



## 5 MINUTE LESSONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

# Rapture Hotline

## Are the Christians Still Here?

I have a neighbor whose family are Jehovah's Witnesses. I asked him one day what his beliefs were about the rapture. He thought a minute and then said, "That's a Baptist thing isn't it?" I laughed and then said, "I suppose so."

In my research, I was surprised to find out that a rapture, followed by 7 years of tribulation, then followed by the second coming of Christ was not the majority view of the early Christians. In the United States many believe that Christ actually returns twice:

- Once in a rapture to take Christians out of the world
- And then seven years later He returns with the Christians to earth to reign with Him for 1000 years

The problem with this position is that it is hard to find any passage of Scripture that states that the rapture and the second coming of Christ are two separate events. This teaching has become popular in America since about 1860. It was promoted and became popular by the C. I. Scofield Bible in the early 1900s. As I understand, Historical (the early church) Premillennialists, understand the rapture and the second coming of Christ as the same event (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

It is not surprising that Christians have different views of the future because the future has not yet happened.

This is the point: What did the church closest to the apostles believe?

What will happen when Christ returns? This is what we know about the end of the age when God establishes His eternal Kingdom. I call this "simple eschatology." Eschatology is taken from a Greek word that means "last things." These are future things, such as the return of Christ, the millennium, the final judgment, eternal punishment for unbelievers, eternal rewards for believers, and studies of the new heaven and the new earth. Jesus makes it very simple in Matthew chapter 13:24-30; 36-43.

*<sup>24</sup>Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

*<sup>25</sup>But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

*26But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.*

*27So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*

*28He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?*

*29But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*

*30Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

*36Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*

*37He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;*

*38The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

*39The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.*

*40As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.*

*41The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;*

*42And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

*43Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

*47'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'*

*51Jesus said to them, 'Have you understood all these things?'*

*They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord (we are Baptists).’*  
(Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43; 47-51 KJV & NKJV)

It is of the utmost importance that we understand that,

*“...this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”* (Matthew 24:14 KJV)

*“And remember, our Lord’s patience gives people time to be saved...”*  
(2 Peter 3:15 NLT)

Recommended reading and studying material for eschatology:

*Revelation: Four Views*, revised and updated by Steve Gregg, Thomas Nelson

*Christian Beliefs*, by Wayne A. Grudem, Zondervan Books

*Four Views of the End Times*, by Timothy Paul Jones, PHD, Rose Publishing

## Questions

**1** What is the one thing about eschatology that all Christians agree on?

**2** Who did Jesus say knows the day and the hour of His return?

3

Read and discuss as a group your thoughts on Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 (KJV).

*“24Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

*25But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

*26But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.*

*27So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*

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*43Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”*

*- Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 (KJV)*

## Answer Key

- 1** What is the one thing about eschatology that all Christians agree on?

**That Jesus Christ will return physically.**

*“You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.” (Matthew 24:44 NLT)*

- 2** Who did Jesus say knows the day and the hour of His return?

*“However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.” (Matthew 24:36 NLT)*

- 3** Read and discuss as a group your thoughts on Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 (KJV).

### **We want to hear from you!**

We would love to hear your feedback on these lessons and how you use them in your own study or in discipling others. If you have any thoughts, stories, testimonies, comments, or questions we would love to hear them!

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