

and the thrust of the text is toward them understanding that they will meet their brethren again in the air with the Lord. The final statement of the context shows the purpose of the given details: "Therefore comfort one another with these words" (v.18). So, it is evident that this is not intended to describe the final day in its entirety. It does not specifically mention the wicked dead being raised too, but that's not the purpose of the context. The words of Jesus, back in John 5:28-29, is sufficient for us to understand that the wicked dead would rise too with the righteous.

Another text used by proponents of a rapture, is Luke 17:35-36, "*Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.*" Now the first problem with this is that the context is dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem that would happen in the year 70 A.D. (see also Matthew 24, and refer to the previous tract in this series). The original idea is that it will be like a normal day but when the siege occurs, one will "be taken," i.e. delivered from danger, because they knew the Lord's instructions on how to be delivered from the destruction. The other, however, would be left. Left where? Good question, and did you see that the apostles also asked Jesus that same thing in the next verse: "*And they answered and said to Him,*

'Where, Lord?' So He said to them, *'Wherever the body is, there the vultures will be gathered together.'*" Jesus taught that those "left" will be carcasses for the vultures. This makes perfect sense in its true context of the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but it presents more difficulties when one applies it to the doctrine of the rapture. The belief of the "end times" theorist is that the righteous would be raptured up followed by 7 years of tribulation on earth for the wicked, which is then followed by a 1,000-year reign of Jesus back on the earth. So, the wicked have much more time to spend after the rapture, and they have time to repent too. But in the very text these teachers use to argue for a rapture, the next statement shows that the ones who are left are carcasses for the vultures, not living people with years of opportunities to repent. It is evident then, that the doctrine of the rapture fails every scripture examination, including the very scriptures that are used to teach it. There is application here for us to always consider the context of the scriptures, to handle them with the highest of honor, for our God and His word expect nothing less.

Friend, I thought you'd benefit from this.
Contact me if you have any questions.

Name: _____

Phone: _____



The Rapture

What exactly is the Rapture?
&
What Does the Bible have to
say about it?

The doctrine of the rapture has taken the religious world by storm. It is a fascinating mystical thought to just vanish right in front of the lost world. It has attracted many to the doctrine in the same way that many are attracted to buy tickets to see a great magician's vanishing act. However, as amazing as it sounds, we must hold it to the word of God to see whether it stands or falls.

One thing to note about the doctrine of the rapture is how new it is to the religious world. Looking through the many writings of the last 2,000 years, no man has been able to find any similar idea to the rapture until recently. The earliest form of a rapture type doctrine came in 1788 in a Baptist church in Philadelphia, PA. A Baptist preacher of our day, John L. Bray, commented on this after researching the history of the doctrine: *"It is mighty embarrassing to me as a Baptist to learn that now I cannot trace this teaching to anyone further back than a Baptist leader, and here in America at that!"* This is concerning; how can we accept a teaching that is so far detached from the words of the Bible?

Of course, a couple of scriptures are used today by advocates of the rapture, which we will give diligence to now. The first of which is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. From this scripture, even the word "rapture" was adopted. This text is surely

dealing with the second coming of the Lord, but the details of the text are not consistent with the doctrine of the rapture. It describes a day when the Lord will descend from heaven with "a shout," with also the archangels voice, and with the trumpet of God. The order of events after this, according to this text, is that the dead who are in Christ will be resurrected, then after them, the righteous who were still living on the earth will be "caught up" with the resurrected and would be with the Lord always. The words "caught up" are only one word in the Greek ("harpazo") and mean "to seize by force." When translated into Latin, the word becomes "raptura," and that's where they got the term "rapture." However, today's idea of a rapture just doesn't fit the context of 1 Thessalonians 4, nor does it fit the rest of the Bible's discussions of the end of time. The details given to the Thessalonians demonstrate a very loud final event, starting with the voice of the Almighty God throughout all the earth, followed by the voice of a commanding officer of the heavenly hosts, as well as the blast of the "trumpet of God," which I'm sure is much louder than a trumpet of man. Now, the doctrine of the rapture teaches that the rapture is completely silent. It will be a mystical vanishing without a single noise. It is difficult to accept that in light of the information that God has given us. Some might argue that only those to be rap-

tured will hear these heavenly sounds. This is untrue by the words of Jesus in John 5:28-29, *"the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."* Jesus spoke of "the hour" that is coming, when "all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth." Jesus makes it perfectly clear that all (both good and evil) will hear his voice, not just the righteous. Jesus' own words singlehandedly refutes the entire doctrine of the rapture, and for that matter, the "end times" doctrine. For the Lord spoke of "the hour" when all the good and evil will be resurrected. The teaching of the rapture is that, along with it, all the righteous dead will be raised up while the wicked remain in the tombs (for another 1,007 years). Now, which is it? Within a single hour, or 1,007 year in between? The doctrine of the rapture crumples when we start to hear the Lord speak. The rapture is holding on to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 as their argument, because that text does not mention the wicked dead being raised. Friends, is the text a complete and comprehensive record of events that will occur on the last day, or does it have an entirely different purpose? Indeed, the context is concerning the sorrow of the church over their brethren who had passed away (v.13),