

My View Of The End Times 10

Imminence

Imminent means that something can happen at any moment, without anything else having to happen beforehand. Put another way, if something must happen before an event occurs then that event is not imminent. So, when people speak about an imminent Rapture they mean that it can occur at any moment, without any prior sign or warning. Imminence is one of the key arguments used by those who believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. However, I believe the following clearly shows that the Rapture is not imminent and never has been.

1) Peter definitely would not have believed in an imminent Rapture because Jesus told him he would die after he had grown old (John 21:18-19). So, rather than expecting to be raptured, Peter knew that he would die. This fact alone destroys the idea that the Bible teaches that the Rapture has always been imminent.

2) Paul's letters are said to support imminency but that is simply not possible as he wrote his letters before Peter died. Paul would have known what Jesus said to Peter and, even if he didn't, the Holy Spirit certainly knew and would not have inspired Paul to write about an any-minute Rapture while Peter was still alive. Clearly, Paul's letters can't be used to support imminency.

3) In Acts 1:8, Jesus said to the disciples, “... *be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” The book of Acts shows that the gospel was first preached in Judea, then Samaria, and only after that did it go to the ends of the earth so obviously the Rapture could not have been imminent before the gospel was preached outside of Judea and Samaria.

4) 1 Thess. 5:2 is used to support imminency because it says, “*the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night*”. However, 1 Thess. 5:4 says, “*But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.*” So we can see that it is sinners, those in darkness, who will be surprised by Jesus' return. Christians won't be surprised because, after the Antichrist is revealed, they will be watching and waiting to be raptured out of the Great Tribulation.

5) In Mark 13:1-31, Jesus spoke about the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation and then, in Mark 13:32-37, He told the disciples about His return and told them not to sleep but to watch. Note that Jesus said to watch after these events had occurred so 'watching' does not support an any-moment Rapture but is a warning from Jesus not to be 'sleeping' when He returns.

Where Jesus says not to sleep, He doesn't mean it literally as we all must sleep. In 1 Thess. 5:5-6, we are told, “*You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness [of sin]. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep [in their sin], but let us be alert and self-controlled.*” From this we see that sleeping is associated with sin so, especially during the End Times, Christians must not sleep but be self-controlled and alert so as not to get caught up in sin because Jesus said that only those who overcome to the end will be saved (Matt. 24:10-13).

“My View Of The End Times 5” gives more detail about 'coming like a thief' and 'watching'.

Finally, nowhere does the Bible say that the Rapture is imminent. Rather, 2 Thess. 2:1-3 tell us very clearly that the gathering, the Rapture, will not occur until after the apostasy occurs and the Man Of Lawlessness is revealed. This makes it very plain that the Rapture has never been imminent and will not be until some time after the appearance of the Antichrist. In fact, it will only be imminent after the Cosmic Sign when the sun and moon are darkened, the stars fall and the heavenly bodies are shaken (Matt. 24:29-30). Amen.

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