

WILL THERE BE A RAPTURE?

May 26, 2013

In a book entitled, *On Borrowed Time: 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Come in 1988*, Edgar C. Whisenant predicted that Christ would return to rapture His saints on Tuesday, September 13, 1988, at 11:00 A. M., Central Daylight Time. Of course, Christ did not return on that Tuesday, so Whisenant changed the date to Wednesday, then Thursday, and then to Friday. Sometime, later in an interview with *Christianity Today* magazine, he stated, "The evidence is all over the place that it is going to be in a few days anyway." Almost twenty-five years later, the Lord has still not returned to "rapture" His saints to heaven.

Most have seen bumper stickers that say, "In case of rapture this car will be driverless." The belief is that when Christ comes back to "rapture" His saints, they will simply disappear without any explanation to those that are left behind. Hal Lindsey wrote in his book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, "Astounding as man's trip to the moon is, there is another trip which many men, women, and children will take some day which will leave the rest of the world gasping. Those who remain on earth at that time will use every invention of the human mind to explain the sudden disappearance of millions of people."

Before we can determine if such a phenomenon will take place, first, we must define exactly what the rapture is supposed to be. The word rapture is not a word that can be found in the Holy Writ. It comes from the Latin word "rpto" which means "to snatch away." This doctrine teaches that Jesus will return secretly to snatch away the righteous immediately before a period of "great tribulation." When it occurs, people will be going about their lives just as they had always done up to that point. Suddenly, cars will have no drivers and chairs in schools, offices, and waiting rooms will be vacant. Seats on buses, trains, and planes will be empty, workers will instantly and silently disappear from factory assembly lines, and husbands, wives, or children will disappear without a trace from their homes. All this, of course, will lead to total and utter chaos as a frenzied search will take place for the missing and the lost. Can any of this be proven with Biblical teaching? The answer is an astounding, NO!

However, the Bible does inform the reader about the events that will take place upon Christ's return to gather His people (Jn. 14:1-3). Paul in explicit detail told the Thessalonians what would happen on that day, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Three great sounds will be heard: He shall descend "with a shout," as when the Lord "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth" (Jn. 11:43), He evidently will give a shout to bring the dead from the graves in the resurrection. Also, He will descend "with the voice of the archangel," Michael will be voicing the commands of His Lord to His angels. Then, He shall descend "with the trump of God." In the Old Testament, the trumpet and the shout were often used together. How startling will the loud trumpet at the last day be! When it sounds, "the dead shall be raised incorruptible" (1 Cor. 15:52).

This is not an event that will be missed by anybody!

When Paul said the dead would rise first, he was not speaking of two separate resurrections because all the faithful will be caught up in the clouds together (1 Thess. 4:17). The dead will be resurrected from the grave before the living meet the Lord, and then, both the resurrected saints and the living saints “shall together... be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the lord.” Paul did not say that we will be with the Lord for seven years and then return to the earth for a thousand years, he said we will ever be with the Lord.

The rapture is just one of the false theories that accompany the Devil’s doctrine of Pre-millennialism. It is a teaching that must be inserted into the Bible because it is found nowhere within its pages! The Lord will return, He will gather the faithful to Himself, and then He will live eternally in heaven with them. Therefore, we must all prepare ourselves for that great and glorious day.