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DID YOU MISS THE RAPTURE?

The doctrine of the Rapture that says that **“Jesus is coming in the clouds to take up saved Christians to Heaven for 7 years and then return to Earth to set up His kingdom”** is nowhere taught in the scriptures. All of the scriptures that are used to teach this doctrine such as 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1st Corinthians 15:51-58 are talking about Christ’s 2nd coming at the end of the world and not a **“secret catching away in the clouds”** as many people believe. This means that no one missed the Rapture because there is not going to be a Rapture. 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 isn’t talking about something that is a secret, but the **“...Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...”** It furthermore says we will **“...meet the Lord in the air, and in the clouds, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”** This does not allow for a return to Earth 7 years later. And by the way, when Jesus returns the **“...the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”** (2nd Peter 3:10) There will not be a planet earth for anyone to come back to after 7 years. The Rapture is a false doctrine that gives people a false hope.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S BIBLE QUESTIONS:

Haggai is the prophet that admonished the Jews for "*dwelling in their ceiled houses*" while the "*Lord's house was lying waste.*" (Haggai 1:1-9)

Stephen was the first individual to perform miracles besides the Apostles after the church had been established. He received his power from the Lord through the "*laying on of Apostles' hands.*" (Acts 6:1-8)

QUESTIONS FOR THIS MONTH:

How old were Abraham and Sarah when their son Isaac was born?

Name two individuals that were baptized by Paul?

SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH!

Salvation comes through the "**grace of God.**" Titus 2:11 says, "***For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.***" Thus all mankind has the opportunity to be saved. But salvation does not come by grace alone for the scriptures also say the following in Ephesians 2:8: "***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.***" Grace expresses God's part in man's salvation; faith expresses man's part in his salvation. The grace of God is explained in Romans 5:8 that says: "***But God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***" Man's faith is expressed in his "**obedience to God's commands.**" Paul says that the gospel of Christ was "***made know to all nations for the obedience of faith.***" (Romans 16:26) Just as "**salvation does not come by grace alone, so it does not come by faith alone either.**" It is "**by grace through faith.**" A faith without obedience is a useless faith. This is the lesson that James teaches us in James 2:14-26. Furthermore, Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 that "***Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.***" Do you have an "**obedient faith?**" Without an "**obedient faith**" God's grace will do you no good whatsoever!

WHAT CAN WASH AWAY MY SINS?

The answer to this question is **“Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”** Listen to this statement found in Hebrews 9:22: **“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”** As Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper in Matthew 26:26-29, He made the following statement: **“...For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”** And so it is clear that our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus. The question remains however as to when the blood of Jesus washes away our sins. Some people say at the point of faith in Christ a person’s sins are forgiven or remitted. But the Bible clearly teaches us that it is when a person is **“baptized into the death of Christ, which is where Jesus shed His blood,”** that our sins are washed away. This is what you learn from Revelations 1:5 which says, **“...Now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,”** and from Acts 22:16 where Ananias told Saul that he needed to **“Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”** It is significant to understand that when a person is baptized into Christ, he or she is **“added to the church of the Lord”** according to Acts 2:47. According to Acts 20:28, the church was **“purchased by the blood of Jesus.”** Therefore when a person is baptized into the death of Christ where His blood was shed, he or she is **“purchased by the blood of Christ”** at the same time their **“sins are washed away.”** Furthermore the Apostle Peter tells us that we are **“...redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish...”** (1st Peter 1:18-20) Even when we sin as Christians it takes the **“blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our sins.”** (1st John 1:7-9)

If you have ever wondered why churches of Christ teach, **“baptism is essential to salvation”**, now you know why. It is in the act of **“baptism into the death of Christ where His blood was shed”** that God in Heaven forgives us from our sins because of the death of His only begotten Son! (Colossians 2:12-14/Romans 6:3-5 and verses 16-18) **HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED INTO THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST?** If not, then you are still in your sins and in an unsaved condition! Don’t wait until it’s too late to obey!