

April 4, 1949

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As we begin today I want to mention two or three considerations, not so much for acceptance as for consideration, but I don't know how fully we can go into these particular things right now. First, a reiteration that we have already noticed that we must be very, very careful in our study of any doctrinal point or any point of prophecy to avoid the error of assuming that a thing is a technical term which always must refer to one thing. It may be, but it has to be proven. It cannot be taken for granted. We found that there was a rapture of Enoch in the Old Testament. There was a rapture of Elijah. I think properly we could say there was a rapture of Christ. He surely was snatched away by divine power even if the picture is one of a slow going up rather than a rapid going up; in fact, I am not sure that we are necessarily told that the going up was extremely rapid in Thessalonians. I don't think the snatching away refers to the rate of going but to the fact of its being supernatural power that carries one up, and surely that was the case in the rapture of Enoch and the rapture of Elijah, in the rapture of Christ, and so there is to be a rapture which will doubtless be something that will take in a very great number of people but we cannot simply assume that this means that no one who was ever saved or ever will be saved fails to be included in this particular rapture. We cannot assume that unless it is so stated, but certainly the impression is given that this rapture includes at least the great bulk of those who are to be saved at any particular time. Now another thing that we must--we must not assume, then, that a thing--there is one particular instant at which a thing occurs. A thing may occur in one particular instance; it may be a process that extends over a period of time and we are interested in evidence in order to give us definite ideas as to whether one or the other of these is the case. We speak of the coming of Christ; His coming to this earth. To what time do you refer? Do you refer to that time when the Holy Spirit caused the body of Christ to begin to grow in the virgin Mary--to the conception of Christ? Was that the instant at which He came to this earth?