

The Rapture Theory

Is it true or false?



by Paul Benson

Should We Trust THE RAPTURE THEORY? by Paul Benson
Copyright © 2016

All Rights Reserved
First Printing 2016

Printed in the United States of America by *True Witness Press*

All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. The inspired and preserved Word of God.

This publication may be reproduced in part or whole for purposes of free distribution, or excerpts for review or quotation. The copyright is merely a safeguard against improper usage.

This book is also available in E-book format
website: www.paulbenson.me

This book is **free** as the Lord provides.

For additional copies please contact:

Paul Benson

P. O. Box 5519

Kalispell, Montana 59903

The Rapture Theory

PREFACE

The promise of the Resurrection of the Dead and the 'catching away' of the Church is at the very heart of our Christian faith. It is our blessed hope which the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross has purchased for us. Teaching on this amazing promise Paul wrote that we should 'comfort one another with these words'. I hope you know the peace and comfort received from a confidence in our future joining together with Jesus to live forever as the Redeemed.

The purpose of these writings is not to discourage folk from looking for the 'catching away' of the Church, but to encourage them to look for it in a fashion and time-frame which is in accord with the truth of the Scriptures; and not be turned aside to follow any of the deceptive teachings which have grown so prevalent in our generation.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 2 Timothy 3:13

The Scriptures foretold of a progressive increase in the warfare against the Church in the area of false doctrine, There have always been falsehoods trying to seduce the Church. Even from the first century the Gnostics, Nicolaitanes, and money hungry Balaams were at work to pollute the beliefs of the early Church.

The Rapture Theory

But whereas in those days the watchmen were fighting at the wall to keep the enemy out, in our day the battle rages on the streets of a city whose walls have crumbled from neglect. And these defenders of the truth must now contend with not just the enemy, but with many who have been so inundated with falsehood they now wage war against their own watchmen, and against the very truth itself.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2 Timothy 3:16

Paul told Timothy the Scriptures were for, among other things, administering correction. My aim in writing this booklet is not so much to win others over to my doctrinal view-point; but that they would adopt a pattern of critical examination of what is preached and taught, and effective study habits which root out error and put it to flight. It is my hope people would realize how deceived we have been by the teachings of man; and thus be convinced of the need to embrace the corrective apparatus of proper Bible study; looking for the true meaning of verses of Scripture through studying them in the passages of their origin. I believe this will ultimately lead to a similar belief structure as I have; for that has been the source of mine. And so much better to get there on efforts of your own, and not just because of what others have taught. I am definitely fallible; but God's Word is not.

We need to verify whether people are preaching the same meaning for Bible verses as what you get reading them in context. This practice of critical appraisal destroys the majority of false teaching; and will prove to be a valuable defense.

'Proof texts' that are snippets of Scripture taken out of context are the basic building blocks of all pseudo-Christian false teaching. And these false teachings are not only damaging and defiling, but also divisive.

The introduction of the rapture theory into the belief system of the Body of Christ in the 1800's, and its rise to extraordinary popularity in the last 6 to 8 decades, has produced a schism among us. A unified belief in proper doctrine concerning end-time events would help heal that damage. It is toward that end I write these words.

Paul Benson

The Rapture Theory

INTRODUCTION

I can't help but notice a trend in today's preaching that does not mirror a ratio of emphasis we see in the Bible. What I mean by that is: How many times do the Scriptures mention the 'catching away' of the Church? Not many. One clear description we find in 1Thessalonians 4 and a few references to it elsewhere. But the coming Resurrection of the Dead and the transformation of the living Saints, which is going to be such an indescribably awesome phenomenon, is either vividly described or plainly referred to dozens of times in the Bible. It is a theme thoroughly woven into the fabric of Scripture.

How old is the teaching of the coming Resurrection of the Dead? Many claim Job to be possibly the earliest writings of the Scriptures; even he spoke of the event:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.
Job 19:25-26

Throughout the books of the Bible we see people speaking of their hope of the Resurrection. Martha said she knew her brother Lazarus would rise someday:

...Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. John 11:24

Paul cited the hope of the Resurrection:

...Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day. Acts 24:21

The Pharisees trying to trap Jesus in his words asked:

In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them?... Mark 12:23

Jesus spoke often of the blessedness of those who will be counted worthy of the Resurrection:

The Rapture Theory

...for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Luke 14:14

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; John 5:29

David voiced his hope in the Resurrection:

...For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Psalm 16:9-10

Isaiah joins the crowd marveling at this wonderful promise:

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Isaiah 26:19

But not one of these people, or any others in the Bible, referred to their 'blessed hope' as that short trip from earth to the clouds known as the 'Rapture', 'Harpazo', 'catching away', or whatever you want to name it. Their hope was in, and their focus upon, the Resurrection of the Dead. Other than its popularized mention in 1Thessalonians 4 where do you see in the Bible any notable emphasis placed on the 'catching away'? I surely do not.

So I ask again, why all this modern day focus on the 'caught up to meet him' aspect of Christ's Coming? Does the Bible put *any* emphasis there? If you stop and think about it the 'caught away' part of what we experience that day is relatively minor compared to the Resurrection aspect. How did things get so turned around to the point where a brief journey from earth to the clouds overshadows what transpires in the Resurrection? The dead awake with the image of Christ. The mortal has put on immortality (1Corinthians 15:54). No more sickness, disease, or dying! We've carried the earnest (down-payment) of our inheritance all these years and now we have the fullness of that promise. We have now entered eternity in a glorified body and death can never touch us. Why minimize that and maximize being carried up into the sky?

I realize rapture folk believe that the Resurrection and the 'catching away' all take place in the same micro-second (a false belief discussed later). But my point is why carry on and on about the catching away and say so very little, or nothing at all, about our resurrection/transformation and what that accomplishes. You might

The Rapture Theory

hear it mentioned in the reading of a text, but the preaching or teaching rarely touches on it. Usually the brunt of the message deals with avoiding the time of great tribulation; which they incorrectly state is the wrath of God (a false notion we will also discuss later).

In all false teaching there is found an appeal to the flesh; some allure or benefit to the carnal nature. I find it telling that the rapture teaching is usually couched in the context of escaping the time of tribulation and the mark of the beast. While the focus there is on escapism and personal well-being, the teachings of the Bible concerning the Resurrection don't carry the same focus. Our anticipation of resurrection centers on *laying aside* concern for your own life to, thru faith in his death on the Cross, follow in the footsteps of Christ; and identify with his sufferings, death, burial, and rising from the dead, in the hope of inheriting eternal life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
Romans 6:5

We'll look a little more at identifying with his sufferings and death later. Let's see if our beliefs fit this Parable of the Tares:

...The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. Matthew 13:28

... the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. Matthew 13:39

The Resurrection of the Just will be God's end of the world harvest of all the fruit his good seed, the Gospel, has produced. Jesus gave the parable of the tares to show us a pattern of the Resurrection. It will follow the pattern of a farmer in those days harvesting his crop. At harvest time they would go through the field and separate the tares (weeds) out from among the wheat so the bad seed would not be mixed with the good when it was reaped. These tares would be tied or bound in bundles and set aside

The Rapture Theory

for later burning. Then the harvest could now take place with the wheat taken away from the field. Later the farmer would return and burn the bound up weeds. That is the pattern given for the end of the world harvest; but the teaching of many on this issue doesn't follow that pattern.

Those promoting the rapture theory say this parable cannot be about the Resurrection of the Just because the tares (they say) are destroyed first then the wheat is harvested so it must be a later judgment. What they miss is the tares are not destroyed first only separated and marked for destruction; (...bind them in bundles). The tares couldn't be burned with the wheat still in the ground, it would destroy the crop! They are not following the pattern.

This pattern fits perfectly with the end-time events. The mark of the beast will identify and separate the tares, sealing their fate, marking them for later destruction. Then the Lord will harvest the wheat, gather us up unto him, and return to burn his field. God's harvest will fit the pattern of the literal harvest or there was no point in giving the parable in the first place. Also the Bible says the harvest is the end of the world. This must take place in conjunction with the Return of Christ which **is** the end. The rapture (they say) does not happen at the end but 7 years before the end; that is out of sync with the parable. It has the wheat harvested before the tares are bound up; and more wheat growing after the harvest: the (so called) tribulation saints and saved Jews!

It is my firm belief the Bible does not teach two 'catching aways' of the Church; one before the great tribulation in addition to the one clearly taught at the Second Coming. Since I do not believe the teachings of a 'pretribulation rapture' are portraying the same event the Bible describes, I will be referring to those teachings as the 'rapture theory'; and the genuine event which transpires at Christ's Return after the tribulation as the 'catching away'.

I will show many examples of why I say the rapture theory is a deceiving and damaging false doctrine; and has been fabricated from Stolen Snippets, Deceiving Distractions, Unbiblical Concepts, and Outright Lies. This is a bold accusation, and will likely offend many, but as they say: "The proof is in the pudding!" I hope you will consider what is written here prayerfully and with an open Bible. May the Holy Spirit guide you into all truth.

CHAPTER ONE

STOLEN SNIPPETS

Unknown to most is the fact a large share of the makeup of the 'rapture theory' is built upon catchy phrases which are bits of verse lifted out of a passage speaking, not of a pretribulational rapture event, but instead of the return of Jesus at his Second Coming. Snippets of Scripture stolen away from their rightful context and deceitfully promoted as Bible verse on the 'rapture'.

Stolen Snippet:

' ...Like a thief in the night...'

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. 2 Peter 3:10

The phrase 'like a thief in the night' is such a pillar in the structure of the rapture theory you will rarely hear a sermon on it where it's not used. Also used as a book and film title, and even as labeling on merchandise, many would be shocked to know this phrase was lifted from the context of the Second Coming and the ensuing wrath. Christ's Return **will** come as a thief in the night!

The Rapture Theory

Anyone who would claim the above passage from the writings of Peter was referring to a pretribulation rapture of the Saints would have some serious problems in the area of reading skills.

And yes I do realize the same phrase is used elsewhere in the Bible; let's take a look at that one also. In 1st Thessalonians we have a situation where a chapter break splits a passage in two and if not careful we lose some of the contextual information.

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: 17 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. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:3

Do you notice any difference reading this passage without the interruption of the chapter break? It more clearly shows it's a description of the Second Coming and the sudden destruction that follows. Mankind taken by surprise by the wrath of God just as in the days of Noah and the days of Lot; exactly as Jesus prophesied in Luke 17:26-30 (our next example).

Reading the entire above passage we once again see the phrase 'like a thief in the night' smack in the middle of a description of the Second Coming. But instead of leaving it in its context the phrase is pulled out and deceitfully applied to other use. It now becomes one of the many stolen snippets of Scripture used to fabricate the rapture theory. There are also a couple other places where Jesus uses not the entire phrase, but only the two words 'a thief'. But an ambiguous usage there is no proof of reference to a rapture either. There is no justification for claiming any of these usages are the rightful property of the rapture theory; they have been stolen, and restitution is in order.

The Rapture Theory

Stolen Snippet:

'...As it was in the days of Noah: as it was in the days of Lot...'

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 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. 28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. Luke 17:26-30

Many use a twisted interpretation of these verses to promote a number of false teachings about the end-times. They say Jesus was comparing the conditions of society and moral decay, of our age and theirs, in these passages. I see nothing in this passage about the decay of society or even a mention of the sinfulness of the people. The focus was on the fact that life was just going on as usual until judgment fell. I would have to agree there are many similarities between our day and theirs, but pointing that out was not his objective at all. He was making just one significant point.

You hear people preaching about the rapture making statements like: "Jesus said it would be just like the days of Noah and Lot when the rapture happens." See how cleverly they now have Jesus acknowledging their rapture theory. This is subtle deceit. They are claiming Jesus was referring to the 'rapture' when he said these phrases. This is not true. These allegorical references to Noah and Lot are unmistakably both found in the immediate context of Jesus teaching on his Return. Notice in the passage above the words: thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. That is the Second Coming!

If you study it out you would be amazed how many rapture 'proof texts' are snippets of Scripture stolen out of passages clearly belonging to the Return of Christ. They are stealing these snippets out of Matthew 24 and applying them to their theory for the same reason they always do; they don't have any of their own. The Bible

The Rapture Theory

does not teach a previous event, only the Resurrection of the Dead at the Second Coming. There are no rapture verses!

The notion that Jesus was making a statement that the end-time social climate would be just like in the days of Noah and Lot is a mistaken assumption. That's not what he was getting at. The focus of these allegories was the similarity of the sudden destruction following the deliverance of the Righteous. The very same day the door was closed on the ark God's wrath began to descend upon mankind. The very same day Lot left Sodom and entered Zoar destruction rained down upon the people. The same day Jesus returns, and resurrects/catches away the Righteous, sudden destruction will once again fall upon mankind. This is the point Jesus was trying to get across. Same day; sudden destruction.

Shifting the focus away from this is a necessary distraction because the concept of 'sudden destruction immediately following the catching away' does not fit the framework of the rapture fable. They teach the righteous are raptured away 7 years before Jesus returns and administers God's wrath. These allegorical passages about Noah and Lot are actually a rebuke to the rapture theory, and must be edited and then misapplied to protect their doctrine.

Stolen Snippet:

'of that day and hour knoweth no man,'

How many times have you heard the words 'of that day and hour knows no man' spoken in connection with the rapture theory? Unless you are living under a rock or on a remote deserted island your answer would be, "More times than I can remember." It is one of the most common phrases used to promote that doctrine.

Frequently cited as 'absolute proof' the rapture and the Second Coming are two separate events is a portrayal of 'Two Days' called the 'known day' and the 'unknown day'. Their story usually sounds something like this: There is a day which is absolutely known and a day which cannot be known; two separate days that cannot be the same day. The first is the day of the rapture of which (they claim) Jesus said 'no man knows the day or hour'; this is the 'unknown day'. The second is the day of the Second Coming which (they claim) the Bible says will be 1260 days after the Antichrist begins to rule; therefor if we can figure the day of

The Rapture Theory

Christ's Coming by the 1260 day countdown it is a 'known day'.

Conclusion: since an unknown day and a known day cannot be the same day; and the day of the Second Coming is known whereas the day of the rapture is unknown they cannot be the same day. End of story. Or is it?

For many this sounds like a solid open and shut case. But is it really; or has some deception taken place here? Having had for many years a deep interest in Bible prophesy the time-spans of 3 ½ years, forty two months, 1260 days, 1290 days, and 1335 days found through out the Scriptures have always caught my attention. There is no doubt they are given to us as a framework in which end-time events are to transpire. But as to this 'known day' and 'unknown day' theory there is a serious flaw in the reasoning of those touting this 'proof' of two separate comings of Christ.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:36-37

The problem with this 'absolute proof' they're asking us to ingest is the phrase 'of that day and hour knoweth no man' is a snippet stolen from a passage we have already proven earlier is definitely referring to the Second Coming. Again I urge you to read the chapter and see the context. Jesus clearly labeled the day of his Return as an 'unknown day'! And that makes all the wrangling and fussing over counting 1260 (or is it 1290? or 1335?) days a moot point. I've seen some pretty '*fancy footwork' dancing around this problem with their theory, but nothing that stays on its feet after close scrutiny. Once again the context of the verse rebukes their usage of that verse. Also who knows when the 1260 days start for sure; the day he takes control, the day he announces his control, the day the abomination is set up, or maybe the day it's revealed to the world? Or maybe the day people are required to begin worship of him? A claim to know that exact day is quite presumptuous.

I don't care how rock solid their assumptions seem about reckoning the days from Antichrist's arrival to Jesus' Coming; we see Jesus was absolutely not referring to a prior event, but to his Return. The day of Christ's Return is an unknown day; and this makes their 'proof' go 'poof'! Calling the day of his Return a

The Rapture Theory

'known day', and saying Jesus was speaking of the rapture when he said 'of that day and hour knoweth no man' are both a lie. The context in which this phrase belongs clearly makes that accusation.

* (I am referring here to a notion some put forth of a systematic 'dual reference' in Matthew 24 pointing to two comings of Christ in the end-times. I have read page after page of theological ramblings on this subject but nothing that is anything more than supposition forced by the rapture theory position. What amazes me is they ignore the fact that even if Matthew 24:36 was a dual reference (and it's not) it would still be declaring the Second Coming as an unknown day! More of their 'proof' that proves nothing at all!)

HEEDING THE WARNING

One of the claims made by the rapture theorists is that the impending rapture keeps Christians on their toes and living right; whereas a belief the catching away doesn't happen until after the tribulation leads to complacency. I think just the opposite may very well be true. Knowing the time of great tribulation could nearly be upon us, and watching world events unfolding, doesn't exactly make me feel like slouching and slacking. I know a good many Christians who have a mindset of seeking to be prepared spiritually for the dark days ahead; and are crying out to God for the 'gold tried in the fire' and the 'eye salve so you might see' that Jesus counseled about (Rev. 3:18). This is wise counsel for all of us.

Asking God to purify your faith is basically asking for endurance fostering trials and challenges to come your way; but a heart that longs to be close to Jesus and stay faithful no matter what will cry out for things which would make the compromised and lukewarm shudder and cringe. Seeking a purified faith and the endurance to carry you through the coming persecution and affliction doesn't seem to be on the agenda of those I know who are waiting for their 'any minute now' escape. Why bother getting gold tried in the fire if you won't be here to need it? I think *that view* could lead to complacency, and not somebody sensing a rough pitch-dark road ahead and seeking to prepare for that journey. A long dark night takes a lot of oil to keep the lamp ablaze. The foolish virgins had not prepared for the long dark night, and it cost them the loss of everything they were waiting for! Buy all the oil you can get while it is still light; it is hard to find in the dark.

The Rapture Theory

Although the words of warning that 'of that day and hour knoweth no man' may have been lifted from their true context they remain a valid admonishment that is to be heeded by us all.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.
Luke 21:34

Many suppose those who don't hold to the rapture theory completely disregard Jesus' warnings of the unexpected nature of His arrival, and the danger of it catching you unprepared. I firmly believe in being ready to meet Jesus at any time. I kind of sense in his parables and warnings not just an admonition of the suddenness of his arrival but also something that speaks warning of the often unexpected end of a life. Those believers who die not ready to meet him are just as foolish as those poor virgins. WAKE UP!

As to the unexpected nature of his arrival many claim that it could not be post-trib; but we've already established his Return is an unknown day. Maybe some additional insight would be helpful.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Matthew 24:44

He said his Return will be at a time when people would not expect him to. How could that be a surprise if it's at the end of the tribulation? It's not! It's after the tribulation. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. Daniel 12:12 (1335 = 3½ years + 3½ months) What's the extra time here all about? We don't know for sure.

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3

Picture this: The events of the great tribulation are now over. Things have settled down to the point people are saying, "Whew, that was rough times but it looks like it's behind us. Looks like peace and safety! Now we can get back to business as usual."

I don't know just how it's going to be, but you get my point. In the long awaited calm after the intense and prolonged storm

The Rapture Theory

there will be a danger of being lulled to sleep. That's why all the warnings of Christ to watch (stay awake and alert) so his Return doesn't overtake you as a thief (so you won't suffer loss).

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 1 Thessalonians 5:4

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Revelation 3:3

If we are watching will we be able to know the season? If you examine all the warnings and parables on his Return there is an evident inference to be made that the awake and watching will not be surprised to see him. Why? They have been watching the signs he said to watch, and staying alert.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Luke 21:28

We will be redeemed in fullness at the Second Coming. He told the believers to stay awake, watch for the signs, and they would know the season of his Return was now at hand. His Return is only going to be a surprise to the ones who are not awake and watching. What's up with this passage:

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. Rev. 16:14-16

Have you ever wondered why this final exhortation for us to watch is placed right in the middle of a passage on the armies of the world gathering together for the battle of Armageddon? Do you think this might be a clue for those who are awake enough to see it? Could it be the final signpost for us to watch for? If he says to watch I feel it's reasonable to believe there is actually something he expects us to see, right? How can rapture theorists say there are no

The Rapture Theory

signs to be fulfilled before his Return when he plainly stated so many, and gave us firm instruction to watch for them? The rapture theory is seriously at odds with the Word of God in that regard.

The idea of a sudden appearance taking many by surprise is not out of sync with a post-tribulation Coming of Christ no matter how hard some may try to make it seem that way. Jesus said the day and hour of his Return would be unknown, but he truly taught those awake and watching would be fully aware of the season. Are you awake and watching or living in a religious slumber?

Stolen Snippet:

'...the one shall be taken, and the other left...'

Just think about how many sermons have been preached, books have been written, films produced (not to mention millions of dollars made) off of the idea of being 'left behind' by missing the 'rapture'. Have you ever questioned where in Scripture did they get the concept of some *escaping* and others being *left behind* to face the great tribulation and the mark of the beast?

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Matthew 24:40-41

This is another passage about the Second Coming of Jesus, and the Resurrection /catching away which happens at that time! A close look at the many passages of Matthew 24 shows the entire chapter to be dealing with either the Second Coming, the events and signs leading up to it, or the warnings to us concerning it.

This is another clear-cut case of Scripture stolen out of its rightful context and utilized as prostheses for a theory which has no legs of its own to stand on. This is another theft; somebody call the cops! If a judge made the rapture theorists give back all the Scripture they have stolen over the years they wouldn't have much left to teach on. Their doctrine would probably get 'Left Behind'!

An additional thought: it's remarkable that those who hold to the rapture theory will tell you Matthew 24 was only for the Jews and not the Church; but then they turn around and pull out quotes like we have discussed here as means to promote their doctrine. Talk about having it both ways!

The Rapture Theory

Stolen Snippet:

'...in the twinkling of an eye...'

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Almost any theologian, including rapture theorists, will tell you 1st Corinthians 15 cannot rightfully be considered a 'rapture' passage. There is no mention of the catching away of the believers to be found in the entire chapter! But it is probably the most descriptive of any dealing with the event of the Resurrection of the Dead. It does not say we will be 'caught away' in the twinkling of an eye! Read carefully; it says we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Not a thing about a rapture; the reference is to the raising of the dead and the transformation to a glorified body. How then did the phrase 'in the twinkling of an eye' come to be applied to our journey from the earth to the clouds; giving everyone a quite presumptuous notion this trip will happen instantaneously?

“But Paul”, they say, “don't you understand it all happens together at once?” Does it really? You don't have one verse that presents that notion either; not even a stolen one. If you believe that it is because someone *taught you* to believe it, not because you read it in your Bible.

...the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them...
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

If you have one event happen and then another event follows it they don't happen simultaneously. Here once again we have a snippet of Scripture robbed away from its home and used to support a totally unfounded belief that the 'rapture' is a split second event. The Bible does not say the rapture will happen 'in the twinkling of an eye' and the use of this phrase in regard to it is quite deceptive. We'll look at the real picture of the catching away a little later.

CHAPTER TWO

Deceiving Distractions of the Rapture Theory

The Elect

Deceiving Distraction:
The identity of God's elect today.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Matthew 24:22

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. 31 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 24:30-31

If read in context and honest consideration the words of Christ in Matthew 24 present a very clear picture of the 'catching away' of the believers at the Second Coming of Christ after the great tribulation. In their efforts to obfuscate this truth and distract you from this assault on their doctrine there has been some wild notions, and even blatant lies, thrown at us from those espousing the rapture theory. You will frequently hear nonsense like:

1. Jesus was speaking here only to the Jews, and these words do not apply to us the Church.
2. The 'Elect' spoken of here are Jews. not the Body of Christ.
3. Some of the references to his Coming in this chapter refer to the Rapture and some to his Second Coming; and God

The Rapture Theory

has in this modern age given special revelation to some people to distinguish between the two; and without these enlightened ones guiding us we, the unenlightened laity, can't get a proper understanding of the order of end-time events. We need *them* to teach us. (Big Smile!)

Lets take a look first at the notion that Jesus was speaking only to the Jews in Matthew 24; and it's not for us. I don't know who dreamed this one up, but all it takes to debunk that falsehood is a little common sense. What made this teaching session of Christ any different from all his others? Of course he was addressing the Jews, he did so all the time. There was no gentile Church yet; and I doubt that too many of the Romans were interested.

He was addressing his apostles and disciples; the very foundation of his Church. The same group to which he gave the Great Commission; should we disregard those words also? Jesus was always teaching the Jews; it was to them he was sent. If you apply their criteria for disregarding this chapter to all his other teaching sessions what would we have left? The few times he addressed the heathen? Come on!

Jesus said we are to 'keep his sayings' (John 14). He didn't say, "Keep my sayings unless I was speaking to the Jews." Matthew 24 is sayings we are to keep. Mark ends his record of the Olivet discourse with Jesus saying, "what I say unto you I say unto all..." (Mark 13:37). Now how could that possibly be interpreted to mean, "Today's sermon" is for national Israel and no one else!?"

One of the keys we receive from the Word of God about discerning false teachers is that they will steal God's Words away from his people and replace them with smooth words that cause you to err from the truth (Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel13). Rapture theory teachers denying Matthew 24 is for us is truly a theft in progress.

Let's look at the second part of the deceiving distraction they inject into Matthew 24. How many times have we heard a rapture teacher try to convince us that: "Matthew 24:30-31 is not the Resurrection of the Just because it says 'the elect' and we all know that the Jews are Gods elect; so that cannot be our Resurrection, right?" WRONG! To say we as Christians are not the elect of God is another falsehood they push to keep these Scriptures from exposing their error. To 'prove' their point they will

The Rapture Theory

quote a couple of Old Testament verses that call Israel Gods 'elect', (and they *were* at that time!) and then some will go to Romans and twist a passage to try to garner a New Testament confirmation. But it's all a lie.

If we are going to get to the truth here first we should establish one thing. Israel *was* Gods elect; chosen and favored. But the Bible teaches us they (unbelieving Israel rejecting Christ) were cut off; and the believing Gentiles (Christians) were grafted in to join all the believing Jews (Christians) as one elect body in a New Covenant with God. And when the day comes where a Jewish remnant turns their hearts to embrace faith in Jesus they (as Christians) will be grafted back in. God does not have two elections, or two Brides as some mistakenly say; just one elect body in Christ sanctified by his Sacrifice. If these things are not clear to you please prayerfully study Romans 11. It's stated pretty plainly. And those of you rapture theorists who try to twist verse 28 and say, "See they are Gods elect it says so right here." I suggest you back up to verse 7 and read it all in context for a change. This chapter in context plainly states Israel is not in a state of election, but definitely called to repent and regain that status.

Something that I did to clear this matter up for me was to do a search and study on the usage of the word 'elect' in the New Testament. It left no doubt in my mind those in Christ are the elect of God; and Matthew 24:30-31 is our resurrection/catching away!

The word elect is used 16 times in the N.T. (KJV). The underlying Greek word *eklektos* is used 23 times and is always translated 'elect' or 'chosen'. It is also enlightening to search the word 'election'. A thorough look at all these passages shows not one reference to national Israel now being the elect. The fact the believer is now the elect of God is undeniable as you look through the verses in question. Examine each verse and ask yourself if this is a reference to national Israel or those in Christ. Here are a few:

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Colossians 3:12

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: ... 1 Peter 1:2

The Rapture Theory

The children of thy elect sister greet thee... 2 John 1:13

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Romans 8:33

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; Titus 1:1

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Romans 11:5

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 2 Peter 1:10

The Word of God clearly teaches we the followers of Christ are 'the elect' of God; and therefor we are the ones being gathered unto Christ in Matthew 30:31. If you are still up in the air on this I suggest you take time to study this out completely; reading each verse that uses these terms in its context. If you can find one verse teaching that national Israel is at this time the elect of God and those in Christ are not please let me know, will ya?

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. Isaiah 42:1

If you want to look at this spiritually we are God's elect because we are in Christ, and Christ is God's elect. It's all about our identification with him. He in us, us in him; making us the elect.

The third misguided statement from our list above is so hyper-spiritual it is not even worthy of comment other than to say it seems like this 'rapture' stuff is getting weirder and weirder as it progresses. I think old number three just kind of rebukes itself. We'll leave it at that.

To sum it up, saying the Body of Christ is not God's 'elect' is quite clearly a lie against the multiple witnesses we have in the N.T. writings declaring that we most certainly are. And to say we should not consider the words of the Olivet discourse as written to us carries no clout whatsoever. Reading Matthew chapter 24 (and the corresponding accounts in Mark and Luke) with the understanding that the body of Christ is God's elect leaves no

The Rapture Theory

doubt our Resurrection and catching away to meet Christ takes place at his Second Coming after the tribulation. The claim of an earlier event is a man-made ear-tickling fable.

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of Heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in Heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 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 13:24-27

Anyone who says this isn't our gathering together unto Christ is a false teacher and in danger of standing before God as one.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The fact that the 'Second Coming' of Christ is referred to as such is in itself evidence that the rapture myth is truly a modern creation. If the early church had believed in one coming of Christ to 'rapture' them, and then another coming when he returns to rule and reign years later, they would have by nature called his 'rapture' coming the Second Coming and his later coming to rule would of course been named the Third Coming. When the rapture theory came to popularity some decades ago there was no good way to deal with this pesky numbering issue because the concept of his Second Coming was so ingrained in the vernacular of the believers it could not be undone or altered. So they have to shy away from this sore spot, and act like this is a non-issue, even though it's clearly a major rebuke to their myth and causes many to question the correctness of their rapture theory, and rightly so!

The Rapture Theory

The Fig Tree

Deceiving Distraction:

The fig tree parable is about the rebirth of the nation of Israel.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.
Matthew 24:32-34

It is amazing how deeply a false concept can embed itself into your beliefs; and also how fragments of error can remain behind, hidden away hindering the flow of truth, even years after your rejecting of that false concept in general. I rejected the notion of the rapture theory early on, but it took some thirty years for me to come to the point where I could read the parable of the fig tree free from distraction. I could go there and read it and get the gist of it, but never a solid, “This is what I'm saying, and this is what I want that information to do for you.” Without realizing it I would wander away to another train of thought and never get a fullness of revelation from the parable itself. It took a prompting from the Lord to show me this, and finally get free from that distraction.

The Lord showed me the problem was I had listened to a popularized error about this parable so many times that I thought the error was the real deal. The deception was that this parable of the fig tree had to do with the rebirth of the nation of Israel; that a fig tree symbolizes national Israel and the new growth on the fig tree was a prophetic image of Israel being reborn. This is a total fabrication, and a distraction from the purpose of this parable.

This falsehood causes your train of thought to jump track in the middle of the parable and head for a different destination. With a rapture preacher at the controls you start off down the track receiving the imagery of the fig tree and its new growth; and the next thing you know you are completely sidetracked; being told because the fig tree blossomed (Israel reborn 1948) we are now in the generation which will not pass away before the rapture happens! This parable has now somehow become a promotion for the rapture theory. And have you ever heard a rapture preacher go

The Rapture Theory

back to the parable and finish the true allegory of it? No, and they won't; because the purpose of the distraction is to prevent you from arriving at that station in the first place. You are being hindered from receiving what Jesus intended you to get from this parable,

What is the purpose of a parable? To highlight similarities of two things to help give you understanding about one of them. What are the two things Jesus was paralleling in the parable? Did he mention, or even hint at, the subject of the rebirth of Israel? Is there any thing about this passage that would point you in that direction? The answer is no. The two integers of this equation, if you will, are 'new growth on the tree' and 'when you see these things'; but before we discuss the allegory of the parable let's ask a question; the answer of which surprised me a great deal.

Is the fig tree truly the symbol of the nation of Israel in the Bible? After researching and studying this matter I would have to answer an emphatic NO. We have been sold a falsehood and gladly paid for it with our love gifts, offerings, and product purchases.

When prompted to question this idea of the fig tree being a type or figure of Israel I looked up every passage in the Bible using the words 'fig tree' expecting to see a repetitive theme of such. It is nowhere to be found! After being told over and over and over by such 'great' men as Hal L., Jack V., Tim L., Jimmy S. etc., etc., etc., that the fig tree symbolized Israel I was quite surprised to see it does not. The symbolism is not there! And when you do see a fig tree mentioned in a verse with Israel there are usually other trees listed also in the rebuke or allegory. Israel is not the fig tree!

Ponder this: If the fig tree represented Israel would Jesus have cursed the fig tree and condemned it to never bear fruit again? It withered up from the root and died. How does that fit the picture of Israel's prophetic rebirth? Not a match; and I don't think Jesus would have given us an image so out of sync like that if Israel was typified by the fig tree. He's sharper than that.

If you were going to say any tree in the Bible is used to represent Israel it would probably have to be the olive tree; and yes Wikipedia does say the national tree of Israel is the Olive Tree.

Finding a fig tree and the nation of Israel in the same verse (Oh look, here's a 'proof text'!) is no excuse for stretching that out into the lie we have been told all these years. There is just as much support for the Palm, the Pomegranate, the Olive tree, or the Vine;

The Rapture Theory

all are used to speak in regard to Israel in one fashion or another. If the Scriptures do not portray the fig tree as the symbol of Israel, and there is no historical usage of it as such, where did this false idea come from? I guess maybe someone desperate for doctrinal support saw some similarity in new tree growth and the rebirth of Israel; and thought it was a straw worth grasping at.

But back to the parable of the fig tree. Now that we are delivered from the distraction that caused us to jump track in the middle of the passage maybe we can stay on the rails long enough to see what Jesus was really trying to teach us. I find it very helpful to read Luke's account as it contains wordage carefully avoided by rapture preachers. You may have never noticed they will gladly preach this parable out of Matthew or Mark, but it's unlikely you have ever heard one of them expound on these verses from Luke:

And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.
Luke 21:29-32

Notice he says and 'all the trees'. If the fig tree is Israel then all the trees would be what; all the nations? Are all nations to be rebirthed? Surely not. The rapture crowd has a serious problem there, and that's why most stay clear of Luke on this parable. They can't quite squeeze their distraction into it. The allegory is not about a type of tree but about something common to all trees; and that is they all show signs of new growth in the latter part of spring right before summer begins. Nothing to do with the fig tree exclusively, and definitely not anything to do with the prophesied rebirth of Israel; a wonderfully fulfilled promise, but not the focus here. Jesus was saying in plain language that just like new growth on a tree signals you the season of summer is at hand; when you see 'all these things' the season of my Return is at hand. Watch the signs!

What you are being distracted from by being occupied with the fig tree = Israel deception is that we are being told to watch for signs that herald the season (the season, not the day or hour) of his Return; and many of these signs we are told to watch for take place

The Rapture Theory

within the time-frame of the great tribulation. If you add up the 'all these things' given in Matthew 24, (and Mark and Luke) it's quite a list! We're not left in the dark about the season of his Return.

This is why rapture theorists are forced to steer you to an altered meaning outside of the text. First, if we are to watch for any signs which must yet be fulfilled before Jesus returns their doctrine of his 'imminent Return' is shot in the head and must be laid to rest. Jesus would not have told us to watch for signs the Church was not going to be around to see. Second, if we are told by Jesus to watch for events which transpire during the final three and a half years that would mean the Church would have to still be here and then their rapture myth is also gunned down. (R.I.P.)

Let's leave the rebirth of Israel out of the parable of the fig tree and accept what is clearly taught there. Jesus gave us distinct indicators to watch for that clue us in to the season of his Return.

...when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Luke 21:28

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I hear people say, "I'm praying hard for the rapture to happen soon!" But is that really how we ought to be praying? I'm pretty sure Jesus said to pray: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Luke 11:2

Instead of praying, "Lord, bring your Kingdom here upon us." rapture theorists are praying, "Lord, take us away to your Kingdom." Our duty as believers is to travail in prayer for the Return of Christ. Why are so many ignoring that command and instead praying for an evacuation before the final conflict. What are you praying for: 'Kingdom Come', or 'Cut and Run'?

The Rapture Theory

The Restrainer

Deceiving Distraction:

The Restrainer of 2 Thessalonians 2 is the Holy Spirit.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8

One of the greatest hindrances to Bible study in the area of end-time prophesy is the mess the rapture theory promoters make out of the 2nd chapter of 2nd Thessalonians. The distraction they introduce into the text has you asking and answering questions, which not only promote a falsehood in themselves, but so occupy your attention that you lose track of what the apostle was truly saying in the first place. This subtle beguilement is so effective that it replaces a rebuke of the rapture theory in these verses with a 'proof text' promoting it instead!

The deception here centers around a notion that the main focus of this text is the appearance of the man of sin (Antichrist), that he has a 'restrainer', and this restrainer is the Holy Spirit. Therefor the Holy Spirit (along with those he indwells) must be removed before the evil one can be revealed. But a proper reading of this chapter, without that attention absorbing distraction, shows something quite different! Let's first develop some discernment about this distraction, and divorce ourselves from it; then we can receive the truths Paul was really presenting.

Something I have noticed is that rapture preachers most often do not read the entire context, but jump right into verse 8: 'And then shall that Wicked be revealed' (2Th 2:8) Here's the Antichrist! Then they back up to read verse 7: 'only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.' (2Th 2:7) The Holy Spirit removed! And then they back up again to read verse 6: 'And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.' (2Th 2:6) Now ye know! Case Closed!!! They act as if Paul had written them in reverse, and verse 6 was referencing verse 8 which it is absolutely not. Verse 6 is referencing the subject of the passage up to that verse; the hindering of Christ's arrival.

The Rapture Theory

Most people are confused a bit by the wording of this passage, and when you add in the error presented by the rapture theory it becomes so slurred it's easy to just give up and accept whatever you are being told to believe. But if read properly you see it is actually the *appearance of Christ* which is being restrained. That can be hard to grasp when you have been told otherwise all these years. But please bear with me here a bit.

Paul would not have been explaining in verse 6 a point not yet presented until verse 8. This mistaken notion comes from reading the text in the wrong direction. Most people quote this text backward because that's what they have been taught to do.

We shall read the chapter in question in proper order; but for now, do we see anything about this passage of Scripture, or any thing taught elsewhere in the Bible that would lead us to believe verse 7 is a reference to the Holy Spirit? It is always a healthy practice to ask, "Would I get that understanding from this verse if no one had given it to me?" I can not see anything here or in anything else I have ever studied on the Spirit of God that would even hint I should think the Holy Spirit restrains evil men from rising to power. There is no biblical or historical indication of such. On that basis alone I reject the notion, but there is much greater reason for doing so. We will discuss in another chapter why it is impossible the Holy Spirit could be the (supposed) restrainer they claim must leave the earth so the man of sin can be revealed.

In language studies there is a term called 'cognitive scaffolding' which simply means we receive a progression of understanding as each new sentence adds information to the previous ones. The fullness of meaning in any verse of Scripture is not found only in that verse itself, but also in the contributing information of the verses around it. It is the reality of this concept which makes reading verses in context such a safe-guard, and speaks to the danger of placing confidence in doctrines built out of snippets of Scripture pulled out of context. We obviously cannot quote an entire chapter each time we quote a verse, but if you see the contextual meaning of a verse to be different than the meaning someone is assigning to it: beware! As I said before and it merits repeating, 'proof texts' that are snippets of Scripture taken out of context are the basic building blocks of all pseudo-Christian false teaching. Now on to our reading in context:

The Rapture Theory

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 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. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

(* The Greek word here 'enistēmi' is used only 7 times in the N.T. always in the present or future tense, never to refer to something of the past. The primary meaning it conveys is of something that is or will become 'impending' or 'at hand'. Those who render this as a past tense event are in error.)

Many times have I heard it preached that Paul wrote these verses because some were teaching the resurrection had already happened; and he was reassuring them it had not. End of story; nothing else to see here. A reasonable sounding explanation. But no, if you read carefully that's not even close. I had to hear this mistaken rendering of 1 Th 2:1-2 quite a number of times before I understood it to be a clever distraction and not a simple mistake. They are trying to put these verses to bed, so to speak, that they be not contemplated any further and become bothersome to their theory. Paul was not warning of a false claim the resurrection was past, but instead warning them not to listen to them who were saying the Resurrection was at hand. Some were preaching the Return of Christ was impending! He was rebuking a claim of immanence; a falsehood addressed elsewhere. This correction is foundation for the very important progression of understanding (cognitive scaffolding) to be built upon it with his next words.

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;
1 Thessalonians 2:3

After warning them not to believe our gathering together unto Christ was at hand (imminent) he went on to teach there are a couple of things restraining Christ's coming; a falling away and the man of sin rising to power. The lack of fulfillment of these two things is restraining the Second Coming! That's the 'restraint' being discussed so far, not the Holy Spirit; and it's Christ's appearing that is being restrained; that is the primary subject at hand.

The Rapture Theory

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 1 Thessalonians 2:5-6

The subject here is still the appearing of Christ being restrained; “now you know what is restraining the appearance of Jesus”, namely unfulfilled events must be fulfilled. Verse six is not about the man of sin. It makes no sense to say 'now you know what restrains Antichrist' because no info has been given on that issue! It is about Jesus, our focal subject so far, being restrained from being revealed in his time. Go over it again if need be, this is important to grasp. Here is where the distraction is introduced:

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8

I think most understand the word 'let' here does not mean allow, as we would use it in modern English, but to hold down or hinder. Now, at this point, I ask why would anyone assume this hindrance is the Holy Spirit, and that He must be removed for Antichrist to come forth? There is no evidence here (or anywhere else) for this reasoning. Where is the Scriptural foundation for this? I invite anyone to explain this from the Word of God.

Yes, there is truly a restraint of Antichrist's appearance expressed here, but it is a minor concern overshadowed by the major factor of Christ's Return (the focus of this context) being restrained. The rapture theory minimizes the major, maximizes the minor, and thereby obfuscates important truths. As to what restrains Antichrist, I feel it could be as simple as unfulfilled events awaiting their time to be fulfilled. Then at the appointed time they are fulfilled. And when the restraint (lack of fulfillment) is taken out of the way, naturally the man of sin will now arrive. I think making Antichrist's arrival the main focus here forces an inflated, and distracting, importance on his restraint; and that keeping Christ's Coming as the main focus is paramount to a proper rendering of this chapter. Keep the focus on Jesus!

This chapter so far is definitely difficult and if you don't jive with my understanding of the restraint expressed here I don't

The Rapture Theory

mind. The important thing is that you see this chapter clearly brings forth the truth that the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto him will not happen until after the appearance of the Antichrist. And thus it absolutely could **not** happen before the great tribulation! That is the truth being covered over here.

The distraction they introduce turns you around to where instead of focusing on what is hindering Christ's Return, and what that says about the timing of it, you become preoccupied instead with a theory you were never meant to scratch your head over.

If you have to place a piece of paper over the rest of the chapter, and study the first six verses over and over until you get it; please do so! This was the purpose of the distraction introduced into these verses; to steer you away from the clear and concise statement that Jesus will not return nor will we be caught away until **after** the great falling away and the man of sin is revealed! They want you in and out of this chapter before that light comes on to keep you from what is plainly stated, and how that truth demolishes the rapture theory with a great big wrecking ball.

All three of these 'Deceiving Distractions' we have looked at have had that same purpose; to keep you from receiving truth which is contrary to their myth. I hope this chapter has been helpful to you in that regard.

Let me state here that I do not teach that people will miss out on salvation just for believing in the rapture theory. There are different levels of deception and different levels of accountability. For those who believe an error because someone they trusted taught it to them the consequences may be restricted to whatever hindrance or hardship that belief brings their way. For those now teaching this error unwittingly to others there will be a greater condemnation, but not to the level of those who after years of Bible study have repeatedly pushed aside the voice of the Spirit to stubbornly hold on to their pet doctrines. Then there is the horror awaiting those who know better but still teach error. Whether out of pride, greed, or misplaced loyalty those who deceive others knowingly about the things of God will receive consequences which shall grossly out-weigh any earthly benefit received.

...and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone... Revelation 21:8

CHAPTER THREE

UNBIBLICAL CONCEPTS of the RAPTURE THEORY

Unbiblical Concept: The Great Tribulation is the 'wrath' of God; and since 'God has not appointed us to wrath' Christians will not go through that time.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Matthew 24:21

I hear it all the time: “We won't go through that time of the great tribulation because it's God's wrath, and I know God has not appointed us to wrath!” I realize the importance of this claim to the rapture theory in that it provides a need for escaping this time of trouble; but who ever decided that 'the time of great tribulation' is synonymous with 'the wrath of God'?

The meaning of the Greek word thlipsis translated above as 'tribulation' is shown by Strong's Definitions to be as follows: “Pressure, affliction, anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation. trouble” Nothing about wrath. It could rightly be called 'the time of Great Persecution'; for so it shall be. In Mark 13:9 he translates the Greek word 'Thlipsis' as 'affliction' instead of 'tribulation'. Anyway isn't the wrath of God poured out at the Second Coming of Christ? That's what my Bible teaches.

...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

The Rapture Theory

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Revelation 6:16-17

And I saw another sign in Heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. Revelation 15:1

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Revelation 19:15

These are but a few of the many verses which speak of the vengeance that will visit this world after Jesus resurrects and catches away all who have covenanted with God through the sacrifice of his Son. Those in Christ, redeemed by his blood and filled with his Spirit, will never face the wrath of God. They will be safe under his wing when his indignation once again cleanses this planet. The Word truly does promise that: "God has not appointed us to wrath." But with the rapture theory a mistake is made in not distinguishing between the temporal judgments and cataclysmic events of the great tribulation (last 3½ years), and the eternal wrath of God. Also many make an additional mistake of thinking every thing in the book of Revelation takes place within the time of great tribulation. The Second Coming and the resulting wrath take place after that time. Immediately after the tribulation of those days...(Matthew 24:29).

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9

It does not escape me that almost no one quoting the promise under discussion, from verse 9, quotes the entire verse, nor the one which precedes it. The verse in its context contrasts eternal wrath against salvation from eternal wrath. But when you take the snippet 'God has not appointed us to wrath' out of the verse and use it the way the rapture theory does you now have

The Rapture Theory

being in the great tribulation synonymous with experiencing God's wrath'. Applying the edited portion of the verse to their theory is out of sync with its contextual meaning and is improper usage.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Matt 3:7

John the Baptist preached on escaping God's wrath. Would we believe John was talking about escaping the great tribulation? No, and 1Th 5:9 is not a promise to escape those days either. Besides, going through the great tribulation would not put you under the wrath of God anyway; it comes after it has passed.

If you hold to the beliefs of the rapture theory that doctrinal set teaches a seven year long tribulation, but with the first 3½ years being relatively peaceful. Why would we need to escape that first 3½ years? Surely it's not God's wrath or else it would be a devastating time.

Therefore rejoice, ye Heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. Revelation 12:12

A great deal of the troubles those on earth will experience during those years will be Satan venting his anger upon mankind through the crushing oppression of a global religious, political, and military dictatorship towering over a planet crippled by natural and supernatural catastrophes, not to mention a war that annihilates 1/3 of humanity. Look at all the other various elements of the great tribulation that are not the wrath of God: war, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, fearful signs in the heavens, the mark of the beast and persecution. We see during this time a world that is definitely in chaos and under judgment, but is all this the 'wrath' of God?

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. Revelation 9:20-21

The Rapture Theory

God's temporal judgments always carry a call to, and an opportunity for, repentance. We definitely see this opportunity expressed during the great tribulation. God's eternal wrath carries no opportunity for repentance; it is purely punitive.

To say God *has to* take us out before the afflictions of that day is a statement that denies both the promises and power of God. Are Psalms 91 and all God's other promises no longer true during the final 3½ years? Can God preserve us through times of extreme danger, judgment, or even an outpouring of His wrath if he so chose? I see in the Bible many examples of God preserving the righteous: Three Hebrew boys in the furnace, Daniel in a lions den, Paul ship-wrecked then bitten by a snake, Noah, Lot was preserved by God during an outpouring of his wrath (We'll look at that in depth later), Peter's jailbreak, King David's persecutions, and so on. All these received a big dose of divine protection, He's the same God today as he was then. Do we really believe that? I wonder sometimes if we really see our Heavenly Father for the Almighty God he is. Is the time of great tribulation too big for him to handle? Let's not allow a mindset of unbelief to defile us.

Question to think about: Would it really be in our best interests to escape the tribulation period? God wants our eternal best, right? What would be a better eternity for you. Eternity with salvation and a few rewards for your day to day efforts to glorify God; or an eternity with a martyrs crown upon your head and the unthinkable rewards involved in losing your life in his name?

When Stephen was pummeled with rocks until his battered body gave up the ghost it may have looked to the carnal minded like God should have kept him from that tribulation, but what eternal glory would have been robbed from him by that rescue? Just think where he is now; enjoying a never ending recompense for his unwavering faithfulness. Would it be your eternal best for the Lord to deny you a martyrs death? Would an escape before the coming time of world-wide persecution really be in your best interests? I'll say it again, I believe the rapture theory is nothing more than a bi-product of unbelief and a fleshly mindset of escapism.

The Rapture Theory

Unbiblical Concepts: 1. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place in Heaven. 2. Jesus is making the Bride a house in Heaven.

If you ask most rapture theorists to prove the marriage supper takes place in Heaven you will get some statement of no proof like: “Well it takes place right after the rapture has happened, so if the Church is now in Heaven of course that's where the supper is going to be.” They can't show it to you in the Scriptures; all they can do is quote their doctrine. Believing that a pretrib rapture takes the Church to Heaven is 'proof' the marriage supper takes place there? Would believing that the moon is made out of sugar prove the moon is sweet? Of course not.

Something that greatly furthered my doubts concerning the rapture theory was that in reading and listening to related preaching and teaching I would constantly hear them stating elements of their doctrine as proof of that doctrine. I could cite enough examples of this to fill a book in itself. Using your doctrine to prove your doctrine proves nothing at all.

Where is the scriptural proof the marriage supper takes place in Heaven? There is none. In fact when I decided to look into what the Bible expressly says about this event I was surprised at how little is there. When I think of all the preaching I have heard on the marriage supper right down to details on all the various aspects of what takes place and when; and all the books that are written on that subject carrying on and on about it. Why you would think there were oodles and oodles of passages in the Bible giving us all this info. But where are they? Have you seen them?

The only time the phrase 'marriage supper of the Lamb' is used in the entire Bible is Rev. 19:9. In fact it's the only time the phrase 'marriage supper' is in the Bible at all. Many try to force their marriage supper teachings into a couple of parables mentioning a wedding found in the Gospels; but the fit is poor and is little more than seeing what they want to see. Others will preach ancient Jewish wedding customs like they are the Bible itself. But we are warned not to do so.

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Titus 1:14

The Rapture Theory

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Colossians 2:8

The only info we have on the marriage supper of the Lamb is found in Rev. 19 where we are given an announcement the Bride is ready, followed by the Groom appearing in all his glory with his holy angels, and then the next image is the fowls being invited to the supper of the great God, and then the battle of Armageddon ensues with those 'invited guests' feeding upon the slain. Not quite the lovely picture we have had painted for us all these years, is it? I had trouble with it myself, and it took a lot of time to let loose of the rosy seven year feast in Heaven I had been taught; and if you cannot receive that the battle of Armageddon is the marriage supper that's OK with me. But this is the only description of the marriage supper you can take from the Bible without wresting parables to say what you want them to. There is no biblical foundation for a marriage supper in Heaven.

You can speculate all you want. There is no law against it; it's part of our learning process. But when you say 'the Bible teaches' this or that and it does not you are bearing false witness.

A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish. Proverbs 19:9

That is why preaching all these unbiblical concepts with a claim they are taught in the Bible is so dangerous. Do we want to risk standing before the Judgment Seat as a false witness? If the Bible clearly states something you can stand on it firmly; but it would be far better to say, "I think maybe this is like this... or it kind of looks like this might be... or here's my opinion..." than to state as Bible fact something that has no Bible behind it. Let's found our beliefs on what is plainly stated in the Word of God and not on unbiblical concepts taught by man.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:2-3

The Rapture Theory

One common accusation toward those not espousing the rapture theory is that we deny the promise of Jesus in these verses from John. Namely that a resurrection and catching away at the Second Coming would not take the Bride to Heaven but keep her here on earth and thereby leave (so they say) the promise of John 14 unfulfilled. I assure you that promise will be fulfilled beyond your wildest dreams, but maybe not in the manner you have been taught. The problem here lies in the way the rapture theorists insert their doctrine into John 14:1-2 giving folks a false understanding of what the fulfillment of that promise will look like.

As with most things in the Bible that we don't have a lot of verse on it's best not to get too dogmatic about our ideas. But what I want to get across here is that we have been fed this line about the Bride being built a house in Heaven because putting her there lends support to the rapture theory. If they can put her in Heaven she had to have gotten there how? That's right, the rapture. But an honest look at these verses shows no promise of a big new house built in Heaven, only Christ preparing a place for us in his Father's house. I wonder just what he means by 'in his Father's house'. Has God got a building he lives in? Must have pretty high ceilings!

If you have set under the teaching of a rapture theorist you have heard time and time again that Jesus went to build you a house in Heaven; and on a certain golden street is a great big mansion with your name on the deed which will be your eternal home. And the rapture is Jesus fulfilling that promise to come get you and take you to your big mansion in Heaven. All part of their myth; just one more example of them stuffing verses full of their beliefs and using these 'enriched' verses to nourish their theory.

Have you ever questioned the correctness of that scenario? Is that really what John 14:2-3 tells us? People read a lot into that promise that is not there; and also I believe, most fall quite short of comprehending what is really being promised. This raises a lot of questions for discussion here. First off does God actually live in a house? Is there any Bible on that other than allegorical usage?

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Acts 17:24

The Rapture Theory

I will be the first to admit I could barely begin to explain to you who God is and all he is about; but I think it would be safe to say we may be restricting God a little to try and stuff him into a physical house. God is a Spirit and God is omnipresent. Obviously Jesus was speaking allegorically using the image of a house with his promise. Let's look at just what he did and did not say.

He said there were many mansions in his Fathers house. Some would be surprised that a mansion in old English and one in our modern English mean two different things. The proper Bible definition for mansion is a 'stately room' not a giant house. In his Fathers house are many stately rooms. I don't expect to be hanging out in a fancy suite for all eternity, but I do expect Jesus was saying we'll be 'living large'. It's going to be awesome!

Here's one that might take you aback: He did not say that what he went to prepare would be in Heaven. Isn't there going to be a new Heaven and Earth? What's going to happen to your house in Heaven? Ever considered that? He said 'in my Fathers house'. We need to ask: "Where is God's house?" And then let the Scriptures make that definition for us, not someones theory. Do you see any reference to Heaven in John 14:2-3? No, the ideas of a literal house being built and that this house would be in Heaven are given to you by the rapture theory, They are not part of these verses; but are crucial to their theory so they impose them.

He said he went to 'prepare a place' for us. He did not say he went to 'build a house' for us. The two ideas are not necessarily synonymous. I wonder just how big God's house is?

Thus saith the LORD, The Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? Isaiah 66:1

He went to prepare for us a place like a 'stately room' in the dwelling place of the God who inhabits all of creation and all of eternity. WOW! What would it take for the place he has prepared for us to fulfill the Scripture:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9

The Rapture Theory

And finally the last part of the promise of John 14:2-3.

...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:3

He says he is going to return to earth, receive us unto himself, so we can be with him where he is. The Second Coming and catching away will fulfill that perfectly. I don't see him promising to take anyone to Heaven here. But I do see a wonderful promise we will be with him. If we are going to be where he is, maybe we ought to find out where he is going to be.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11:15

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Luke 11:2

Jesus taught his followers to pray that the Kingdom of God would come to earth; not that the Church would be taken to Heaven. Are you praying for the Kingdom to come? If so your prayer as well as the promise of John 14:1-2 will be fulfilled by Jesus returning to earth at his Second Coming to rule and reign. Where he is we will be also; right here on planet earth.

If you think your blessed hope is a condo on a golden street and Jesus is up there sawing boards and pounding nails, you are missing something big. He is not building you a mansion on a street of gold; he is preparing a place for you in his eternal Kingdom; he went to prepare for us a place right at his side!

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. 1 Cor 3:21-23

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:17

Don't you see? As joint heirs with him we not only inherit the Father's creation, we *are* the Father's house! The place that was

The Rapture Theory

prepared for us is son-ship; adoption into the family of God. We will dwell in the Father's presence as sons and daughters of the Most High God! Him in us and us in Him! We are the Father's house; each of us a stately room. There has been a wonderful place prepared for us in Christ purchased by his Cross and by his Blood.

There are no verses in the Bible which teach a marriage supper in Heaven, nor literal houses for the Believers being built in Heaven. This has been fabricated as support for the rapture theory. But truly what a wonderful fulfillment of John 14:2-3 we'll see!

Unbiblical Concept: The Holy Spirit as 'the Restrainer'.

Another pillar of the rapture theory is the belief the Holy Spirit is the 'Restrainer of Evil' and must be removed from the earth in order for the Antichrist to rise to power. They have unconvincingly inserted this presumption into 2nd Thessalonians 2 as 'proof' the Church will leave before the time of great tribulation. Where in God's Word or in the history of the world has the Lord ever been forced to remove his Spirit in order for great evil to rise to power?

Just look at the instances we have witnessed in the last century of evil men slaughtering people by the millions. Mao Zedong alone was responsible for over 50 million deaths among his own people! Others like Stalin, Pasha, Pol Pot, Leopold, Hitler, Tojo, etc. have each left a swath of death and destruction across the landscape of humanity. Did the Holy Spirit leave the planet each time we saw great evil rise up and vent itself upon the world? There just is not any precedent in Scripture or history for this notion of the necessity of the Holy Spirit leaving earth prior to the great tribulation. Where do they come up with this stuff?

Further more the Holy Spirit is God himself and as such is omnipresent; meaning everywhere at all times. It is literally impossible for the Holy Spirit to not be present on planet earth.

If I ascend up into Heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. Psalms 139:8

The Rapture Theory

Lately some have begun to back peddle on this notion and say He does not leave just withdraws to the position he had before Pentecost. With the idea that it's his power in the Church that is the restrainer; and the Church and that Pentecostal expression of the Holy Spirit must be removed or the Body of Christ would rise up in prayer and fasting against the Antichrist and gain victory over him. My answer to that is THEY DO gain victory over him, but not in any fashion the world would recognize as victory.

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

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto Heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. Daniel 12:7

It says he will overcome the Saints but this will only be in a natural sense. Just as the Cross of Christ appeared on that day to be a dismal failure in the eyes of the world, so too will be the conflict of the body of Christ with Antichrist. It will look like God's people are defeated, but only for a short season.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Revelation 12:11

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. Revelation 3:21

All Antichrist will have accomplished with his worldwide slaughter of the Body of Christ will be to later see them return with crowns on their heads and an eternal reward for their faithfulness. He will have given them all a promotion in the Kingdom! The rejoicing of the world over the demise of those terrible Christians will be short lived; and then God himself will avenge his children.

The concept of the Holy Spirit as the 'Restrainer who has to be removed' is just more effort to shore up a claim the rapture will

The Rapture Theory

remove the Church so they don't have to suffer through the great tribulation. I've yet to have anyone show me in the Scriptures a valid reason for believing such a thing. It is just one more totally unfounded part of the rapture myth.

Unbiblical Concepts: 1. Christians instantly disappear at the Rapture. 2. Jesus will be invisible at his Coming for the Church.

We will look at two falsehoods in this section because of how they are related; and the same verses apply to both.

One of the many unsubstantiated claims we are asked to swallow by those promoting the rapture theory is that the catching away happens in an instant. We've all seen the movies or read the books portraying an instantaneous departure of the Church with everyone leaving a pile of clothes behind; and the bewildered onlookers are left wondering what just happened. We know this is in accord with the rapture theory, and plays quite well theatrically, but should we accept this and other aspects of their narrative as fact when there is no biblical evidence to support so many of their claims? I want my beliefs to have some Bible behind them, how about you? Is there any other source to be trusted?

I would like to know who first started this 'poof we are gone idea'; and just where did he get that idea from? Not from the Scriptures; it is not in there. We have already shown elsewhere that the phrase 'in the twinkling of an eye' was hi-jacked from a description of the resurrected and living Saints being 'changed in the twinkling of an eye' (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). It is not about the catching away, which is in fact not even mentioned in that entire chapter. But someone decided to purloin the phrase and apply it elsewhere; namely to describe the rapture event. Can anyone show me biblical evidence the rapture trip up to the sky will be a split second journey? It's not there! But I do see some strong indication it will be a gradual ascension, and also quite visible. Please consider the following verses:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall

The Rapture Theory

also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Romans 8:11

Paul informs us here we will be quickened (made alive) by the same means Jesus was – the Spirit of God. Are you filled with that life giving Spirit? If so I'll see you in the Resurrection!

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end... 1 Corinthians 15:21-24

The Bible uses the term 'the resurrection of the dead' to describe both what Jesus experienced and also what we will experience. We shall take part in the same event he took part in! First Jesus, and then later all believers, made alive by the power of the Spirit. Are we not the Body of Christ; and Jesus is the Head of the Body? The order we see here is first the Head then the Body.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Romans 6:5

This passage says our experience will be in the likeness of his. That means what we go through will *look* like what he went through. Should the catching away of the Body look any different than the catching away of the Head? No. Why should we think it would? We'll be following in the footsteps of our 'Forerunner'.

There is no scriptural foundation for teaching the 'poof we are gone' rapture picture. It fails to follow the pattern plainly given in the Word of God. Did the Head disappear in a split-second leaving his clothes behind? We know for sure he did not:

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward Heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven. Acts 1:9-11

The Rapture Theory

When Jesus was 'caught up' it was a gradual climb up into the clouds. We don't know exactly how long it took, but we can easily see it took at least long enough for the disciples to watch him for a bit, and then listen to some prophetic insight from the angels as they continued to watch his ascension until finally he disappeared into the clouds. Where in all the Word of God is there any suggestion we should be believing in an instantaneous disappearance of the Body when it comes time to meet the Head who is waiting up in the air? That is not the pattern given.

Which brings us to the next **unsupported claim**: Jesus will be invisible when he gathers the Church up to meet him; the world will not see him.

The above passage, Acts 1:9-11, says he is returning in the same manner he left. His ascension was totally visible and he will be visible when he descends from Heaven. This is clearly stated there. Now let's take a look at the Resurrection passage:

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: 17 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

It says Jesus will descend from Heaven and then we will be taken up into the clouds to meet him in the air. Clouds and air are part of the physical visible world we live in. I cannot for the life of me see where people see an invisible catching away to an invisible Jesus promoted in these prophetic passages of Scripture. There is not a shred of evidence to support the assumption; and what is described in the verses we have examined contradicts that assumption. The rapture theory is plumb full of these false notions; and they are easily proved baseless by the healthy habit of studying the Scriptures in context. The truth sets us free from deception only when we seek out and embrace truth. This takes time and effort.

Again, where in the Bible do you find any verses in context plainly stating Jesus will be invisible when he returns to raise the dead and catch away the Bride? I have yet to find them and I have been searching for them for a *very* long time. But I do find many passages which inform us his Coming will be quite visible!

The Rapture Theory

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 1:7

Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven. Acts 1:11

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. Matthew 24:30

For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under Heaven, shineth unto the other part under Heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. Luke 17:24

With so many examples of God's Word clearly showing a Coming that is quite visible, and ZERO verses teaching an invisible one; it's a little strange to me people would support such a notion. Both the invisible rapture and invisible coming of Christ are unbiblical concepts. Let's believe what the Bible plainly states.

Unbiblical Concept: Revelation 3:10 is a promise Christians will not be on earth during the time of great tribulation.

The fact that Rev. 3:10 is cited as one of the strongest 'proofs' of the rapture theory shows how weak and void of biblical substantiation this teaching really is. Lacking passages of Scripture which expressly state the elements of their theory they resort to inserting their doctrine into text such as this one in Revelation. Please read the verse and ask yourself: "Does this verse really say what they are claiming it does? Is it about the great tribulation?"

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

The Rapture Theory

Revelation 3:10

First off, is there anything in this verse that says 'wrath'? Does it say, "the hour of wrath"? Does it say, "to bring wrath upon all the world"? I sure don't see it, do you? It says to 'try them' not to 'destroy them'. Where did anyone get that this promise was about escaping wrath? Quite a stretch folks! I mean really. When the Scriptures talk of the 'wrath' of Almighty God, the Lord isn't using statements like, "I think I'll 'try them' a little." or "I think I'll give them an hour of temptation." Terms like temptation, trying, or testing carry a hope for success or victory, or maybe even a redemptive work in progress; but God's wrath carries no such hope, The wrath of God is him venting his fury upon his enemies. Its purpose is destruction; a plowing under of the field so to speak. Does this verse convey that imagery? No, it absolutely does not.

The verse is obviously a promise about avoiding a time of testing; but strangely rapture theory folks think they can claim this as a solid promise God is going to rapture them off this planet before the time of great tribulation begins. The question is not whether the words 'keep thee from' in this verse mean 'out of' the tribulation or 'thru it', as many have argued over the years; but is this verse even about end-time events in the first place? Is there anything in this verse or the context in which it is found that plainly states a promise to escape this time, or even mentions the tribulation itself? If you had never heard of the rapture theory would you read this verse and say: "Hey cool, God is going to catch away the Church before Antichrist gets here!" Would you honestly receive that meaning from this verse if no one had first taught you to think that way? I highly doubt it.

Also, did God remove the Philadelphia believers from this planet to fulfill his promise to 'keep' them. Obviously not. And we have no reasonable expectation he would have to remove us to keep us. God is all powerful; let's not limit the Holy One with our unbelief. In concern for the hardships his disciples would face Jesus prayed: "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil (John 17:15). The Greek word for 'keep' in the above verse is the same one used in Rev. 3:10. Jesus seemed to be of the opinion God does not need to take us out of this world to 'keep' us! I'm sure God was

The Rapture Theory

faithful to that promise for the Philadelphia believers right in their situation, as he will be for us also. God will keep us.

One thing that helped me see through their presumptions promoted here was asking myself: “Who was this promise written to, and just what did it promise them?” Let's look at that, shall we?

This verse is found in the words Jesus told John to put in a letter and send to the Church in Philadelphia. This was an actual fellowship residing in an actual city by that name. I am pretty sure John obeyed the Lord and sent them an actual letter. Do you expect me to believe they received those words as a promise from Jesus they would not have to go thru the cataclysmic end-time events 19 centuries in the future *if* they would keep his Word and not deny his Name? It would be ridiculous to think so. Did the ones who were not faithful receive the reciprocal of this promise? Were they transported into the future to endure the end-time troubles? Neither the faithful or unfaithful in this Philadelphia church would ever have to worry about whether or not they would go through the final years of this age. That cannot be the promise (or warning) this verse was intended to bring forth to them.

If they were being 'kept' from something that the less faithful among them would have to endure it had to be something common to the time in which they lived. We have no right to think this promise spoke one thing to those people but something entirely different to us. The truths of God's Word do not change from one generation to another. That type of treatment of God's Word creates an atmosphere where error can flourish unchecked,

A useful key of understanding can be found in looking at what the *purpose* of what they were being 'kept' from was. It says, “ to try them that dwell upon the earth.” A verse that comes to my mind is one, also in John's letters to the churches, where Jesus tells lukewarm believers to “buy gold tried in the fire.” (Rev. 3:18) Peter also uses this concept of 'gold tried in the fire' in regard to the trial of our faith (1 Peter 1:7). Think about this: would a goldsmith or jeweler take some pure 24k gold and throw in in the smelting pot to refine it? What would be the sense in that; it is already pure. There is no need to try it.

I don't think it is unreasonable to conclude the promise of Rev. 3:10 has to do with faithfulness in the life of a believer causing God to keep them from a process of refining they don't

The Rapture Theory

need to experience. God does chasten his children, but not unnecessarily. And I think this verse speaks the same wisdom to our generation as it did to theirs. Keep thyself pure. (or you might get a trip to the woodshed.)

In Daniels end-time visions we see some being tried and made white (Dan. 11:35), but others who were strong in the Lord doing great exploits for his glory (Dan. 11:32-33). Not everyone was being tried; not everyone needed it. There we see Gods wonderful promise of Rev. 3:10 (and its reciprocal) being faithfully fulfilled during the great tribulation! The ones who were faithful being kept from the testing, and the ones in need of purification being 'made white'. Sounds like God is being faithful to all here.

When you look at the condition of the body of Christ in this nation do you see a Church that even *qualifies* for the rapture they claim this verse promises? Has this generation of believers been faithful and kept the word of his patience? I don't think so! The Lord is coming back for a Bride without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. Personally, I think the Bride could use a trip to the laundromat! "...his wife has made herself ready." Revelation 19:8

There is not a thing about Rev. 3:10, its context, or even common sense that shows it to be relevant to the promise of a rapture or even end-time events in general. This unwarranted claim almost rivals the one that says John being told "come up hither" (Rev. 4:1) means the church will miss the time of great tribulation. That idea is so baseless and lame I'm almost embarrassed for the person when I hear them say it. These wild unsupported claims of 'proof texts' are nothing more than a grasping at straws and are the hallmarks of unbiblical doctrine.

The elements of the rapture theory are implicit; meaning they seem to be implied by certain texts. Implicit teachings fill the doctrinal structures of the Catholic, Jehovah Witness, Mormon, Christian Science, and other organizations with falsehoods like soul sleep, annihilation, purgatory, a non-divine Christ, infant baptism, and so on. If you want to believe something badly enough you can find plenty of scriptures that seem to imply it. The true doctrines of our faith are explicit; meaning they are expressly declared in the Word of God with the confirming safeguard of multiple witnesses. The rapture theory can make no such claim.

Just an after thought: how many who think they can claim

The Rapture Theory

Rev. 3:10 as a promise would care to also claim another 'promise' in John's letters. If Rev. 3:10 is for you why not 2:10 also:

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:

behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Revelation 2:10

Does not this verse also carry a promise to the Church? Why is one a promise to you, and not the other? There are times God keeps us from trials and tribulations; there are times he allows them to try us (or maybe even chastise us); and there are times he allows suffering for his glory such as persecution or even martyrdom. We need to have a heart to trust him in whatever God allows to come our way.

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1 Peter 4:19

Unbiblical Concept: The Old Testament Saints will not be resurrected and 'caught up' with the Body of Christ.

Rapture theorists, and most dispensationalists, teach the Old Testament believers will not be a part of our 'catching away' to meet Jesus. They separate them (and the supposed tribulation Saints) into another 'plan of salvation' with most teaching O.T. Saints are the Bride of Jehovah whereas N.T. Saints are the Bride of Christ. Did you know they teach God has two Brides? Most are unaware of this, and some other of their wild claims, because many dispensationalists don't preach a lot of the elements of their doctrine due to the controversy caused. They freely preach the parts that tickle the ears, but are prone to keep the lid on the stuff they know will raise questions over apparent conflicts with the Scriptures.

But we do not need to go into any profound theological ramblings to get to the facts here. A look at some simple truths found in Scripture will clear this up.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits;

The Rapture Theory

afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then *cometh* the end... 1 Corinthians 15:22-24

If you completely read 1st Corinthians chapter 15 you will see no distinction between O.T. and N.T. believers in regard to the Resurrection. What we see is 'all were dead' then 'all made alive'. Paul contrasts the fall of man with the antidote to the fall; being made alive in Christ and resurrected with him. Paul was plainly teaching all who were by Jesus redeemed from the fall would rise at his Coming. Who does it say will be resurrected with Christ? Those that are his! So the question we need to answer here is: do the O.T. Saints belong to Christ? We shall see they indeed do.

The rapture teachers say the O.T. and 'tribulation Saints' are saved in a different manner than us. This is actually a heretical belief; there is no other way into the Kingdom of God than through faith in Jesus Christ, and the new-birth that faith brings!

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John 3:3-6

Jesus stated plainly only those who have found the new-birth will enter God's kingdom. It will not matter what 'era' you lived in; what will matter is did you find the 'Door'? People find that Door through the preaching of the Gospel.

...to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. 1 Peter 4:6

We are not given to understand everything that happened when Jesus descended to the region of the dead, but God thought it important that we know that the Gospel was preached to the O.T. Saints, and that Jesus freed those captives. They had to receive the

The Rapture Theory

Gospel of grace through faith in the blood of Christ just as we had to. This is the 'good seed' that once planted in a heart of faith springs up into everlasting life. Receiving the truth of the Gospel and putting your faith in Jesus, and his shed Blood, places you 'in Christ'. Let's look at the origin of our promise of inheritance:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. Gal. 3:8

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Galatians 3:16

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:28-29

We are all made one in Christ! The way that a lot of people preach the plan of God for mankind they make the absurd claim God has one plan for the O.T. Saints and another for the Church. Many actually teach the Church was plan B. That is falsehood. There is only one plan. God's plan to redeem mankind from the fall was preached as early as the Garden of Eden when God provided a covering for the naked man and his mate. Those animals didn't just slip out of their skins and say, "Here ya go!". There was bloodshed and a loss of life to provide that covering. The Gospel of Christ's sacrifice was God's plan to 'cover' us with His Righteousness from the beginning and has never changed or needed upgraded.

The promise to inherit the kingdom was given to Abraham and his seed. This promise is fulfilled in Christ; and because we are in Christ we also are Abraham's seed, so it is the same promise to us. One promise to all. There is no inheritance outside of Christ.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:40

Did not the dead *see him* and *believe on him* when Christ

The Rapture Theory

preached to them? Jesus said that every one that believes on him will be resurrected at the last day. Paul said this would happen for all those who are Christ's at his Coming. (1 Cor.15:23)

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Luke 14:13-14

The people who were being addressed in this passage were not a part of the post-Pentecost Church. Jesus told these people living under the Law they could take part in the Resurrection of the Just! The rapture theory says the pretrib rapture is the Resurrection of the Just, and that the O.T. Saints will not take part in that Resurrection. Who should we believe? I know where my vote is going. How about you?

This is some of the stuff I was talking about that doesn't get preached on much outside of a strict dispensationalist crowd. If you are not already brainwashed into their theology, things like this might not set well with you, and they know it.

There is no rapture before the time of great tribulation; the theory is a man-made invention of modern creation. The Resurrection of the Just takes place at the Second Coming; and will include all believers from Adam's day to that day. The rapture theory's claim that the O.T. Saints don't get resurrected with the Church is an unbiblical concept; and is preaching deception.

Some additional thoughts. The rapture theory teaches that at the rapture the Age of Grace is closed out. I see all these web sites with advice for those who missed the rapture; telling them to read the Bible for it will show them the way of salvation. If the tribulation Saints are not saved in the same manner we are what good is our Bible going to be to them? It teaches grace through faith, not an alternative way to be saved. It will tell them unless they are born-again they won't enter the Kingdom, and it will also tell them to be filled with the Spirit; both of which will be kind of hard if He left with the Church at the rapture. It will tell them to walk in the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, seek for the Spirit to lead them into all truth. It will tell them 'not of works lest any should boast', but the rapture theory says they are saved by their being faithful to

The Rapture Theory

death, not by grace like we are. I'm sorry, but I kinda think changing faith into faithfulness is equal to changing grace into works. If we could be saved by works why the need for the Cross?

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Galatians 2:21

If the rapture theory were true it seems like it would be better advice to tell them to disregard the Bible. Wouldn't it get pretty confusing reading a New Testament full of teachings on how to get saved and live for Jesus in a dispensation that had already been dispensed with? No, we know the Bible will work fine for those going through those days; us the Body of Christ. We serve a God whose word is true and unchanging; as is his plan of salvation

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Revelation 14:6

There will not be a new Gospel of Works during the tribulation! The Gospel by which people will be saved during that era of tribulation is the 'everlasting Gospel'. It will be preached by the Body of Christ awaiting the Second Coming of Christ. And upon Christ's Return the O.T. Saints will rise along with us!

Unbiblical Concept: The armies in white robes at the Second Coming are the previously raptured Saints not the angels of God.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Revelation 19:13-14

The rapture theory teachers say the 'armies in Heaven' clothed in white linen following Jesus out of Heaven at his Second Coming are not angels, but instead the Bride of Christ. They cite Rev. 19:8 as a 'proof text' because it says in that verse: "white linen is the righteousness of the Saints." And they then go on to suppose that if these Saints in white linen are now *coming out of*

The Rapture Theory

Heaven they had to have first *gone in* indicating a previous rapture and thus disproving the claim that the Resurrection of the believers takes place at the Second Coming.

This sounds somewhat convincing until you put it to the test. Does it say here, or anywhere else, that these armies coming out of Heaven are believers? No, this is mere speculation with no scriptural support. And as is the usual case with their 'proof texts' they have proved nothing. In fact they have created a lie.

Lets look at some other individuals clothed in white linen:

And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. Revelation 15:6

It looks to me like these angels in Heaven are wearing the same apparel as those guys on horses with Jesus. What a shocker! Mary and the others at the tomb saw an angel clothed in a long white garment. (Mark 16:5) Daniel also saw an angel clothed in linen (Dan. 10:5) What else would they be wearing, Levi's?

To say the armies following Jesus out of Heaven are not angels because they are clothed in white linen is absolutely ludicrous! This is a prime example of the way the rapture theorists fabricate 'proof texts'; like inserting their beliefs into this Scripture to 'prove' a point, while ignoring other relevant passages that clearly describe Jesus coming out of Heaven with his angels.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, 2 Thessalonians 1:7

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: Matthew 25:31

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Matthew 16:27

The Bible clearly teaches Jesus is bringing ALL the angels of Heaven with him at his Return. Just how many angels are we talking about here; a sky full? No wonder it says armies – plural! There are many confirming witnesses describing the angels coming

The Rapture Theory

out of Heaven with Jesus. Why would you think Rev. 19:14 is describing anything else; unless you are trying to fabricate support for a rickety theory in danger of collapse.

About this time some of you rapture theory believers are wishing you could throw in these verses:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1Th 4:14

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints, Jude 1:14

... like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee. Zechariah 14:5

Many try to use these verses as proof that the rapture would have to had already happened in order for Jesus to bring these people with him. But does it say they come out of Heaven? No, it doesn't. Jesus will appear in the clouds with all his holy angels, resurrect the believers, gather us unto himself, and then descend bringing all of us with him. The world will in truth witness Jesus coming with his Saints. There is no conflict with these verses.

Also where does it say the departed Saints are Heavens' armies and fight the battle of Armageddon? The Bible does speak of our struggles with evil in this life as warfare, but does that mean we are the 'armies in Heaven' that do battle for God? Isn't that the job of the angels?

When the martyred Saints call out to God to be avenged (Rev. 6:10), will He tell them to go take care of it themselves? I question the way the rapture theorists turn Christ's Bride into a vengeful army; I guess they take back all their forgiveness towards their persecutors, and go kick some major butt on planet earth?

It just doesn't seem in line with the descriptions we have of the Return of Christ that He would hang back and let his Bride do any fighting for him. It gives me this mental image of a loving married couple at home safe in bed for the night when suddenly they hear glass breaking and noise of intrusion downstairs. Can you picture that doting husband turning to his wife and saying, "Honey, you wanna get that please?" It just don't fit right, does it?

The Rapture Theory

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Romans 12:19

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. Psalms 58:10

We will be present at the battle of Armageddon, see the vengeance of God upon our enemies, and rejoice in victory. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate believers are the 'armies of Heaven', but plenty to show it's the holy angels. It shows willful ignorance to teach this unbiblical concept in light of the facts.

Why the Need for a New Name?

For nearly two thousand years the Scriptures, the body of Christ, and even scoffers, have referred to the event that brings us the fullness of our salvation, and the redemption of our body, as the Resurrection at the Last Day. Why was there a necessity to invent a *new* name: The 'Rapture'? Have you ever thought about that?

Did anyone really *need* to rename our promise of the Resurrection? Do we need a new name for salvation? For healing? For the Cross? No! How about for Heaven? No, but how about if I came up with a new doctrine of a paradise that is a little different than what has been commonly believed for all this time, and what if I said getting there is a little easier than what we've been taught. I couldn't call it Heaven. Folks might look into what the Bible really teaches on Heaven and call me on it. I'd need a way to get them to turn loose of long held beliefs; maybe some subtle distractions.

First I would have to invent a new name for this new revelation. Then I could say I'm not talking about *that* concept of paradise but *this* other one. Then I could start pulling snippets of Scripture out of context that kinda sorta sound like my theory; and go to work devising all kinds of clever 'proof texts' about my new doctrine. Altered renderings of Bible verses all with no real foundation in God's truth; but so cunningly devised that my unsuspecting followers will be totally convinced they are 'Bible Truth!' I can probably even get them to finance a book series!

Where could I find a really appealing name? I know! I'll

The Rapture Theory

take a word for Heaven from the Greek, translate it into an obsolete dialect, then render that word into English and I'll have a new name for my new doctrine. (don't laugh, that's exactly how they came up with the name 'Rapture'!) And I can say it's from the Bible because it is - kinda sorta. Let's call this other concept of paradise 'Ecstasy' shall we? Now I've got a catchy name that will appeal to the senses of the carnal: 'Ecstasy!' ('Rapture' anyone?)

And good news! You can get into this Kingdom of Ecstasy much easier than was previously believed. New revelation shows us you can escape all that 'suffering for Christ' business. You don't have to identify with his death. You don't really have to turn away from your sin or live a life of holiness. And you don't have to suffer persecution for taking a stand for Jesus in this world. Have it your way! Just accept my new teaching of escapism and all will be well. Wouldn't you rather go hassle free to the realm of Ecstasy than to suffer aggression and hardship along the path to that other place? (Wouldn't you rather go in the Rapture and escape the end-time trials and persecutions to be endured by those awaiting the Resurrection at the Second Coming?) OK. Enough about my new name for my new doctrine. Please forgive me for jesting.

But seriously have you wondered why the preaching on an event called the Resurrection for close to twenty centuries now becomes a focus on the 'Rapture'? Why? Because many in this day have turned aside to believe in a fable. This was prophesied to happen and this erroneous modern theory is a direct fulfillment of that prophesy. Maybe there is *some* truth to people saying the rapture theory is in the Bible. Here it is; in this prophesy!

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.
2 Timothy 4:3-4

I hear people all the time say, "It's just a matter of timing; some just believe differently about when the same event will happen in relation to end time events." This in itself is a false belief and a distraction from the truth. The rapture theory, and the Resurrection that is actually taught in the Bible, are not the same event! I am surprised at how many people don't understand that

The Rapture Theory

Scripture plainly teaches a Resurrection at the Return of Christ; even if there was an earlier 'rapture' event there would still have to be a Resurrection and catching away at the Second Coming.

It's not the timing of one event, but **the introduction of another** that is the issue; folks now claiming the Scripture is teaching two resurrections and two catchings away. This is an 'adding to' of the Word of God and is a very dangerous practice.

If you believe in the rapture theory you are believing a theory that says there are two (or more) catching aways. Even theologians who promote the rapture freely admit there **is** a resurrection at the Second Coming, but say the rapture is another separate event seven years earlier. Since it's easier to pass off a false doctrine if people believe it's the only game in town, most rapture teachers don't say a lot about the Second Coming's resurrection. It causes conflict in those who, searching God's Word for both, find instead truth which denies the rapture theory. Better to leave the impression there is nothing there to study out,

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end...

1 Corinthians 15:20-24

I know I've used these verses a number of times, but this passage gives us a clear biblical order of the Resurrection. Doesn't sound much like two different 'catching aways' does it? And there is also a doctrinal safeguard built into this passage; a second witness of the types/shadows of the Old Testament painting portraits of N.T. truths. Let's look at that second witness.

Notice the term 'firstfruits'; this is a reference to the Old Testament practice, commanded by the Law, in which a man would ask God to sanctify, or bless, the harvest of his fields, orchards, or vineyards etc.. He was to harvest the first small portion of his crop and take it to the priest as an offering to God. The priest would lift it up before God as a wave offering, and this 'firstfruit' offering would sanctify the remainder of the crop; which the husbandman would then go harvest. Do you see now why Paul called Jesus the

The Rapture Theory

'firstfruits'? The offering up of Christ was a firstfruit offering to God; this sacrifice sanctified the rest of God's harvest, namely us the believers. (The day Jesus rose from the dead was not called Easter by God's people; it was the Feast of Firstfruits; which always fell on the Sunday following Passover)

What a beautiful image of Christ's work on our behalf found there in the Law. And just what is the pattern given to us here? God gave us his order: Christ the firstfruits; then the rest of us at his Coming! Christ was raised first and now the rest of the crop shall be made alive; the harvest of all believers down through the centuries will take place at one time: the Second Coming! The rapture theory divides into two events what the Word tells us takes place all at once: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (1 Cor. 15:23).

So we see it's not simply a disagreement over timing, but the introduction of a myth about a second prior event which has no foundation in truth. There is only the Resurrection of the Just at the Second Coming. Anything else is a fable.

Guilty by Association?

I am trying to condition myself to use biblical terms instead of man-made ones. I try not to use the word 'rapture' unless I'm speaking about the rapture theory and its components. The reason being I have developed a conviction that doing so unwittingly promotes that deception. We should refer to our hope the way the Bible does; and say we are looking forward to the Resurrection at the Last Day. Our casual usage of the word 'rapture' leaves the impression we endorse that erroneous concept. We become just another person 'waiting for the rapture'. This helps foster the 'it's only a matter of timing' falsehood and makes us a part of the problem and not the solution.

Again it's not about the timing of an event, it's about the deceptive introduction of a false hope into peoples belief system. Do we want to be a part of that? Let's help others realize there is a conflict going on here between truth and error, and we've chosen not to buy into the lie. If all who reject the rapture theory would boycott the use of the word 'rapture' many would become curious why, and might be stirred to critically examine doctrinal points

The Rapture Theory

they currently see as a non-issue. Let's call it the Resurrection at the Last Day, its proper Bible name; not some catchy thing a deceived man made up to promote his falsehood.

The Rapture Theory

Could someone give me a hand, please?

Maybe you could help me with my research. I have been looking for years for answers to some questions the rapture theory raises in my mind. The problem is I cannot find any Bible verses that clearly teach these major facets of the rapture theory which I am assured are 'Scriptural'. All other major doctrines of our faith are plainly stated with multiple witnesses leaving no doubt what we are to believe. If there are 31,102 verses in the Bible surely there must be some passages explicitly stating these elemental truths of the rapture theory. Does anyone know where they are?

Where does it say Jesus will have an invisible coming to earth? Where does it say the rapture takes us off to Heaven? Where does it say there will be resurrected believers in Heaven before the Second Coming? Where is Scripture that says the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place in Heaven? Where does it say the Body of Christ will instantly disappear? Where does Jesus say he will come back to earth twice in the end-times? Where do the Scriptures say the time of the great tribulation is the 'wrath of God' being poured out? What verses teach the Body of Christ is not now God's 'elect'? Where does the Bible state the Fig Tree represents or symbolizes Israel? Where does it say there will be no signs of Jesus' Return for us to watch for? Where does it teach that the Holy Spirit restrains evil men from rising to power? When did Christ's Return become imminent? Where does it say the Body of Christ will not face the Mark of the Beast? Where does it say the rapture takes place in a split-second? Where does it say O.T. Saints will not rise in the Resurrection of the Just? Where does it say that the 'Age of Grace' comes to a close before the tribulation? Does anybody know?

If I can't find any clear Bible teaching to answer these questions why in the world should you or I believe such a thing? Where is the love for the truth that God demands from his people? This rapture theory is nothing short of a man-pleasing delusion!

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

CHAPTER FOUR

Outright Lies of the Rapture Teachers

Outright Lie: The story of Lot is given to us as a type/shadow of a 'Pretribulational Rapture'.

A bald faced lie I have heard stated by many rapture theory teachers is that the story of Lot is a type/shadow of the rapture before the time of great tribulation. Their reasoning is that because God took Lot out of Sodom before he destroyed it this testifies of the rapture theory. But in reality the story of Lot is one of the strongest rebukes of this myth found in the Bible. Most of us know the story of Lot but I would encourage a refresher if you think it paints any picture of the rapture.

When Abraham and Lot became so increased with herds and flocks that the land could not bear it they decided to split up. Lot chose to dwell in the plain of Jordan.

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.
Genesis 13:10

It's helpful here to pick up a little understanding of the geography of this area. I also found it very interesting to study not just the history, but also the findings of the extensive digs and studies archaeologists have done in this area.

The Rapture Theory

The plain of Jordan was a basin at the southern end of what we now call the Dead Sea. It was a very fruitful valley irrigated (well watered) using the water of five tributaries running into the plain from the surrounding mountains. But, although providing water for the massive irrigation systems of these people, the bitter mountainous wilderness penned in this prosperous area and somewhat isolated them from the rest of the world. (I wonder if this isolation contributed to an introverted culture that led to their descent into debauchery?)

Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.
Genesis 13:12

In this isolated valley were five cities stretched out in a line down through the plain. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the upper area. The two cities of Admah And Zeboim in the lower region; and in the central plain was the city of Bela also known as Zoar. They were known as 'the cities of the plain' with each having a king or governor ruling over them. Lot chose to dwell with his herds and servants in the upper end of the valley at Sodom.

When God decided to destroy the wicked people of that valley he sent angels to escort Lot and his family out of danger. Here's where many people get the story wrong. Lot did not GO UP into the mountains at this time.

And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: 19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: 20 Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. 22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city

The Rapture Theory

was called Zoar. 23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of Heaven; 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. Genesis 19:17-25

And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Deuteronomy 29:23

God did not just destroy Sodom and Gomorrah as most think, but the entire plain of Jordan and four of its five cities. And where was Lot when God rained down fire and brimstone upon the wicked? Taken UP to the mountains like so many have suggested? No, I'm afraid there is no rapture picture here in the story of Lot. He was hunkered down right in the center of the valley in a little town called Zoar which had been slated for destruction but was spared, and became a sanctuary of safety, because of the presence and intercessions of one righteous man.

The wrath of an angry God poured down all around them and destroyed the entire plain of Jordan with its cities, its peoples, all their livestock, and all their crops in a hellish firestorm while Lot, what remained of his family, and the inhabitants of Zoar were divinely protected. Kept from God's wrath while in the midst of an outpouring of God's wrath. (maybe they were claiming Rev. 3:10? just kidding.)

The extensive archaeological digs and studies of the plain of Jordan have uncovered clear evidence of the fiery destruction of the entire region, but remarkably a little village in the central area showed none. It had been exempt from whatever destroyed the rest of the valley by fire. Also quite interestingly they found evidence of prior devastation of another sort that had necessitated much reconstruction. Some sections of the cities' walls were rebuilt upon foundations of broken rubble and burnt pieces of wooden beams.

They found this evidence of ruin and rebuilding about 20 layers (years) earlier than the devastation by fire and brimstone. This matches the biblical record of the band of four kings looting

The Rapture Theory

and ransacking that area and hauling off Lot and all his goods. But God, using his friend Abraham, delivered Lot and got him back home. I wonder if this invasion of the cities of the plain was a warning from God of what was to come? If it was, sadly that warning went unheeded.

I think it is pretty evident after looking at the story of Lot that to say his experience is support for a rapture theory is nothing short of an outright lie. It very clearly shows God's ability, and his willingness, to delay or curtail an outpouring of his wrath on behalf of the Righteous. Even if the great tribulation in its entirety were the wrath of God (and it is not) that does not mean God has to take the Church out first. God is able to keep what is his. He is all powerful! Heaven is not going to suffer a power outage during the final 3½ years. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds (Psalms 68:34). Let's preach this thing like God has some power, shall we?

In a similar fashion the story of Noah does not paint a picture of a rapture away to Heaven. The day the door of the ark closed the wrath began to fall. The righteous man Noah never left planet earth but floated above the waters of God's outpouring of wrath, and then descended to a purified world cleansed by God's judgment.

I expect our experience at Christ's Second Coming to mirror that of Noah's. We will be quite safe from the wrath Jesus pours out at his Return; safe under the wing of the Most High. If you're keeping score the rapture theory is still batting 0.

Outright Lie: The Coming (parousia) of Christ and his Revelation (apokalupsis) are two separate events.

The rapture theory centers around the false notion that there are two separate returns of Jesus in the end-time events. To illustrate the difference in these two events we are explained the first is his invisible Coming (Greek-parousia) to 'rapture' the Church, and the second is his Revelation (Greek-apokalupsis) where he is revealed to the world and pours out judgment.

My question is this: 1 Cor. 15:23 says we will be resurrected and caught up to meet Christ at his Coming (Greek-parousia). In

The Rapture Theory

2nd Thessalonians 2:8 it says Jesus will destroy the man of sin with the brightness of his Coming (parousia). How could Christ's Coming (parousia) destroy Antichrist at the end of his reign if his Coming (parousia) is before the tribulation? It's not, it's right after!

There are a number of words used to refer to the Coming of Christ: coming (Greek-'parousia'), revelation (Greek-apokalupsis), coming (Greek-erchomai) etc., and if you compare their usage in the Bible you will see times they are used interchangeably to refer to the same event. A glaring example is to look at Jesus' reference to the days of Noah and Lot in Matthew 24 and then compare Luke's account. Matthew has Jesus using the word coming (parousia) but in Luke Jesus speaks of it as the day he will be revealed (apokalupto). Both are describing the same event!

So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming (apokalupsis) of our Lord Jesus Christ: 1 Corinthians 1:7

In this verse above we have the word 'apokalupsis' there translated as coming. The same Greek word is translated in the next example as Revelation! Are you waiting for the rapture; or waiting for the Coming/Revelation (apokalupsis) of Christ?

The Revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. Revelation 1:1

The Coming of Christ for the Church and the Revelation of Jesus Christ are one and the selfsame event! To deny that is a lie.

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

His Appearance and his Coming are the same event! To separate into two events what the Word of God plainly shows to be one Coming of Christ is error and deception.

The Rapture Theory

Outright Lie: Christians won't face the Mark of the Beast or Antichrist's War on the Saints.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns...

11 ...And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon... Revelation 13:1+11

In Revelation 13 the apostle John saw in a vision two beasts rise that would dominate the world in the final years of this age. A global dictator and a leader of world religion. We will not enter into a deep discussion of all the aspects of what the world will be subjected to under their reign of terror and deception; but rather whether the Body of Christ will be here on earth to face their onslaught. But before we discuss this let's take a quick look at Antichrist's predecessor. We should keep an eye out for this guy.

Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. 21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. Daniel 11:20-21

When the angel of God was giving Daniel a rundown of the political/military power of the last days he referred to Antichrist as a vile person; and so he will be. But I think it important to note a couple of things about the guy he replaces. We don't get a lot of info on this guy other than his seat of power is short lived and his claim to fame is he will be a 'raiser of taxes'. These two facts might just assist us in recognizing him and therefor his successor; the vile one who will bring desolation to the nations of the world.

In order for the global system of governance to come to maturity it will require major funding. We have for quite some time been hearing a call for taxation on international transactions from those wanting global government. Such a tax will raise the hundreds of billions of dollars necessary yearly for the beast to

The Rapture Theory

exercise world dominion. Keep your eye out for a world leader to step onto the scene instituting a system of global taxation; and then die shortly thereafter. The charismatic and flattering deceiver that will fill his shoes will turn out to be the most ruthless dictator the world has ever known; and will eventually be worshiped by all whose names are not in the book of life.

One of the most egregious and dangerous lies of the rapture theory is that believers are being told they will not face the mark of the beast nor the consequences for refusing to take it. People teaching this will give an account for the bewilderment and confusion of those who enter this time unprepared for what they will face because they were assured they would never see this day of persecution and testing. Could you imagine giving account for someone who lost faith over what you taught them because it turned out to be false; and now they doubt everything else they have ever been taught. How many will lose grip on their faith and fall prey to the overwhelming pressure to take the mark of the beast? A false witness shall not be unpunished... (Proverbs 19:9)

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Revelation 13:16

Just as we now see economic sanctions imposed upon 'rogue regimes' to painfully force them to yield to the will of the international community; humanity will see this tactic of control refined to the point where individuals not totally submissive to the global tyranny will lose the privilege of conducting commerce in a normal fashion. In a cashless economy where only the identifying mark of enslavement will grant access to the electronic monetary system; those refusing to submit to this control will be outcasts and considered a danger to society. Seen as human vermin, a world wide program of extermination will ensue. Any not willing to take the mark and express worship to the exalted ruler and his image will be seen as unfit to remain among the dominated masses.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and

The Rapture Theory

cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. Revelation 13:15

Somehow this image of the beast will be not only able to speak to the multitudes, but also determine if people are dutifully worshipping or not, and cause any dissenters to be killed. The eternal consequences involved are not up for debate.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: Revelation 14:9-10

No follower of Jesus can take this mark and submit to the demand for worship without forfeiting his or her eternal soul and suffering the wrath of God forever. We can see those facing this horrible dilemma are the Body of Christ by the descriptive information we are given about them in the following examples.

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

It says the Antichrist makes war with the 'Saints'. This absolutely has to be referring to the Body of Christ. On this side of the Cross Saints are born-again Christians; there is no other type of Saint! There are many people who are saying the 'tribulation Saints' are saved in a like manner as those of the old covenant; a combination of works and faith. This displays great disrespect to the work of the Cross, and is actually preaching heresy; except a person is born-again they cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; Colossians 2:14

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man... Ephesians 2:15

The Rapture Theory

In case you may have not heard it, the Law was abolished; nailed to the Cross and taken out of the way. If you are believing a doctrine that takes the Law down off the Cross and undoes what was accomplished there I fear for your soul. The Saints that Antichrist makes war against are the 'born-again' Body of Christ.

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:12

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Revelation 12:11

They have the grace to walk in obedience, have the faith of Jesus in their hearts, an overcoming spirit, are washed in the blood of the Lamb and have the testimony of the Gospel on their lips: is this not the Body of Christ? Sure sounds like it to me!

...no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 1 Corinthians 12:3

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Romans 8:9

The rapture teachers tell us the tribulation Saints are proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus, but do not have the Holy Spirit because he left at the rapture. Paul plainly states in the above verses that you cannot have the testimony of Christ's Lordship without the Holy Ghost; and furthermore if someone has not the Spirit of Christ he doesn't even belong to Christ. Once again a critical examination causes the rapture theory's house of cards to collapse. We can see by all the descriptors of these Saints that they carry the attributes of born-again believers and not some poor schmucks having to tough it out in their own strength without the power of the Holy Ghost. The rapture theory can't have the Body of Christ in the great tribulation so they invented a new breed of Saint; 'the unregenerate (but saved!) tribulation martyrs' who obtain salvation not by the sacrifice of Christ, but of themselves. (Thanks anyway Jesus, but I think I'll just buy my own ticket!)

The Rapture Theory

The Saints spoken of in Daniel and Revelation that are in the great tribulation are the Body of Christ obeying Christ's command to endure until the end. Immediately after the tribulation time Christ will come and receive his Bride. To say the tribulation Saints are a different type of believer thumbs a nose at God's Word and denies what was accomplished on the Cross of Calvary. To say the Church will not face the Antichrist and the mark of the beast is lying deception and takes away from the book of Revelation. Please ponder the seriousness of that. It could cost you your soul!

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19

WHERE'S THE HARVEST TIME PURGE?

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3:12

John said that at God's harvest of mankind the Lord would thoroughly purge his floor. This is an allegorical reference to the manner in which grain was harvested in Bible times. They had a threshing floor where the harvested stalks of wheat, barley, etc. were threshed (beaten) to loosen the desirable grain from the undesirable stalk and chaff. Then once the stalk could be removed there was the final 'purge' remaining. They would use what was called a winnowing fork to toss the grain up in the air while others would use a fan to create a breeze to blow away the chaff; with this process repeated until the grain was free of chaff and ready for storage. (I see the threshing floor as a type of the great tribulation.)

Some thing noticeably missing from the rapture theory is the threshing floor part of the Harvest. They have the wheat going non-winnowed to the barn. (Personally I believe there is a connection between the chaff and the foolish virgins. Both are culled out so to speak.)

The Rapture Theory

Outright Lie: The Bible teaches the doctrine of 'The imminent Return of Christ'.

One of the first-string players on the rapture team is the doctrine of 'The imminent Return of Christ'. This pillar of the rapture theory states that Christ *may come at any moment to snatch away the Church.

The true meaning of the word 'imminent' implies an impending or 'overhanging' event that *will happen very soon. Someone whose death is imminent will not be alive weeks from now. The deception of this doctrine begins with its very name. *They change the definition of the word imminent from 'will' happen at any moment to 'may' happen at any moment. (let's just make words mean whatever fits our story!) Something that 'may' happen is **not** considered imminent. This is not a correct usage of the word, but using the word imminent impacts you with its true 'impending' or 'over hanging' definition, and gives more clout to the concept. This improper usage of the word 'imminent' in the rapture theory is missed by most people. Quite subtle, huh?

I have a question which makes rapture theorists uneasy because of where it leads to. When did the rapture *become* 'imminent'? I would like to know if it became imminent in modern times, in medieval times, in the days of the early Church, or was it imminent from the day Christ ascended? This is a very important consideration because they all say, "The Bible teaches the doctrine of 'Immanency' and the Church has always believed it!"

The point of my question is that in order for the Scriptures to have always taught his Return is imminent it would have to had been imminent when they were written. And we can absolutely prove it was not in a number of ways. First, if it was imminent at that time it would have happened at that time! (Oops, I forgot they changed 'will' happen to 'may' happen. Sorry.)

The reason we know the Scriptures were not written from a viewpoint of immanency is they were given us by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knew that many events must take place before Jesus could return. And it would have been out of accord with the truth to give the Church the impression Christ's Return was impending. God is not sloppy about his choice of words.

The Rapture Theory

The Holy Spirit knew many things must transpire before the Coming: the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, Peter dying as an old man, dearth prophesied by Agabus, the Gospel preached in all the world, chariots with flaming torches (headlights?) that can run like lightning, the rebirth of the nation of Israel, rise of a religion that forbids marriage and meat eating, false Christs, false prophets, a falling away and the man of sin being revealed, and so on, and so on. If all these things, and many others, had to come to pass first the Scriptures could not have been written to teach his Return was at hand because it absolutely was not.

To say the Scriptures were written to declare a standing doctrine of immanency is flagrant error; and to say the Apostles, were led by the Spirit to teach this concept to their disciples is a lie. I have sadly heard that lie many times from rapture preachers.

Here is something you may have never heard before. Paul and Jesus both warned us against listening to people preaching an impending return of Christ! Here is Paul's warning:

...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. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means...
2 Thessalonians 2:2-3

The words at hand in this passage mean 'impending' which is also the meaning of the word 'imminent'. You can take out the words 'at hand' and insert the word 'imminent' without altering the meaning of the verse an iota. Paul was saying, "Don't let anyone tell you the Return of Christ and our gathering together unto him is imminent!" He goes on to explain what must transpire first.

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; 2 Thessalonians 2:3

Here is a similar warning from the Lord Jesus himself:

And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

Luke 21:8

This was not a warning about following false Christs; but about those coming in Jesus name, claiming Jesus is Christ, and

The Rapture Theory

preaching deception. This is a warning from Jesus about deceived believers proclaiming the time of his Return is upon us! This is very clear instruction from the Lord we are **not** to follow people preaching falsehoods like the 'Doctrine of His imminent Return'. What did he say if they come preaching immanency? "...go ye not therefore after them". He said don't follow them!

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matthew 24:26

Here's something else that is hard to be swallowed by many Christians. Jesus also told us not to believe preachers proclaiming anything other than a visible Coming of Christ! Any one promoting an invisible or secret visitation of Jesus is not to be trusted. He said believe them not! Jesus and Paul both taught against immanency; and Jesus taught against believing anything other than a visible Return. Have you been sitting under or following those preaching these falsehoods that Jesus and Paul warned about? Might want to reflect on that one a bit. Now we see the true purpose of the parable of the fig tree given by the Savior.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Mark 13:28-29

Although not written from the viewpoint of immanency; the Scriptures do present a time when the Return of Christ **will become** imminent. His Coming will not be truly imminent until the season of his arrival. Jesus gave us many signs to recognize that season; and we are to let the signposts tell us how far we are along that road not the opinions or doctrines of man.

The doctrine of the 'Imminent Return' as taught today is a false doctrine, and should be rejected by the Body of Christ.

In The Honorable Court of the Berean Christian

Judge WiseReader Presiding

THE RAPTURE THEORY

VS.

THE WORD OF GOD

The conflict between the rapture theory and the Bible is so evident that only one of them can be true. If you go through the Word of God carefully you will find many verses which make statements so contrary to the rapture theory (and dispensationalism in general) that either their doctrine is false or the Bible is in error. I am talking about Scriptures that absolutely would not have been worded in such a manner if the rapture theory was a reality. A good many of these conflicts deal with the concept of faithfulness and reward. Let's look at a few:

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Peter 5:4

In the 5th chapter of Peter the apostle was exhorting elders to faithfully feed the flock so they could expect a crown of glory at the Second Coming. Why would the Holy Spirit inspire Peter to say this if they would be rewarded seven years earlier at the rapture? Did the Holy Spirit not know about the rapture?

This idea of being rewarded at Christ's Return is found many places in the Bible. But the very framework of the rapture theory necessitates the believers' reward be given earlier at the pretribulation 'rapture' or it throws other elements of their doctrine totally out of wack. If we are to be given our reward at the rapture it would be a lie for the Scriptures to say we're rewarded at the Second Coming. Don't you agree?

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;... ..Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:1+8

If you read this entire passage in your Bible there can be no doubt Paul was saying in verses 1-8 the day of his, and also our,

The Rapture Theory

reward is the day of Christ's Appearing and Kingdom. If the rapture theory were true, with the believers being rewarded at that time, it would have been totally out of line for the Spirit to inspire Paul to write these words; they would absolutely be untrue! Can two opposing ideas both be true? Does God's Word contain lies?

That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Timothy 6:14

In this 6th chapter of Timothy Paul warns Timothy about coveting and exhorts him we are to obey that commandment right up until Jesus returns and shows himself King of Kings and Lord of Lords. How could the believers be obedient until his appearing if they are not going to be here to see his appearing?

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. 10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of *the grace that should come unto you:* ...

...Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 1 Peter 1:7-10+13

Why in the world would Peter be telling us to hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to us at the Revelation of Christ if that was not when we are going to receive that grace? The rapture theory teaches we would receive the fullness of our salvation at their mythical event seven years before the Revelation of Christ. Was Peter speaking error, or is the rapture theory error?

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Matthew 16:27

The rapture theory says we'll be rewarded at the pretrib rapture and they also claim there will be no angels with Christ at

The Rapture Theory

that event. Somebody is fibbing here, and I don't think it's Jesus!

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth. Rev. 11:18

More Scripture here on reward at his Second Coming. I know, some say that verse is easy to explain away with the notion of a later judgment. Let's see you explain away this next one.

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels,...
2 Thessalonians 1:5-7

This passage shows the Body of Christ being persecuted right up until the Revelation! So much for the notion of 'tribulation Saints' that are not the Church. When Jesus is revealed he is going to hand out paychecks (recompense) to both the persecuted and the ones who are persecuting. This is the 'wrath' and the 'reward' promised at the Second Coming. Notice Paul put himself in the same body of believers with these folk: 'rest with us'. This is the Church being rewarded for their persecutions, including those of the great tribulation they are enduring when Christ arrives! This letter was not written to a new breed of believers called 'tribulation Saints' but to the Church of Jesus Christ.

...denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Titus 2:12

Some rapture preachers throw a distraction into this verse falsely saying it is speaking of the two comings of Christ. The rapture being the 'blessed hope' and the Return of Jesus being the 'glorious appearing'. This falsity becomes an irrelevant point when you realize we are being told here to live in this present world

The Rapture Theory

looking for the glorious appearing of the Lord. The Holy Spirit would not have told Paul to have us looking for something we will never see in this world. The rapture theory makes this verse untrue. Or is it the other way around?

My hope is you would recognize these, and so many other verses, being out of kilter with the rapture theory should be a big warning sign that something is amiss with their teaching. True Christian doctrine flows with the Word of God and does not necessitate covering up or explaining away discrepancies.

The Antidote

We have a historical precedent of the damage the rapture theory can cause in the way it adversely affected the Church in China during the persecution, torture, and martyrdom of the believers under Mao Zedong in the early 1950's. Christians, who had been steeped in the errors of the rapture theory by western missionaries, believed they would be raptured out before anything of that sort could befall them. They were left confused and spiritually unprepared to deal with the horrible onslaught of Mao's Red Guard, and many fell away from the faith.

Corrie Ten Boom, a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, spoke of this extensively in her later travels as a speaker on behalf of Christ. It is well worth researching. Can you picture the way the rapture theorists were viewed with disdain and mistrust afterward? They had lost their reputations as men of God and were shunned as false teachers who had misled the believers and damaged the Church. We can only hope they found forgiveness and did not enter eternity to face accountability for their deceptive teachings; and that they had allowed the truth to set them free.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalms 119:105

Years ago warnings of the mark of the beast, and the consequences of receiving it, were a common item of discussion in Christian conversation. And that warning was imprinted in the understanding of the children growing up around this. It seems like today this warning has been replaced with a self centered attitude of: 'Why should I worry about something I will never see'?

The Rapture Theory

What will be the fruit of shelving this topic like it has become obsolete due to modern theory? I often wonder how this will play out in the lives of this generation of children not having been imprinted with that understanding of the consequences for taking the mark. What will restrain them from later destroying themselves by giving in to the pressure and propaganda convincing them it is all for the good of mankind?

A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin. Proverbs 26:28

A lot of people come across like: “What's the big deal? Just let people think what they want about the rapture, end-times, the great tribulation, etc.; why bother people about what they believe?” Why? Because we need to understand that false teachings are not benign; they are malignant and thereby do much damage. Not to mention the fact they are very offensive to God himself.

Lying lips are abomination to the LORD; but they that deal truly are his delight. Proverbs 12:22

I think the unbalanced focus on the 'catching away' rather than the Resurrection speaks volumes of the self centered nature of modern Christianity. It's all about what's best or easiest for you, not about pleasing God or identifying with Jesus. When's the last time you heard a message on any one of these verses:

... we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. 1 Thessalonians 3:4

...unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Philippians 1:29

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 2 Thessalonians 1:5

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2 Timothy 3:12

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 2 Timothy 2:12

All these references about identifying with the sufferings of Christ to the point where we suffer ourselves; but how many

The Rapture Theory

preach at all on this aspect of our faith? It's not all about suffering, but should we be avoiding the topic altogether?

But not only do the rapture teachers shy away from verses on suffering for Christ, remarkably they even steer clear of many passages about our Resurrection and 'catching away'! Ever heard them preach on this next one?

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. 4 He shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. 5 Gather my Saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. 6 And the Heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah. Psalms 50:3-6

The reason rapture preachers avoid this passage is that it is obviously a description of the Second Coming, and our gathering together unto him at that time. Some rapture theorists try to explain this passage away with some weak arguments about a later judgment (and now a fourth Coming?), but most just ignore it and hope it won't get brought up. Here's another passage dealing with the Resurrection you're not likely to hear them preach from:

But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? 11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: 12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the Heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. Job 14:10-12

What, Job? The Resurrection won't happen until what? This prophetic statement found in Job, as astounding as it may seem, is in accord with Peter's words about the Return of Christ:

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. 2 Peter 3:10

Here is how Isaiah and Revelation put it:

And all the host of Heaven shall be dissolved, and the Heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host

The Rapture Theory

shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. Isaiah 34:4

And the Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Revelation 6:14

As with most prophetic end-time events it's hard to pinpoint the timing of this one exactly but the combined witness seems to put it immediately before, or in conjunction with, the Return of Christ; and Job declares it will happen *before* the dead rise! I guess it should be no surprise I've never heard Psalm 50:3-6 or Job 14:12 used by someone trying to promote the theory of a 'rapture' before the great tribulation. They would sink their own ship!

The 'message' of the modern day Church in our nation bears little resemblance to the Gospel of the Scriptures. But ask the 'scriptural illiterate' pew warmers and they would swear they are being fed manna from Heaven. If the overwhelming majority of the Bible you receive is what comes across a pulpit, T.V., or radio you are not likely to have a proper understanding of what lies ahead for the Body of Christ. And we really do need to know the truth of it. Jesus prayed for his disciples that they would be sanctified. How? Through God's truth.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

John 17:17

I feel the believers of our generation have lost sight of a very critical aspect of the Gospel. And that is this: Truth has a sanctifying effect on a receptive heart whereas error and deception defile a person. This is true for an individual or an entire nation. I believe this has a lot to do with the condition of the Church in our nation today; as well as the nation itself. The congregations are not being washed with the water of the Word, but soiled with crowd pleasing perversions of the truth and even outright lies. How crucial is this issue to us?

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. James 5:19-20

The Rapture Theory

Notice how James ties truth to salvation in these verses. Erring from the truth, he says, will make you a sinner in need of being converted and saved from death! Sounds somewhat crucial to me. To be lured away from the truth is to be lured away from Christ. I think we need to wake up to the dangerous condition of the 'not that worried about doctrine' believer. The churches in America are packed plum full of people who would rather agree to disagree than make any sacrifice of time or energy to 'prove all things and hold fast that which is good' (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

I once posed a simple question to a professed believer and received the response: "I don't know, I'll have to call one of our elders and see what we believe." And he promptly did so. Sadly, this is the question he could not answer: "Was Jesus God clothed in humanity, or just one of God's created beings?" And the response he got from his elder was even sadder; for it turned out he was a Mormon. This devout man had almost no Bible knowledge, but was assured he was being taught properly from good honest people who did. Some well meaning folk, who I am sure had his best interests at heart, were feeding him a pack of lies.

...we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 2 Peter 1:16

Even in the days of the apostles there were 'cunningly devised fables' attempting to lure the believers away from the truth. How much more should we beware in a day where so many have lost a love for the truth? Thank God we have a rock to stand upon!

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 2 Peter 1:19

The truth of God's Word will always be the antidote for the poison of error and deception. Critical examination of teachings and the study of Scripture in context are the antidote at work to dispel that poison. Don't be afraid to question your beliefs; put them to the test and see how they stand up. Open your Bible daily and drink deep. It's good medicine! Paul Benson

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 1 Thessalonians 5:21

The Rapture Theory

Materials Available

Books:

Is the Bible you read: The True Sayings of God? by Paul Benson (8½” x 11” 160 pages. Shows nearly 500 of the corrupting changes to the ‘modern’ versions. A comparative study of 10 versions!)

Should we trust: The Rapture Theory? By Paul Benson (A hard hitting examination of the rapture teaching.)

Should They Be Changing The Bible? by Paul Benson (Shows why the ‘modern’ versions are not to be trusted.)

Escape or Passover by Paul Benson (A look at the Rapture theory using nearly 100 Bible passages.)

Tracts:

In Spirit and Truth (A good primer on the error of the ‘new’ Bible versions.)

The Scripture Quiz (An eye-opener to the difference between the KJV and the ‘modern’ versions.)

A Good Man’s Garment (An exhortation to appreciate the gift of Christ’s righteousness.)

The Prophetic Feasts of the Lord (On the prophetic types of the Old Testament Feasts.)

Don’t Go To Hell! (This is a tract they will not soon forget!)

The materials offered here are FREE as the Lord provides.
Send your request or correspondence to:

Paul Benson, P.O. Box 5519, Kalispell, MT. 59903

All books are also available in e-book format:
website: www.paulbenson.me