

The Personhood of God, pt. 15 – The Work of Christ (cont.)

Kingdom Now & To Come – THE FULL GOSPEL MESSAGE (cont.)

More on End Times – The Rapture (Matt 24 & 1 Thess 4-5)

Background from last week:

Matt 24-29-31

- Jesus is returning here on earth. 2nd coming of Christ to this world.
 - Clouds of heaven = Progression of the etymology of the word heaven from the skies to the place where God is (transcendence)
 - Gen 1:6-12: the heavens are the waters of the air (clouds), earth is the ground and waters of the land
- The elect will be gathered with him here on earth.
 - Note “gather his elect” can be from the 4 winds and from ends of heaven
 - Does that mean the elect here on earth at the time, or the elect who have died in Christ?
 - Could be both. 4 Winds is most commonly used in scripture as encompassing the 4 corners of the earth (corners is metaphorical not scientific - remember our exegetical tools!). 4 winds of heaven coming from heaven to the earth to gather or scatter before the Lord: Jer 49:36, Zech 6:5, Ezekiel 37:9, Daniel 7:2, Zech 2:6. The 4 winds can also be called 4 winds of the earth, particularly in the apocalyptic writing of Revelation: Rev 7:1.
 - Either way, it is understood that the 4 winds gather those elect in heaven and on the earth to be united to Christ.
- Why? For what purpose are they being gathered with Him as He comes to earth in the clouds? More to come on this!

Now we will start with verses commonly associated with the rapture...

Matt 24:36-44

- v.36 - Jesus is limited in knowledge as it relates to his 2nd coming (at least during his time on earth His time was limited).
- V.37 - But an indicator of the end time & the 2nd Coming of Christ will be lawlessness reminiscent of the days of Noah.
- v.39-41 - Note that being "taken" here is not a good thing! Like the days of Noah, the day of the Lord (coming of the Son of Man) will be a time when the wicked are taken (swept away) for destruction.
 - Those who hold to a belief that being taken is a good thing are missing the context of the word.
- v.42-44 - Therefore, BE READY! It could happen at any time.
 - Provided the requirements of vs 14 & 37 are met). Gospel is done going throughout the earth, and wickedness will be like the days of Noah

So what about Paul's words concerning being raptured in the air with Christ?

- This is where people have mistakenly lumped the “taken” from Matt 24 with those “caught in the air” in 1 Thess 4-5.
- They are not the same grouping. The former is for the wicked (Matt 24), the latter is for the righteous in Christ (1 Thess 4-5)

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1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

- v.13 - These verses are meant to be comfort for those who have lost loved ones in the Lord...HOPE
- v.14 - When Jesus returns, he will bring with him those who have fallen asleep (died) in Him. Cloud-of witnesses-in the air with Jesus (as we saw in Matt 24)
- v.15-16 - Kingdom is coming for ALL in Him, coinciding with His return. Dead do not rise in physical form (spiritual bodies) until the last trumpet when Christ returns (See 1 Cor 15:50-52...more next class). Dead rise first (as the start of the Rapture).
- v.17-18 - Then we are raptured in the clouds with Christ, to arrive with Him, as he establishes the kingdom in the new heaven & new earth. IMPORTANT NOTES:
 1. Christ arrives here to establish kingdom
 - New earth-Rev 21:1-3...more on this next week as well, but note the bride of Christ – the new Jerusalem, the Church – comes down from heaven.
We are raptured up in order to come down...together.
 - Rapture is a cleaning of the world (taken away like the days of Noah) and a processional from the new heaven to the new earth.
 - Note it is God's dwelling place that has changed from heaven to earth.
 2. We are raptured, not to another world, but to the clouds (heavenly places), to arrive with Christ. The royal triumphant arrival as co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17)
 3. All creation is awaiting this renewal that begins with the saints and extends to heavens and earth - Rom 8:19-22)
 4. Those who are "left behind" will be with the Lord in His kingdom. You want to be left behind!
- 5:1-7 - Similar to Jesus' words in Matt 24
 - Thief in the night
 - Be alert – awake!
- v.8-11 - Faith, Hope & Love are all tied to the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. There is no millennium to give any group a second chance. We all have second chances...and third...and fourth chances...everyday until He comes again. At the time, the gospel will have FINISHED going forth to ALL nations

SUMMARY: The Rapture is to meet Jesus in THIS world, and to enter triumphantly with the King to His Kingdom. The Rapture is not to be "taken" away.