

Is the rapture near?

I was very tempted to answer this question by simply saying, “I don’t know,” and then welcoming you to contact us if you have any further questions. That would be kind of funny, but not very instructive!



As with most of our “Questions of the Month,” I wish to draw attention to the bigger picture. Our ministry is called “The Starting Point Project,” and many of you are familiar with the phrase’s meaning and our mission statement. If you’re not, I would highly recommend reading our “Question of the Month” from October 2016, entitled, [“What exactly is a Starting Point?”](#)

When God created this universe and everything in it, He not only had a beginning in mind regarding our time here on Earth in its current state, but He had an ending in mind as well. I believe God created us as eternal beings. Part of our existence is spent here on Earth, in a fallen, sin-cursed environment. The remainder will be spent in “eternity,” which will either be with God (which is “eternal life”) or separated from God (which is “eternal death.”) Eternal life will be spent in the environment of a “new heaven” and “new earth,” (Revelation 21:1).

Before this (i.e., the “beginning of eternity”), I believe the Bible teaches there will be a number of events, such as a period of tribulation, the second coming of Jesus Christ, and a thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth. I also believe there will be another event we call the “rapture.” This event seems to describe a time when Christ comes in the air and gathers-up all the Christians who have already died, as well as those who are currently alive, and takes them to heaven. The timing of this event has been debated for years and will not be solved (or even attempted to be solved) by this article. The main views are that the rapture will occur, (a) prior to the 7-year tribulation period, (b) in the middle of the tribulation period, and (c) after the tribulation period.

I happen to heavily favor the “pre-tribulation” view, but that’s largely based on having grown up being taught that view and having done some personal study. I’m somewhat confident, but if it turns out I am wrong, I will shrug my shoulders and say, “Huh!” Here’s the “bigger picture.” No matter what your view is regarding the timing of the rapture, it should not significantly change your primary focus, which is to evangelize and make disciples! God not only created the world we’re living in; He gave us plenty of evidence that it’s His creation. (See Romans 1:20.) He also told us a fair amount about how He created it, when He created it, and what happened to it (i.e., how it got corrupted). (See Genesis 1-3.) Just as there was a definite beginning, there will be a definite end (before God restores all things to a perfect condition again and “eternity” begins).

So, are we living in the “last days?” Is the rapture near? To the first question, I would fairly confidently answer, “Yes.” To the second, I would answer, “Definitely maybe!”

Question of the Month

What events must occur before the rapture happens? None! The rapture is what we call an “imminent event,” meaning it could happen at any time. It could be 2 seconds from now, 2 minutes, 2 years, or much longer. My sense from studying Scripture is it’s more likely to occur sooner than later. More specifically, I wouldn’t be surprised at all if it happened immediately or in the next few years, but I would be very surprised if it were another 75 or 100 years from now, or even longer. Those are just my thoughts.

When non-Christians begin to see how much evidence there is for the accuracy of the Bible when it comes to origins (i.e., the beginning of life and the universe), they become very curious as to what else the Bible might have to say about other very important “worldview” questions, such as, “Why are we here?” and “What happens to us when we die?” These worldview questions will naturally lead to discussions regarding God’s plan for final judgment on sin and what eternity is all about. Hebrews 9:27 states, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” How will we be judged? What criteria will God use?

Everyone wonders what will happen to them when they die. Christians can be very confident (and enthusiastic) about what will happen to them personally, but everyone else struggles with their response. Some, for various reasons, feel they are doomed because of how bad of a person they view themselves to be. Most others have set up a standard in their minds that grants them access to heaven based on their own merits. They might not be extremely confident, but thinking that way gives them some level of peace. Because of the level of uncertainty, however, most non-Christians don’t think about their eternal destiny very deeply or very often, because it can be fairly unsettling. Furthermore, they believe no one can really know for sure. They reason that everyone just has to do the “best they can,” and “God knows their heart.”

The problem is that God DOES know our hearts, and even “doing our best” is like “filthy rags” to God. (See Isaiah 64:6) Jesus is our only hope (John 14:6), and just as He created all things (Colossians 1:16) and came once to die for the sins of the world (John 3:16), He is also coming again to judge the world (Revelation 19:11-16). We should not only be “looking and waiting for His return, but we should also be making the best use of the time we still have (however short it might be) to share the Gospel with as many as possible.

As the world around us seems to be turning upside-down, we need more than ever to be a “light in the darkness,” as we share the reason for the hope we have in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:15)!

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to [contact us!](#)