

Imminency

By Scott Huckaby
6/2/2024



For Discussion: Why Knowing The Imminency Of The Rapture Is So Critical For Believers
harbingersdaily.com, 4/8/2024)

Why Knowing The Imminency Of The Rapture Is So Critical For Believers

Imminency. It tells us we live on the edge of eternity. The Rapture might happen at any moment. However, as the moments become days and then weeks, months, and years, we struggle to maintain our eager anticipation of Jesus's appearing. Many of us wonder how much closer we will get to the start of the Tribulation before He comes for us. We see so many biblical signs of the end times and yet we wait and wait. I know it's not easy, not at all.

<https://harbingersdaily.com/why-knowing-the-imminency-of-the-rapture-is-so-critical-for-believers/>

What is the doctrine of imminency?

The Rapture might happen at any moment. It tells us we live on the edge of eternity.

Is the doctrine of imminency an essential?

No, it is not a matter of salvation whether you believe it or not, but it is very important aspect of our walk with the Savior.

What does *at hand* have to say about the expectation of New Testament saints?

James 5:8 – *For the coming of the Lord is at hand*
If the *coming of the Lord is at hand*, it is something that could happen at any time. There is nothing that has to happen before the Rapture of the church.

What does *eagerly waiting* have to say about the expectation of New Testament saints?

Philippians 3:20 – *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*
If we are eagerly waiting, we are expecting the Lord to appear for us at any time. We are not eagerly waiting if we expect something else has to happen before the Rapture. ...see also 1 Corinthians 1:7

What did Paul expect regarding the Rapture?

1 Thessalonians 4:17 – *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

Paul expected to be among those living who would be transformed into a glorified body not having to die. That means, he believed in imminency.

...see also 1 Corinthians 15:52

How can the Rapture be comforting if there is any portion of the Tribulation that has to happen first?

1 Thessalonians 4:17-18 – *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

If any portion of the Tribulation has to happen before the Rapture, it would not be imminent and not at all comforting. Indeed, instead of looking for the Lord Jesus to appear for us at any moment, it would put Christians in the dubious position of watching for the Antichrist contrary to the command of Jesus...

Matthew 24:42 – *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

How does imminency result in a closer walk with Jesus?

1 John 2:28 – *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

What's the encouragement here for continuing to "abide" in Jesus? It's the awareness that at any second we might find ourselves into the presence of our righteous Saviour. Does this not motivate us to promptly deal with bitterness, unforgiveness, anger, and other sins rather than let them gain a foothold in us?

1 John 3:2-3 – *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

John writes that a focus on Jesus appearing produces greater purity in us. The recognition that Jesus might come for us at any moment keeps us close to the Savior and quickly brings us back to Him when we stray.

How does imminency help us maintain an eternal perspective?

Proverbs 27:1 – *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.*

The awareness that the Rapture might occur at any moment sets our hopes on eternal realities as nothing else can.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 – *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Another benefit of living with a sense of imminency is that it puts our service for the Lord in a proper perspective.

There's no better cure from adapting the world's standards of success than the desire to hear these words in the near future: *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."*

Does the doctrine of imminency mean we should check out of society to sit on top of a mountain looking for the Lord to return?

No...

Luke 19:13 – *So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'*

So, we have a paradox... we are to do both, watch and continue on as if the Lord is not returning right away.

What is a paradox?

A paradox is a seeming contradiction that, when properly understood, may prove true.

Are paradoxes biblical?

The Bible uses paradox at times to explore the full scope and nuance of truth. One of the most famous paradoxes in the Bible is the teaching that God is triune: there is one God who eternally exists in three Persons.

What are some examples of paradox in the Bible?

2 Corinthians 6:8-10 – *"We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything"* (ESV).

Matthew 10:39 – *"Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it"* (see also Matthew 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 17:33; John 12:25).

Philippians 3:7 – *"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ"* (ESV).

Matthew 23:11 – *"The greatest among you will be your servant."*

2 Corinthians 12:10 – *"When I am weak, then I am strong."*

Each of these paradoxes is meant to contrast an earthly view with a heavenly view. There is a difference between our material situation and our spiritual reality, although we experience both at the same time.

"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself" (Proverbs 26:4, ESV) seems to be contradicted in the next verse: *"Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes"* (Proverbs 26:5, ESV). It's up to the reader to discern the meaning of these instructions and solve the paradox.

Other examples of paradox in the Bible are found in separate passages that seem to teach opposing ideas:

"For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law" (Romans 3:28, ESV) vs. *"You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone"* (James 2:24, ESV).

"I did not come to judge the world" (John 12:47) vs. *"For judgment I have come into this world"* (John 9:39).

"The way is hard that leads to life" (Matthew 7:14, ESV) vs. *"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:30).

"Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1, ESV) vs. *"Judge with right judgment"* (John 7:24, ESV).

One of the most perplexing paradoxes in the Bible concerns the interplay of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. We see this in the matter of salvation: John 1:12 says, *"To those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"*; but then John 1:13 describes those children as *"born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."* So, which is it? One verse says that we must believe to be saved, and the next verse says it's not our decision, but God's. It's a paradox, but both verses are true.

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- New Testament saints believed in imminency; we should too.
- Imminency results in comfort, a closer walk with Jesus and an eternal perspective.
- Watching & doing business is a paradox, embrace both!