

Discovery Hour  
E100, Week 18  
May 8, 2010  
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The set of passages this week made it very hard to choose which of the passages to focus on. Nearly all five of the passages seemed to be ripe for discussion but of course we can't do that. As such, I whittled it down to two.

1 Thessalonians focuses on the return of Christ and what is typically referred to as the rapture, though there is no single word for this event in scripture. This passage is one of the most extensive treatments we have on the second coming of Christ. There are differing views on when this event will take place. Pre-millennialists believe Christ will return prior to the inauguration of the thousand year reign spoken of in Revelation 20. They tend to see the world as growing more and more wicked, leading to the tribulation, and the return of Christ to establish his reign. Post-millennialists believe Christ will not return until the end of the thousand year reign and so tend to see the world as becoming more and more Christian, with the tribulation at the end. This leads to a more optimistic view of human society and, some would say, historically the push for the social gospel as the sooner Christ's kingdom is ushered in here on this earth the sooner he will return.

Related to these views are perspectives on when Christ's return will take place relative to the Great Tribulation. Pre-tribulationist see Christ's return taking place prior to the tribulation and would see this particularly in this 1 Thessalonians passage and Christ's words in Matthew 24:36, which seem to indicate that it will happen without prior warning. However, Christ's words in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 make it seem that believers will suffer through the tribulation, thus favoring a post-tribulationist view.

A second passage that particularly interested me was the 1 Timothy passage where Paul explains that scripture is God-breathed. God chose to reveal himself in a number of ways beginning with his interactions with Adam and Eve, Abraham, Noah, and many others. Then we see him revealing himself through the prophets over several hundred years and then in the form of a man, Jesus, who was both divine and human. Interestingly, scripture has this same feature in that even as Paul describes it as "God-breathed," was written by men. An important related passage on this is 2 Peter 1:20-21.

### Discussion Questions

1. Does it make any difference what view one takes on the second coming of Christ? Do Christians need to "have a view" on this?
2. Sermons and films that reference the second coming of Christ and the rapture have been popular evangelistic tools and we may even have to say that they have worked, should we do more with it to reach others?
3. Why did not God just send down a completed book, published on his end, and then we could just make as many copies as we needed here? Why work through human writers?