

"THE BOOK, THE BLOOD & THE BLESSED HOPE"

TEXT: Titus 2:13

INTRO.: A. The Devil has an all-out assault on sound doctrine in these last days, especially against the 3 foundational doctrines we are studying: **"THE BOOK, THE BLOOD & THE BLESSED HOPE."** The attack against "The Book" is unrelenting & ongoing. Version after version is produced w/little resemblance to the Traditional Texts of Scripture in many instances. "The Blood" is under attack by such heretics as R.B. Thieme & John MacArthur and their neo-evangelical followers. (It is interesting that those on the other side of these issues disclaim fundamentalism!) Then there is the doctrine of "The Blessed Hope" or the Rapture of the Church. Here, even those formerly recognized as fundamentalists, are saying that the Church may have to go through at least part, or all of the Tribulation. Definitely NOT the traditional, historic or biblical view.

B. Thus the purpose of this series on these foundational doctrines is to reacquaint believers with the scriptural arguments in favor of the historic position of the Church regarding these crucial matters.

I. THE BLESSED BOOK:

II. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD:

III. THE BLESSED HOPE:

NOTE: There are several views in vogue concerning the Rapture. *The Partial Rapture Theory* suggest that some believers will be caught up at the Rapture & others left behind. The idea is to separate spiritual Christians from carnal Christians. The idea here is that the Tribulation is kind of a "Protestant Purgatory" which will purge out the sins of the carnal believer. The problem is that ALL believers are cleansed by the blood of Christ & are automatically & perpetually ready for heaven. **(Heb.10:17)**

Another view of the Rapture is the so-called **"Mid-Trib. Rapture"** which teaches that the Church will go through part of the Tribulation & will be caught out later. The most recent revival of this heresy is called **"The Pre-Wrath Rapture"** & Marv Rosenthal is the most vocal spokesman & guru for this position. (Unfortunately Dr. Roland Rasmussen (former Pre-Trib fundamentalist) has also espoused this view, along with some formerly Pre-Trib. Rapturists "fundamentalists.")

Then there is the "majority view" called the **"Post Trib Rapture,"** which teaches that the Church will go through all of the Trib. & then be caught up to heaven. Most Amillennial, Protestant churches believe this view (*that's why it's the "majority view."* *Most fundamental churches are Pre-Trib Rapturists!*) **WE ARE PRE-TRIB RAPTURISTS!** That simply means that we believe that the Rapture could happen at any moment & **will occur BEFORE the Tribulation!**

A. The Rapture Is 'Imminent': (Any Moment)

1. Our Text Teaches It!

Titus 2:13 Looking for that ***blessed hope***, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

ILLUS.: Any other position would not be worthy of the designation **"THE BLESSED HOPE!"** What would be "Blessed" about going through any part of the Tribulation?! What are YOU looking for?!

2. The Scriptures Declare It:

1 Thes.4:13-17 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

- a. Paul closed this passage with the words **"comfort one another w/these words"**; there would be little comfort if believers had to look forward to the Tribulation.
- b. Paul himself was looking forward to the Rapture: **"we which are alive and remain..."**

2 Thes.2:1-3 *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

- c. Paul teaches that "a falling away" would precede the coming of the Antichrist & the Tribulation.

- d. Someone in Thessalonica had taught the believers that the great Trib. was already present & that they had been left behind, since neither even (above) had taken place, he assures them they had nothing to fear.

3. The Nature of The Tribulation Demands It:

- a. The Tribulation is the **"time of Jacob's trouble"** i.e., it is specifically to punish Israel for rejecting Christ, & to punish the Gentile nations for their treatment of Israel.
- b. The Tribulation is a time of wrath, judgment, indignation, destruction & death, but the believer has a promise that he is under **"no condemnation"** (judgment), but is under the blood, with all sins forgiven.
- c. The Church has been cleansed, purchased & set apart to the Savior.
- 4. The Church cannot go thru the 1st part of the Trib. because both parts times of judgment.
- e. God is not going to set aside the blood of Christ & use the fires of judgment as His cleansing agent.
- f.

Rev.3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

1 Thes.1:10 *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

4. The Lack of Signs Given for The Rapture Implies It:

Titus 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

1 Thes.5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

1 Thes.5:9 *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

- a. The Church is commanded to look for the coming Savior, not for signs.
- b. Since the Church will not go thru the Trib. it needs no signs.

B. The Rapture Is Inspirational: (Motivates)

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

1. It Motivates to Godly Living:

ILLUS.: The Pre-Trib. Rapturist's position that the Rapture is imminent helps him to be conscious of his lifestyle, that it remains pleasing to the Lord at all times.

2. It Motivates to Good Works:

ILLUS.: Knowing that the Rapture is followed by the Judgment Seat of Christ believers are motivated to work for the rewards Christ will give when we meet Him.

3. It Motivates to Soul Winning:

2 Cor.5:10-11 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*

ILLUS.: An NFL coach was asked if he held out incentives to his players in order to get up for the game. He said: "Oh, no, they're pros, they know what they're supposed to do." The next season was their worst in the NFL & the coach was looking for another job.

The Imminent Rapture is our incentive to stay at the business of holy living, good works & soul-winning.

CONCL.: A question needs to be asked of believers in the light of the Rapture: ***What on earth are you doing for heaven's sake?!***