

THE SECRET RAPTURE THEORY

(Exerpt from Bible Study Guide)

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Hal Lindsay in his book - The Late Great Planet Earth - popularized the teaching of the Secret Rapture. This concept of a secret coming of Christ for His "elect" prior to the great tribulation and the appearing of the antichrist is today "the lifeblood of the electronic church." A teacher of this theory makes the following explanation of the term, "rapture." He wrote:

Strange to say the word itself does not appear in the Bible. The English word means: "to transport to a state of happiness." It comes from the Latin word. "rapid." meaning "to seize quickly or suddenly" or "to snatch away."

If the reader will carefully consider I Thessalonians 4:13-18, he will note that in the day of Christ's sudden coming for His own. they are to be "caught up" (verse 17). The Greek word here means precisely "snatch up suddenly." From this we derive the term "Rapture" commonly used among premillennial teachers in referring to the first phase of His second advent. (The Rapture, pp. 4-5; Quoted in The Secret Rapture and the Antichrist, p. 11)

To clothe the theory in the respectability of New Testament Greek research, its advocates have asserted that there is a difference between the parousia, or personal presence of Christ, and the apokalupsis, or revelation of Christ in His glory. However, the very text cited to associate the concept of "snatch away suddenly" with the Latin, "rapid" and hence the English, "rapture" - I Thessalonians 4:15-17 - declares "the parousia (coming) of the Lord" to be accompanied by "a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Hardly secret! Further Paul declares that "Wicked One" (Antichrist) will be consumed with the spirit of His mouth at Christ's parousia. (II Thess. 2:8) So the antichrist does not come after the parousia of Christ, but is destroyed at his parousia.

It is also taught that these two supposedly different comings of Christ are separated by seven years. To obtain this sum of years, the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9, are arranged so as to have the 69 weeks cover till the time of Christ's first Advent. Then is introduced a "prophetic parenthesis" till the parousia of Christ to be followed by the 70th week. This is built upon dispensationalism with the Church Age during the time of the "Gap."

Great stress is made of the results of the "rapture" upon civilization. Newspapers of the variety which will supposedly be published following the "rapture" are used as "missionary" literature. One such "advanced" edition carries in bold headlines - MULTITUDES MISSING - with a sub-line, "Nations Throughout the World Alarmed Over the Mysterious Disappearing of People from the Earth." In writing of occurrences, the

imagination is left unfettered. Terrible wrecks take place on the highways as the driver of one vehicle is snatched away. Airplanes crash because the pilot disappears. Even the editor of this Post Rapture Journal has himself listed among the missing, with the reminder - he had preached his famous sermon, "The Meeting in the Air," hundreds of times.

The Scriptures teach plainly only one second coming of Christ - not a two phased event. Jesus told His disciples: - note the time sequence by the use of "then" -

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. And then shall *He* send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. (Mark. 13:26-27)

[Note - The "they" that see are defined in Matt. 24:30 as "all the tribes of earth." The meaning of "elect" was discussed in the Lesson, p. 49.]

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The fact is that dividing the second coming of Jesus into two events was not known in Christian teaching prior to the early 1800's. There are some advocates, however, of this theory who hold that certain statements of early church fathers can be used to sustain its approach to apostolic origin. One of these men is John Walvoord, who is known as the "dean" of this teaching. His conclusions are discredited in a recent publication, The Great Rapture Hoax, by Dave MacPherson (pp. 338-339).*

The teaching of the rapture of the "saints" prior to the great tribulation came by a revelation to a young Scottish teenager, Margaret Macdonald, in 1830. Through this revelation or dream, Margaret introduced the "secret" rapture idea noting that Christ would first be seen by only Spirit-filled Christians. She indicated that the antichrist was still in the future, instead of the historic Protestant designation of the Papacy. From that beginning in Port Glasgow, Scotland, it was taken and developed by John Darby and C. I. Scofield into a whole futuristic schema of last day events.

[*This book may be obtained from the New Puritan Library, 91 Lytle Road, Fletcher, NC 28732. Another book by the same author - The Incredible Cover-Up - is also very enlightening on this subject.]