

Current Affairs #83 – The Rapture, Part 3

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So how did this doctrine of the rapture ever come to be? How could the Scriptures that we have looked at, which so plainly speak about the resurrection of the dead and the return of the Lord—and indeed, the first resurrection which is the resurrection of the righteous dead at the time of the return of the Lord; as opposed to the second resurrection which is at the end of the millennium and that is for the purpose of judging the unrighteous dead, where the Scriptures say, “the rest of the dead live not until...”¹—how did this doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture, then, come up?

Well, it was invented by an Anglo-Irish clergyman, a member of the Church of Ireland, whose name was John Nelson Darby. Before that, there was really no reference to any kind of rapture—pre, mid, post, any kind of that. Frankly, there is no rapture doctrine in the Bible. It talks about how the saints who have died are resurrected—their bodies are resurrected—and they are caught up to meet the Lord when He has reached the level of the clouds on the day of His return.² That is in concrete. You cannot move those blocks because that is what the Scriptures say in both 1 Thessalonians and in 1 Corinthians. That is the hard, immutable reality. It is when the Lord is coming back with the shout of the archangel and the trumpet sound of God announcing the return of the Lord. This is what is symbolized in the Jewish feast of Rosh Hashanah, the actual coming of the King, the blowing of the seventh trumpet at the return of the Lord.

The appeal, however, of this doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture, or the rapture itself, was put forth by an Irishman, John Nelson Darby, who was born in 1800 and lived to 1882. This person was an Anglican priest. His teachings came in a time in England and in the United States in which there was much discussion of manifest destiny. The teachings are against the background of thought of dispensationalism. Dispensationalism is a core Baptist doctrine, and commonly

All Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless otherwise noted.

¹ See Revelation 20:5: “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”

² See 1 Thessalonians 4:16: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” See also 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

received among Pentecostals as well. It is where they see the Bible as divided up into specific epochs, so that God accomplishes certain things in certain epochs, and it is the epoch that is important. So, for example, they talk about the age of the patriarchs. They talk about the age of Moses. They talk about the age of the prophets, the age of Christ, the church age, and so on, and the end of the age.

The problem, you see, with this whole notion of dispensationalism—there are multiple problems (I am not talking about why it is false; I will get to that)—but the problem with dispensationalism is that they divide Scripture into epochal periods so that whenever something that God is doing and says He is doing has been accomplished, they say, “Well, God said it. It was accomplished. We are on to the next thing.” They never see the continuous cycling of these events which are fulfilled in part and fulfilled literally, but they point to a greater and greater fulfillment. So for them, once it is over, it is done.

And so if you talk about eschatology, the doctrine of last things, as being, for example, typed and shadowed, say in the historical period of Babylon or in the period of Egypt or the Roman Empire, then they are content with saying, “It is over and done. We do not need to be concerned about it.” That is what allows them this enormous loophole through which to literally drive a Mack truck, and you do not have to deal with prophetic Scripture. The problem is that, in these times, we are seeing again the reoccurring of things that once occurred in a prior time, and it is bigger than it ever was before, but whoever believes in dispensationalism is stuck at the point of saying, “Oh, that already happened.” And it does not matter how obvious the situations are in the present, they are like people with blinders on as they lurch toward what they think are the next things to happen, because they have no answers. Quite frankly, dispensational theology has no answers for where we are today. It does not.

So what is it left with? It is left with a desire for an escape. And it hangs on this thread that is an insufficient thread, because it is a grotesque and brutal perversion of the plain meaning of these two Scriptural passages, and primarily the passage from 1 Thessalonians 4:17, which does not say

that we are going to be caught up for seven years to be with the Lord in some secret rapture.³ No. The only catching up is first, of the saints who have died in Christ on the day that the Lord is announced to be coming from heaven and as He has reached the level of the clouds, the physical clouds. Which corresponds perfectly to the Book of Acts, chapter 1, verse 11, in which the story is of how Jesus is ascending to heaven, and the angels said, when a cloud received Him out of their sight, “This same Jesus will come again in the same manner in which you have seen Him go into heaven.”⁴

When He has come at the level of the clouds and when the righteous dead have been raised, then and only then—because the living “shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep in Christ”⁵—then and only then will the living be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye (the shortest measure of time), from a natural form (the forms we are now in) to the same form in which the righteous dead are being resurrected.⁶ That is why 1 Corinthians 15 describes the fashion in which the dead will be raised,⁷ and concludes that Jesus Himself, the Lord Himself, will be revealed from heaven at the shout of the archangel, the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ shall arise first in this changed form. The ones who are living in the present form... I hate to be so pedantic, but this matter has been so thoroughly confused that you have to have someone literally take you by the hand and lead you through because the grooves in our thinking have been so deeply cut, and erroneously so. And I am not even sure doing it this way is going to convince people who want to believe in an escape. But it says you shall by no means precede those who have fallen

³ See 1 Thessalonians 4:17: “Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

⁴ See Acts 1:9-11: “Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.’ ”

⁵ See 1 Thessalonians 4:15: “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.”

⁶ See 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

⁷ See 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

asleep in Christ, and we will be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye (the shortest measure of time).

What form will we be changed to? Well, it tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 (verse 44), “we are sown a natural body, we are raised a spiritual body”—the same form in which Jesus was resurrected when He arose from the dead. You cannot kill it anymore. It can move up and be caught up in the clouds of heaven without strings, pulleys, or wires. It is a multi-dimensional body, the same as what He was raised in. That body is what is raised from the earth and is lifted up to the heavens to join the soul/spirit combination of the righteous dead. So, they have a body now in which to come back and inhabit the earth as it will be, with the Lord with whom they are coming. Those who have died in Christ will have that body; they will be resurrected in that form. And those who are still alive will be transformed from our fleshly, breathing body that is governed by the rules of this earth into the same kind of body as the resurrected dead in Christ—who are now preceding us in resurrection to go up to be with Christ in the air, to come back with Him to the earth—they will be transitioned immediately, in the twinkling of an eye, to that same form of body.

That same form of body is exactly what Jesus had when He was raised from the dead. That is a body that could move through walls. It could move around without notice or attention. When the disciples were gathered together on the day of His resurrection, in a locked room, Jesus suddenly materialized in the midst of them.⁸ And when they recognized Him, He disappeared, and He did not need to unlock the door and walk out.⁹ That is the kind of body that we will have when we are changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. That body ate fish with His disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.¹⁰ And that body departed immediately from being revealed at the tomb, and told Mary and the women who had gathered at the tomb that He had gone before into Galilee. That

⁸ See John 20:19; 26: “Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ ”; “And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ ”

⁹ See Luke 24:30-31: “Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.”

¹⁰ See John 21:1-14; see also Luke 24:41b-43: “He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.”

body is a spiritual body, capable of housing the soul and the spirit. So the total man, the total new man, the one born from heaven, now is given a suitable and fitting body, the same model as what Christ had when He was raised from the dead. In that sense as well, He is the firstfruits of those who slept.¹¹ That is the reality that we are talking about. That body they could not kill again. That body cannot be enslaved, imprisoned, threatened in any way.

Such is what will happen at the last day, at the sound of the trumpet when the Lord returns: we will join Him in the air at the level of the clouds, and we will come back to the earth. Those who are alive and remain will not go to heaven. They will go up to the level of the clouds. If you want to call that the heavens, fine. But it is not in heaven as we know it today. And from heaven, we will come with Him. That demonstrates uncontrovertibly to the earth, who are all seeing Him come back and are all seeing the believers coming back with Him, the reality that if we have borne the likeness of the man from earth, we shall also bear the likeness of the Man from heaven.¹² It demonstrates the reality that we are born from above. That is not the full expression of what it means to be born from above, but it certainly is one of the expressions of being born from above.

If we are born of God, we are spirit. That which is born of flesh is flesh; that which is born of Spirit is spirit (cf. John 3:6). And in a spiritual form, we live now in these present bodies. So in truth, what is giving way is the enfolding of our flesh, enfolding upon our souls and spirits. And that will give way, transformed in an instant, to what we already are and how we are already functioning in the earth. In that sense, it will not be new. It is the giving away of the earthly tabernacle in which we now dwell, giving place to and making visible the heavenly or spiritual.¹³ What is now not visible will then become visible, and it will be in the same visible form as what Jesus was in when

¹¹ See 1 Corinthians 15:20: “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

¹² See 1 Corinthians 15:49: “And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”

¹³ See 2 Corinthians 5:1-2: “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven...”

He was raised from the dead. It is the like-form in which the righteous dead will be raised from the dead.

Dispensationalism is an absurd way to understand the Scriptures because there is never a reference to time epochs as dispensational. What the Scriptures speak about in dispensing—in giving out, the time of dispensation—is not a time epoch. The conflation of the word “dispensation” with the word “time epoch” is at best crude and vulgar, because a time epoch is not a dispensation. What is a dispensation? What does the term mean? If you have grown up in England or around the British, what we call a pharmacy or a drugstore, they call a dispensary. It is a point at which prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs can be distributed. A dispensation is a dispensing. It is a giving out. It is not a time period.

Why couldn't Darby see that? This is ordinary. But you see, when you clothe things with religious verbiage, you confuse them. A time of restoration from the presence of the Lord is about the restoration from the presence of the Lord; it is not about the time in which that is done. Because all that a time block is, all that a time epoch is, is a container of a dispensation, a container of the thing that God is dispensing. It is never a time epoch. It is what God does in that time. You can have that time, if God does not do anything—which, of course, is not accurate; God is always doing—and it is an empty time epoch because nothing has been dispensed. Look up the word “dispense” and/or “dispensation.” A dispensation is a giving out of something. To dispense is a dispensation. Whenever you dispense something, there has been a dispensation.

What does God dispense? God dispenses an economy. God dispenses an order of His House. Because the word for dispensation, speaking about what God dispenses, is a compound of two Greek words: *oikos*,¹⁴ which means house; and *nomos*,¹⁵ which means order or law. You are familiar with it from Deuteronomy. That is a Greek naming of an Old Testament happening: *deuter* is second, *nomy* is law, so Deuteronomy is the second dispensing of the law. That is when Moses recited and rehearsed the law in the hearing of Israel, just prior to them entering into the Promised

¹⁴ See *oikos*, Strong's Greek 3624 - <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/3624.htm>

¹⁵ See *nomos*, Strong's Greek 3551 - <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/3551.htm>

Land. The first dispensing of the law was from Mount Sinai. Forty years later, as they are ready to go into the land, there is a rehearsing of the law. “Hear, O Israel,” Moses calls Israel to order to tell them and recites the law. So, the book that contains the second recitation of the law by Moses is called Deuteronomy—“deuter” (second), “nomy” (law).

Oikos nomos is what is dispensed. So, a dispensation is a thing that God gives out that happens to be in time epochs. But it is about the thing; it is not about the epoch. When you use the epoch to say God gave out a certain thing, and therefore He is not going to do any more with that, it is over and done, you are patently foolish and have no comprehension of how God sees the end from the beginning. Everything He dispenses along the continuum of time is meant to grow in complexity and intensity. It starts out as types and shadows, perhaps continues as types and shadows until the reality comes, and then the types and shadows go away. If all you see is the time epoch and that portion that has been given out in that time epoch, and you conclude that the thing has been dispensed because of the time epoch that you are relating to, you will miss the real when it comes. You will miss the fullness that is spoken to in the time epoch.

So what does God dispense? God always dispenses the *oikos nomos*—the root of *oikonomia*,¹⁶ from which we get the English word “economy.” The economy of God is described in these two words: *oikos*, which means house; *nomos*, which means law or order. So, God gives out grace to remedy any condition that is in the world, because God continues to try to bring men to Himself. The way He does it is He gives out the order of His House that is sufficient to accomplish the bringing of men to Him in the condition of men during that time. At the end of the age He will dispense the full order and glory of His House so that men who are trapped in the schemes of the devil, caught in the coils of the dragon, trapped in this kingdom of seven heads and ten horns, will begin to see God’s help in the manner of life and in the conduct of those who are representing Him as fully mature saints in that time.

This was not fulfilled in the Roman epoch. It was not fulfilled, as some thought it might have been, in the time of Napoleon or Hitler. These are just types and shadows along the path of the very thing

¹⁶ See *oikonomia*, Strong’s 3622 Greek - <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/3622.htm>

that is to come. So, no, dispensationalism as a focus upon time epochs is absolute rubbish. It is garbage. And as to the things God is doing being completely fulfilled in a time epoch, that too is as ignorant and as uninformed. But if you subscribe to those views, you are going to be left with nothing except the hope of getting out of here before the things that are rolling forward and coming to pass within the end of the age, which are designed to be the background against which the glory of God is put on display by the mature saints collected together as this Kingdom against which the beast wars. The dispensing of grace in that time, the *oikos nomos* of God, is the glory of God appearing in the fully mature son, and it is quite sufficient to conduct the Lord's business, regardless of what the enemy has done.

How did this thing get ahold of the modern church? I have here the corner of a large envelope that I tore off that contained some things from, and I kept the person who wrote to me—it is Dwight Young, who was a professor emeritus at Brandeis University at the time that I met him. I am not sure he is still alive today. If he is, he is in his nineties. He was at a time a student at Dallas Theological Seminary. There was also another student there whose name was Hal Lindsey. You probably are familiar with these names. My conversation was with Dwight, and he told me how this rapture doctrine got ahold of the Baptist Church. This was certainly more than fifty years ago that he was there.

He said the professors were discussing Darbyism, and whether or not it was a valid theology. This graduate student, Hal Lindsey, wrote a book called *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Actually, he wrote a master's thesis on the subject of this form of dispensationalism and the rapture. He later turned his master's thesis into a book called *The Late Great Planet Earth*. Now some of you may not know about this book, but it was a runaway bestseller. According to Dwight, that is where the Baptists made the switch. They saw that there was a market for this doctrine, and they ran with it. Dwight later moved up to and was a professor of biblical studies, biblical languages at Brandeis University, from which he retired, and he was in a state of retirement when I met him. He is the one who told me about how this doctrine got loose in the Baptist circles. And now, you would think it was the gospel.

Historically, nobody ever thought of this doctrine before Darby. But once he popularized it in the context of dispensationalism, meaning things wrap up within epochs, people began to embrace it because they did not have to trust the Holy Spirit. If you are going to have any measure of understanding of prophetic Scripture, the end from the beginning and where we are at this point in time, you are going to have to walk in the Spirit. He is the One who wrote the Book; He is the One who is perfectly capable of interpreting it. And the folly of logic and reason and manmade constructs, such as dispensationalism, will lead you to increasing folly, such as the rapture.

I hope that I have thoroughly disabused you of any notion of a rapture. I hope equally that I have thoroughly disabused you of any notion of dispensationalism as being how you understand the fulfillment of prophetic Scripture. Now we will continue these discussions using what we have learned about the way that the enemy attacks the son and the way the son responds to the enemy. We will use that template to now continue to deconstruct the Book of Revelation, because all of the events that are happening happen alternatively between the glorifying of the saints and the desperation of the enemy who is cast out of his state of invisibility in the second heavens and who now is subject to the limitations of being on the earth. But he has prepared his descent so that when he comes, he will have a kingdom of seven heads and ten horns ready to oppress the whole earth, and by extension, to try to extinguish, even to annihilate, the saints.

But guess what? God knew the end from the beginning, and the greatest moment of the Body of Christ is in the midst of that darkness. That darkness has no potential to blunt our display of the glory of God, the radiance of God's glory, or to represent Him exactly.¹⁷ It has no ability to influence that at all. This is the time for the glory of what God has been doing, when He established the heavens and the earth for the purpose of establishing man in creation so that He might be seen in creation as who He is. He is on a path wherein not only will He show who He is in all of His glory through the corporate body, but He will bring the enemy to judgment as well. And He has committed that judgment into our hands.

We will talk again soon. I am Sam Soleyn. See you then. Bye-bye.

¹⁷ See Hebrews 1:3: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature, upholding all things by His powerful word."