

Lesson Notes:

Millennium and Rapture, the Conflicting Views

Paul describes the “catching up” of believers to meet Jesus and their loved ones in the air in **1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18** and **1 Corinthians 15: 51-53**. The timing of this event (known as the Rapture) has sparked a controversy during the past 2 centuries and in the 4th century AD when Christianity became the accepted religion of Rome. Following is a discussion of the views surrounding Millennialism and the Rapture.

Scriptural Principles

1) **The description of the rapture** – Paul vividly describes the rapture in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** and **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**.

2) **What are the Views and Why?**

a) **Amillennialism**

What is the belief? – This is the view that the events described in **Revelations 1-20:6; Matthew 24, Mark 13** and **Luke 21** occurred between 65AD – 476AD.

That God’s wrath was poured out first upon the Jewish people for rejecting Christ and secondly upon the Roman Empire for her persecution of his church.

Amillennialists believe that much of the verbiage in **Christ’s Olivet Discourse** and in the **Book of Revelation** is symbolic wording and is not to be interpreted literally (ex. Blood up to a horse’s bridle). They believe that we are living in the Millennial period right now and the so-called rapture will occur almost simultaneously with Christ’s final return and the white throne judgment.

i) **Supporters - St. Augustine 350-430AD, Catholic Church, Lutheran Church**

ii) **Arguments and scripture used to support this view** – In **Rev. 1:1** John indicates that these events are to happen “soon”. In **Rev. 1:3** John indicates that the time for these things to come to pass is “near”. Soon means “soon” and near means “near”. Therefore, the events in revelation must have occurred in the early centuries after Christ’s death and resurrection. In **Rev. 11:7** the two witnesses could easily be referring to Peter and Paul. In **Rev. 13:18** the antichrist is given the number of a man and his number is 666. Caesar Nero when assigned values in the Hebrew alphabet totals 666. The reference in **Rev 17** is obviously Rome.

b) **Millennialism**

What is the belief? – This is the view that the events referenced in **Revelations; Matthew 24; Mark 13** and **Luke 21** have yet to occur. They believe that there will be a literal antichrist, a 7 year tribulation, a battle of Armageddon in which the armies of the world surround Israel, the return of Jesus Christ, and a 1000 year

reign of Christ before Satan is loosened for a season and then eventually condemned to the lake of fire. Millennialists believe that the so-called rapture will occur prior to a 7 year tribulation (pre-trib); some in the middle of a 7 year tribulation (mid-trib) and some after a 7 year tribulation (post-trib).

i) Supporters - Evangelicals, Fundamentalists

ii) Scripture used to support this view – Rev. 1:7 indicates that when Christ returns every eye shall see him. **Rev. 19: 7-9** refers to the marriage supper of the lamb which is when the rapture will occur. In his Olivet Discourse Jesus tells his disciples in **Luke 21:36** to pray that you will be found worthy to escape these things. Supporters of the millennial view indicate that this passage is referring to being raptured away before the wrath of God which is poured out upon earth's inhabitants at that time. In **Acts 15: 14-16** James indicates that God will gather together a people for himself from the Gentiles prior to rebuilding the temple. Supporters of this view argue that James is referring to the rapture. In **Romans 11:25-27** Paul uses nautical terms for fullness and to come in. The Greek word used for "come in" refers to arriving at a destination. Supporters of this view say this is referring to the rapture. In **Ephesians 1:8-10, Ephesians 3: 3-9** and **Colossians 1: 25-27** Paul refers to this event as a mystery. Paul's use of the word "Mystery" throughout the new testament refers strictly to the events described in **1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18** and **1 Corinthians 15: 51-53**.

3) But our Salvation through Jesus Christ binds all Christians together – No matter whether you are a Amillennialist or a Millennialist the important thing to remember is that we are all one body of believers under our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (**Romans 10:9**).