



### ***The End Times Ostrich Syndrome***

*"Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come...Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'" — Mark 13:33-37*

*"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door. — Mark 13:28-29*

The first reference above is a favorite quote employed by some in a similar way to putting one's fingers in their ears and blabbering loudly so as to halt any discussion on the End Times, particularly when it comes to the Rapture. There are those who hold to the notion that because of the one truth, *"But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone"*, (Mk. 13:32) they can lift the verses following in Mark 13:33-37 out of the whole context of the Olivet Discourse and declare that there can be no discussion about the timing of the Rapture. In many cases, what is worse, they use this as an excuse to ignore any other aspect of what is predicted to come in the Last Days. Some seem to carry over the assumption that because no one can set their alarm clock to the precise day and time, therefore no one can know for certain anything else either. This is what I call, "The End Times Ostrich Syndrome". In their refusal to discuss the timing of the Rapture, contrary to Christ's direct teaching they are unwilling to even look at all the other things involved with His return. To be certain, the Rapture is an important milestone, but it is actually only one of many.

Jesus personally provided a host of things to look for in anticipation of His return, and indicates that although we may not know *"that day or hour"*, He unequivocally bestows on us the responsibility to recognize the *season* of its nearness. In Mark's account of Christ's discourse, Jesus specifically says not to be misled, be on guard and to take heed

***"Who Can Understand God's Prophetic Plan", Page 1 of 6***

over and over and over again. The Olivet Discourse can be viewed as a prolific check list of indicators so that we can know *“He is near, right at the door”*. I can understand someone not wanting to engage in a marathon seminar trying to predict the day and the hour of the Rapture; I absolutely agree with that. But does it follow that because we cannot know the specificity of the one thing, that we therefore cannot pursue the understanding of any of the other things connected to the Last Days? And what about the situation where one of those other things is being misinterpreted *because* of a particular Rapture view?

There is an unfortunate tragedy in the way we name each eschatological proposal, using the general timing of the Rapture as the primary label. All one needs to do is mention “Pre-Tribulation”, “Mid-Tribulation”, “Post-Tribulation” and/or “Pre-Wrath” and our attention is instantly drawn to what each of those positions propose regarding the timing of the Rapture. To the casual observer everything else is incidental. Although this may be a defining difference between eschatologies, it most certainly is *not* the only item of disagreement. If you think that the timing of the Rapture is the only thing that distinguishes these interpretations from each other, with all due respect, lift up your head and take a better look.

This becomes apparent with nearly any book or website dedicated to a particular eschatology. There is quite a laundry list of differences which go far beyond just the timing of the Rapture, and this is my concern when we feel we have to pick and choose which of these labels best suits us. Authors and speakers may assign the largest and most prominent space to their belief as to the timing of the Rapture, but they inevitably address things such as the Antichrist, the False Prophet, how to define “the day of the Lord”, the ministry of the two witnesses, the role of Israel, the identity of the restrainer in Thessalonians, the Gog and Magog scenario, Armageddon, the identity of the twenty-four elders, and on and on and on the list continues. These schools of thought disagree on a *lot* more than just the timing of the Rapture.

Granted, we will find those identifying themselves with opposing labels who, although they disagree on the timing of the Rapture, do not disagree on each and every subsequent End Times event. But it does beg the question as to why there are so many differences between these views and why there is such varied differences. It may not be true 100% of the time, but the overwhelming cause I have observed in my Christian lifetime is that the timing of the Rapture is given so much more weight over any other

*“Who Can Understand God’s Prophetic Plan”, Page 2 of 6*

event, that even the nicest brother or sister in the Lord interprets *every other* End Time event first and foremost in the shadow of their belief as to the timing of the Rapture. One of the main reasons these eschatologies disagree in so many other areas is they are first and foremost concerned with making sure nothing violates their notion of the timing of the Rapture so that a by-product is that everything else comes in a distant second.

Just as it is with the rest of Scripture, the prophetic portions of God's Word are not a "spin the wheel and decide for yourself" affair. One of the worst Bible study techniques is to do whatever it takes to interpret a Scripture to ensure it does not infringe on one's presupposition of the meaning of another Scripture, doctrine, or idea. In my opinion, this is what has given "eschatology" a bad name for many. And the true treasure that is lost is that because the discussion of the Rapture is so often over-focused on the timing, we do not appreciate what may be the even more important aspect of the theology—the spiritual framework of the event so as to aid in the right determination of that framework for all the other aspects. We need to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture and not filter everything through the presuppositions we bring to our study of God's Word. This is not exclusively a "prophecy" problem; we have to be willing to allow following the itch whenever Scripture appears to be challenging us in *any* area of our faith.

It is not, however, always a subtle difference of interpretation. A scholar whom I know to be a righteous brother in the Lord teaches that Peter's quotation of Joel at Pentecost had nothing whatsoever to actually do with Pentecost. This is an incredible deviation from his record of handling other New Testament passages quoting the Old Testament. Why does he make an exception to his own rules of handling Scripture? It posed a potential conflict to a particular End Times belief he holds. This is the problem when we become more concerned for protecting an "ism" than the integrity of Scripture.

It seems that when it comes to nearly any formal teaching or casual conversation concerning the End Times, I am forced to discuss the timing of the Rapture because that is most often the most potent contributing factor to someone misinterpreting Scripture for one of these *other* milestones. I think it is far more important that we properly learn to identify all the things which tell us to "*straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*". (Lk. 21:28) The day or the hour? No. But "*that He is near, right at the door*"? Absolutely.

["Who Can Understand God's Prophetic Plan", Page 3 of 6](#)

I have and will continue to characterize this as one of Satan's greatest deceptions among the Elect. Like David Copperfield, he has us all looking "over here" to argue about the timing of the Rapture to our neglect of what is actually going on "over there". What is even worse than eschatology acolytes arguing the timing of the Rapture to the exclusion of everything else is the effect upon those who feign deafness to the whole subject. "**They** don't know...**nobody** knows...**no one** can know...don't bother me". The true tragedy is that over-realizing the timing of the Rapture has led many to forgo all the rest. Do you see how this actually works in tandem to destroy the core of the Rapture? No one can guess the day or the hour, so we do not even bother with all the events Christ *told* us to look for which would prove *how near* the day and hour actually is! We are *supposed* to be quite certain about a specific list of things leading up to the Rapture, but because we are loathe to discuss the Rapture (or that is the only thing we are consumed with—*both* extremes are dangerous), we end up being disobedient to the things Christ says we *should* know.

This can be an issue with almost any aspect of God's Word whether or not it is specifically an item of prophetic significance. Sometimes the human tendency is to superimpose our predispositions on the text and it is necessary to deal with that presupposition. The world indoctrinated us with its definitions of words like "love", "faith", "grace" and so forth, and God's Word re-educates us to instead understand and employ such terms according to *His* definition. But as tedious as this can be at times, it is more preferable than dealing with those who stick their head in the ground and refuse to participate because they have declared everything to be relative and subjective. We can agree to disagree on many things which the Holy Spirit has yet to reveal to us, but *everything*? We cannot know *any* of it? *Everything* is subjective?

I did not always hold to my current viewpoint where the Rapture and many other End Times events are concerned. I suppose my pride was no small factor when I made an outrageous statement to the Lord to the effect that I was throwing out all my books and commentaries and going to depend solely on the Holy Spirit to use God's Word alone to interpret God's Word. I am happy to also say that since that time I have come across other dear brothers and sisters in Christ who went through the very same experience and, independent of each other, have come to many of the same conclusions. I am not proclaiming some unique ability or special mental prowess; I am talking about jettisoning presuppositions and personal prejudice. I know how difficult this is because,

["Who Can Understand God's Prophetic Plan", Page 4 of 6](#)

like an alcoholic who needs to stay away from the sauce, it is a daily battle for me to not go back. It is an exercise in faith to place a greater trust in God's Word than in my own inclinations. It is personally comforting to have heard this repeated testimony time and again from others.

One prominent deception that is being perpetrated among the Elect is to make the Rapture the near total focus of End Times discussions; another is to assume because the Rapture cannot be accurately predicted that nothing else can either. We have those who will not entertain Scripture's pull toward an alternative interpretation of an End Times event because it seems to violate their presupposition of the timing of the Rapture, and those who ignore these things altogether. Am I speaking heresy by suggesting that **both** are in danger?

No one's position on the timing of the Rapture is going to be the reason why someone goes to heaven or hell. One brother says it will happen Monday, another says Friday, and even though He actually comes on Wednesday, both are going to be included. Why does there seem to be either an overly passionate fixation or a complete indifference? Because, my friend, this is one of Satan's most brilliant deceptions. Instead of focusing on things as Christ articulated them, we are either greatly diminishing our sensitivity to them or ignoring them completely. What should be our passion for rightly dividing the whole Word of God is being marginalized or in some cases neutralized, and the effect extends far beyond just our position on the Rapture.

Jacob Prasch of Moriel Ministries is writing his own book, not because he wants to create a new "ism", but for the very reasons I have raised here. Most of the holders of these views get various things right—it is rare to find someone completely wrong about everything, but there is an inherent confusion when truth is laid side-by-side with error. Yes, the timing of the Rapture will have to be addressed, but more so because, as previously stated, it is the primary presupposition influencing eschatology. This may be difficult, but one scriptural truth—no matter how important a place we assign it—cannot cancel out another. That would be a violation of God's very character. I wish we could get away from initiating discussions with statements like, "Well, Pre-Tribulationism says...", and "Pre-Wrath holds the position that...", and instead begin with, "This is what Scripture appears to teach..." The elevation of the "isms" on the one hand drowns out the whole truth, while the ear-in-the-finger crowd refuses to listen on

["Who Can Understand God's Prophetic Plan", Page 5 of 6](#)

the other. May the Lord return to find us faithful to pursue what He instructed in the first place. There are many other things we are supposed to be prepared for.

*“Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” — Luke 21:34-36*

In Him,

[Servant@WalkWithTheWord.org](mailto:Servant@WalkWithTheWord.org)