the reality of being "caught up with Christ" (I Thess. 4:17)
    1. Semantic irrelevance of using the word "rapture"
    2. Maintaining the hope of Christ's return
  - B. Questioning the elements of pretribulational premillennial "rapture"
    1. Inadequate basis for two-phase Second Coming
      - a. "caught up," "meet," descend" same time period
      - b. final judgment
    2. Inadequate basis for imminence of expectation
      - a. His return is impending
      - b. His return will be sudden, unannounced
      - c. Christians are to be expectant, prepared, waiting and watching
    3. Inadequate basis for secret rapture
      - a. His return will be public
      - b. His return will be visible
    4. Inadequate basis for silent rapture
      - a. His return will be with shout
      - b. His return will be with trumpet
    5. Improper claims of new revelation
  - C. Avoiding the effects of pretribulational premillennial "rapture"
    1. divisiveness, intolerance, disunity
    2. arrogance, pride, superiority, gnosticism
    3. escapist mentality, avoidance, withdrawal
    4. negative attitude toward society; disengaged
    5. inadequate ecclesiology; ghetto mentality; church relegated to tossing out life-savers