



# *Last Days Beacon*

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## THE BLASTED HOPE

*WHY IS THE DEVIL ATTACKING THE PRE-TRIB RAPTURE DOCTRINE?*



*By Dr. David Schnittger*

I have been privileged to be a born-again Christian for over 55 years. A wise pastor met with me the night I walked the aisle at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly on July 27, 1967. He opened the Bible to John 3:16 and inserted my name: “For God so loved *David*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that if *David* believeth in him *David* should not perish, but *David* will have everlasting life.” From that moment to this I have never doubted that I am a child of God and that I have everlasting life.

I have also been privileged and blessed to be, *early on*, introduced to the Blessed Hope of the any-moment return of Jesus Christ to catch up the Church in advance of the Tribulation. Since that time, I have earned four theological degrees and been involved in an active teaching and writing ministry for over 50 years. My studies in Bible, Greek, Hebrew and Systematic Theology have only strengthened my conviction that the pretribulational Rapture of the Church is plainly and repeatedly taught in Scripture.

At the same time, I am convinced that there is no doctrine in Christendom that is more reviled, mocked and belittled than the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture of the Church. I have been called a “dispy” (dispensationalist), an advocate of the “poof theory,” a “Darbyite”, a “Scofieldite,” a “defeatist, a ”Zionist” and an “antinomian.” I have been lambasted and ridiculed because I do not believe in “historic premillennialism” (post-trib Rapture). I have been told that I do not have a vision for a “victorious Church” because I do not believe the Church will bring in the kingdom. I have been told that I do not believe that Christians will suffer persecution because I do not believe the Church will go through the Tribulation. In all of these attacks, I am never the one who brings up my pretribulation Rapture beliefs. The antagonists apparently smell the “Rapture heresy” on my breath and proceed to attempt to exterminate it. They are not happy until my “blessed hope” becomes my “blasted hope” and I am left miserable, with no hope at all. In effect, what they are saying is that the “blessed hope” is a “cruel hoax.”

In a strange way, even these attacks are a fulfillment of prophetic Scripture. The Apostle Peter predicted just what I have been describing, as a feature of the “last days.” We read in 2 Peter 3:3, 4: “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

Notice that the subject of their scoffing had to do with “. . . the promise of his coming.” Peter picks up the subject of “the promise” in verse nine: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” What “promise” is Peter referring to in verse nine? I believe it is the same promise he mentions in verse four: “the promise of his coming.” In plain language, Peter is saying that the reason Jesus seems to be slow in fulfilling the promise of His coming (Rapture) is that He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

I have been teaching, preaching, writing, publishing and broadcasting on the subject of the Rapture since 1975 when I graduated from Bible college and began writing and broadcasting with the Southwest Radio Church of the Air. I have been teaching that the Rapture is “imminent”; that is that it could occur at any moment, without the necessity of any prerequisite prophecy being fulfilled.

Sometimes, people ask me why it is taking so long for the Rapture and they are upset that we are still here as world conditions go from bad to worse. I always quote 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is no slack concerning his promise (the Rapture), as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” That is the reason the Rapture has not occurred - because God is patient and wants more people to get saved and become part of the Church. At a moment known only to Christ, one day the last person to get saved and become part of the Body of Christ will occur and, lickety-split, we will be out of here!

## THE BLESSINGS OF THE BLESSED HOPE



Why is the devil attacking the blessed hope? I believe it is because the devil wants to discourage and defeat us in the midst of these difficult days just prior to the Rapture. I have studied, *in-depth*, all of the alternative eschatologies - posttribulationism, amillennialism and postmillennialism. None of them make any sense biblically! None of them offer any hope! I would like to unfold just some of the blessings promised to those who hold to the blessed hope of the pretribulation Rapture of the Church.

**Peace of Mind:** We read in John 14:1-4, 27: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know . . . peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” The certainty of Christ’s return for the Church is the remedy for troubled heart and minds. It is a source of peace and courage!

**Comfort Amidst Sorrow and Suffering:** The Apostle Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

In light of this hope Paul states, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18). We have a marvelous comfort in the midst of loss and sorrow, knowing that one day will be gloriously and eternally reunited with our believing loved ones who have preceded us to heaven.

**Induces Self-Purification.** There is a clear linkage between believing in the imminent Rapture of the church and self-purification. We read in 1 John 2:28, “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” This is amplified and clarified in 1 John 3:2, 3: “Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

One of the primary purposes of the prophetic teaching on the Rapture of the Church is to serve as a strong motivation to live a life of purity and godliness. The hope of Christ’s soon return should be a purifying hope!

**An Incentive for Godly Living:** Titus 2:11-13 brings together the full scope of salvation, which includes justification, sanctification and glorification: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (justification) Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteous and godly, in this present world (sanctification). Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (glorification).

Notice the seamless connection of each aspect of the full scope of salvation - past, present and future. Notice also that the motivation for justification and sanctification is the blessed hope. It is also worth noting that the object of our “looking” is not the Tribulation or establishing the Kingdom. It is the blessed hope, which is defined as “the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

It is the grace of God *all the way* - beginning with our justification, continuing in our sanctification and culminating our glorification. All of grace - none of works! We do not work to overcome evil, elect the right candidate or bring in God’s kingdom in some postmillennial fantasy. No, we cannot earn our justification, affect our own sanctification or arrange the deck chairs on the Titanic to accomplish our glorification. It is ALL OF GRACE! PRAISE GOD!

**Stimulates Diligent Service:** 1 Corinthians 15 deals extensively with the subject of the resurrection of the saints and its resultant victory over sin and death. The chapter concludes with verse 58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

This verse begins with “therefore,” informing the reader that this verse is the logical result of all that which precedes it. Paul’s line of reasoning is that the hope of resurrection should motivate us to steadfast service. Once a believer gets a firm grip on the glorious certainty of living eternally in an incorruptible resurrected body, he will not be easily moved away from a life of wholehearted service for the Savior.

One of the difficulties some have with the subject of the Rapture has to do with distinguishing between the Rapture and the Second Coming. Below is a chart highlighting some of the differences.



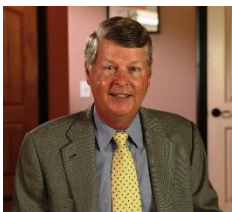
| RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH                                     | SECOND COMING OF CHRIST   |
|---|---|
| 1. It occurs <i>before</i> the tribulation<br>LUKE 21:36  | 1. It occurs <i>after</i> the tribulation<br>MAT. 24:29-30            |
| 2. Christ comes <i>for</i> the saints<br>I THESS. 4:13-17 | 2. Christ comes <i>with</i> the saints<br>JUDE 14; REV. 19:11-21      |
| 3. Christ takes the saints to<br>heaven JOHN 14:3         | 3. Christ brings the saints back to<br>Earth ZECH. 14:4-5; REV. 19:14 |
| 4. Christ returns to the clouds<br>I THESS. 4:17          | 4. Christ returns to the Earth<br>ZECH. 14:4-5                        |
| 5. Christ is not seen<br>I COR. 15:52                     | 5. Every eye shall see Christ<br>REV. 1:7                             |
| 6. It is the "blessed hope" of the<br>church TITUS 2:13   | 6. It is the great day of His wrath<br>REV. 19:15                     |

Do not let anyone turn your blessed hope into a blasted hope!

For further study:

*The Rapture Question*, Dr. John F. Walvoord, Zondervan, 1979.

*The Popular Handbook on the Rapture*, LaHaye, Ice and Hindson, Harvest House, 2011.



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