

WHAT ABOUT THE RAPTURE?

October 25, 2015

Harold Camping, American Christian radio broadcaster, author and evangelist; predicted that Jesus Christ would return to earth on May 21, 2011. He also taught, upon that return, the saved would be taken up to heaven in the rapture, and that five months of fire, brimstone, and plagues would destroy millions of people each day, culminating in the earth's final destruction on October 21, 2011. When May 21, 2011 came and went, Camping declared a spiritual judgment had been made, and the final destruction and physical rapture would occur on the October date. Three years later, the Lord has still not returned to "rapture" His saints to heaven. Camping did later admit that his trying to predict the end of time was "sinful," and that his critics had been right in emphasizing the words of Christ recorded in Mt. 24:36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

That is just one incident of the many failed apocalyptic prophecies throughout the years. How many of us have seen bumper stickers that say, "In case of rapture this car will be driverless." The belief behind such teaching is when Christ comes back to "rapture," His saints 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).

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.