

all references are from the King James Version of the Bible.

# THE "RAPTURE THEORY" —TRUE OR FALSE?

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Many people have asked me, "Why are you against the rapture? Why does it matter to you if someone believes in it or not?" My answer to these questions is that I believe the "rapture theory" is a false doctrine which is one of Satan's greatest deceptions of the last days. It is deceiving millions of innocent people who await the second coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; and it will take many of them to their deaths—both spiritually and physically. What greater deception could Satan devise than to convince people that Christ is going to come before His true time? They will be easy prey for the Antichrist and his false prophet who will deceive many with great signs and wonders. Believers in this theory will be as sheep going to the slaughter—so we must not be caught in the lies about the rapture.

Not realizing its true origins, most Christians just assume that the rapture is found and taught in the New Testament of the Bible. It is not. Rather, it started in early 1830 in Port Glasgow, Scotland, when a fifteen-year-old girl named Margaret Macdonald had what she believed was a revelation. She declared that a "select group of Christians would be caught up to meet Christ in the air before the days of Antichrist" (Dave MacPherson, *The Incredible Cover-up*, Omega Publications, 1980, p. 93). She shared this "prophetic" utterance with many other people, and quickly the new and false doctrine spread. Only a few months later this theory was embraced as doctrine by the Brethren movement and published in their September, 1830, issue of *The Morning Watch*. It soon was accepted by thousands of people, and today it is an established and unquestioned doctrine for many unsuspecting Christians.

Two of the most quoted scriptures that the teachers of the rapture use are from the New Testament of the Bible. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in

one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke 17:34-36; see also Matthew 24:40-41).

Using these two scriptures, advocates of the rapture theory declare that all born-again Christians are going to be caught up bodily in the clouds and taken to heaven, returning to the earth with Christ after the tribulation period is over. But that is *not* what the Scriptures say!

There is not one word in the Scriptures that says the Lord will catch up His people to heaven to escape the tribulations of the last days. In fact, the Bible declares the exact opposite. Instead of escaping the tribulations of the last days, many of God's people are going to be overcome by the Antichrist, and many are going to be hunted down and killed for the gospel's sake. John the revelator tells about the Antichrist and his beast: "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:7). Although many ministers believe this passage refers to the apostasy of the Dark Ages, it is clear that it also refers to the Saints in the last days when the Antichrist will be a strong world power.

If you believe that God's people will all escape the tribulations of the last days, consider these words from Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, *that should be killed as they were*, should be fulfilled." Many of God's people will be upon the earth during the time the Antichrist rules the earth, and the Antichrist will make war against the Saints of God. Therefore, God's people can not have already been

caught up to heaven.

Other scriptures are in agreement. John writes, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:12-13).

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). If God's people are going to be raptured and taken to heaven, why are they being called out of the wickedness of Babylon?

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:4-5).

Teachers of the rapture theory apparently do not read *these* scriptures to their congregations. Evidently they do not want them to hear these words, for they clearly indicate that God's people are not going to escape the Antichrist and the tribulations of the last days. When Christ's disciples came to Him on the Mount of Olives, they asked Him, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3).

Christ said to them: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.... But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:9, 13). If God's people are going to escape the tribulations of the last days, why did Christ warn them that some of them would be "afflicted and killed"? He said nothing about anyone escaping the tribulation by being caught up to heaven.

In fact, many times Christ declared that "you must endure unto the end"—the exact opposite of what the preachers of the rapture are declaring. The Scriptures clearly show that being caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord will take place *when He returns at the time of the first resurrection*, which will not occur until after the tribulations of the last days are over. Jesus Himself declared, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man

in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29-31).

Notice the time sequence. Christ declared, "Immediately after the tribulation"—not before, not during, but "immediately after." Verses 30 and 31 refer to the twelve tribes of Israel and the gathering of Christ's elect, again showing that they would be upon the earth during the tribulation of the last days.

Christ's words continue, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:36-39; see also Mark 13:24-27).

In the days of Noe (Noah), all the wicked people on the earth were destroyed in the flood. Christ says it will be like that once again. He saved Noah and his family by directing them to build an ark. In the last days, God has a plan by which His people will escape the fire and brimstone from heaven that will destroy the wicked on earth. This is revealed in the words of Christ found in Luke 17:26-36:

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.

"Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

When Jesus Christ—the Son of Man—is revealed, it will rain fire and brimstone from heaven and will destroy the wicked as in the days of Lot. But the Lord will preserve His people.

I have heard many proponents of the rapture theory

declare that the Lord will come as a thief in the night and take the righteous to heaven—that when the rest of the people in the world wake up, they will wonder where God's people went. For those who trust this make-believe story, I suggest that they read the following scripture:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which 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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13). I do not believe anyone on the earth is going to sleep through this event.

Over and over the Scriptures declare that Christ is not going to return and gather the elect until *after* the tribulations are over. Christ will *not* return until "*after* the working of Satan." "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God...."

"And then shall that Wicked [the Antichrist] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-10).

In these verses, several major events are spoken of. The first is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the gathering together of His Saints to Him at the time of His ministry on the earth. After a falling away (the apostasy of the Church), the Antichrist will declare himself to be God and sit in the temple of God. Then the Lord will consume the wicked at His glory coming, Whose coming is not until "*after* the working of Satan."

At my place of employment, a young Protestant minister who advocated the rapture heard that I had spoken out against the theory; and he insisted on discussing his viewpoints and doctrine at work. For

three or four weeks we discussed our differences whenever we had opportunity. I showed him all the scriptures in this article and a few more. Finally he admitted that God's people were not going to escape the Antichrist and the tribulations of the last days. Apparently this young man's discovery shocked some of his brethren. A few days later the young preacher came to me and said that he knew who those Christians are who are going to be killed by the Antichrist and who will have to suffer the tribulations of the last days. He declared that after the rapture takes place, thousands of people will repent and become born-again Christians. He said that because they were not born-again Christians at the time of the rapture, they would have to stay upon the earth and endure the tribulations of the Antichrist.

After hearing this story, I asked him where I could find this great event recorded in the Scriptures. The minister lowered his head, looked down at his feet, and said, "It's not written in the Bible, but this is the way it must be."

I told him that his story sounded really good, but it did not change the Scriptures. They declare that the elect are not gathered until the tribulations are over. I also told him that his story was another fantasy created by Satan. I had heard it before from others who believed in the rapture but who could not explain who the Christians were who are to be killed by the Antichrist—yet still be upon the earth during the tribulations of the last days.

Once again we see another falsehood created and proclaimed by the teachers of the rapture. They can not find one scripture from the Bible that tells about thousands of people witnessing the rapture, repenting, and becoming born-again Christians. They cannot produce one scripture that declares that these Christians are then forced to endure the tribulations of the last days and the Antichrist on the earth. Nor can they find one verse in the Bible which declares that the elect will be caught up unto the clouds before the tribulation starts or during the tribulation.

Some of these same preachers state that the elect will remain in heaven until the tribulations on earth are over, and then they will return to the earth with Christ for His thousand-year reign. There is no scripture in the Bible which confirms that idea. *No such scriptures exist in the Bible!* This is more deception by Satan.

I realize that no matter what is written against the rapture, thousands of people will still stubbornly cling to their belief, blindly turning from the truth. Surely the rapture theory is a great deception perpetrated by Satan against sincere believers and followers of the Lord. They will be totally unprepared for the days of tribulation, thinking that God has rejected and abandoned them and has failed to keep *their interpreta-*

tion of His Word. This is not news. Jesus said that many Christians will turn away from their faith because of the falsehoods they have accepted as truth:

"False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. But in those days, *after that tribulation*, the sun shall be darkened, and the

moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And *then* shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (Mark 13:22-27).

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