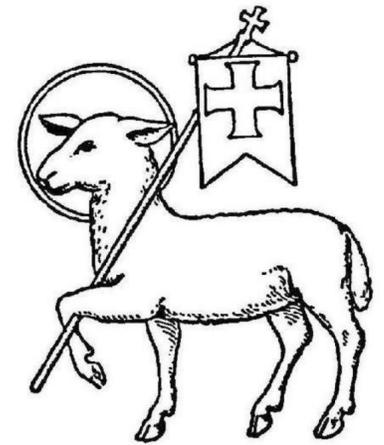


THE BOOK OF REVELATION

7. God's people during the great tribulation



Introduction: The Rapture

- Imagine the scene everyone has gone, and you've been left behind.
- The 'Rapture' or the 'Pre-tribulation secret Rapture'. The next thing to happen in the prophetic calendar – could be any moment now (even today!)
- Became popular in the 1970's:
 - Hal Lindsey (*The Late Great Planet earth; The Rapture, Vanished, etc.*)
 - Tim La Haye (*Left Behind; The Rapture, etc*)
- A false doctrine or a faulty interpretation? (Or true?)
- Based on:
 - 'Church' does not appear in Revelation after chapter 3 (so must have gone)
 - Believing Christians have been saved from wrath (and lots of wrath in Revelation)
 - John 14:3 'I will come again and take you to myself'
 - 2 Peter 3:10 'he will come like a thief in the night'
 - Matthew 24:36-44 (v. 40 'one will be taken, one will be left behind.'
 - The 'Day of the Lord' and the 'Day of Christ' are two separate days.

Reasons for rejecting this interpretation (but not rejecting the Rapture)

1. Prior to 1830 no one had ever heard of this idea or taught it. (1830 'The Book of Mormon' by Joseph Smith)
2. The dubious circle in which the idea first emerged (1830, Margaret McDonald from Port Glasgow) Edward Irving and McLeod Campbell. (Both expelled from the ministry of the Church of Scotland for their unorthodox views on Christ).
 - [For origins of the doctrine see 'The Incredible Cover-Up: The true story of the pre-trib Rapture' by Dave MacPherson, Logos Books, 1975]
3. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and the Plymouth Brethren (and its various branches: Christian, Open, Closed, etc). C.I. Scofield (*The Scofield Reference Bible*, 1909)
4. No main-line denomination has ever taught it, most evangelicals and charismatics in the UK would not believe it.
5. It is not in the Bible! Although its teachers point to various verses, no one coming to an open-minded independent study of the Bible would find the secret rapture in these verses.
6. The main text, and only verse where the word rapture is found is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11, in particular verse 17 " ... then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [Latin Vulgate: 'raptura'] in the clouds ..." but this verse actually disproves the theory:
 - It will be noisy (trumpet, cry of command, archangel's call)
 - The day of the Lord (there is only one day of the Lord in the Bible, and that is the Second Coming)
 - It will only be like 'a thief in the night' for unbelievers – for believers it will be the opposite (5:4)

- It will not be the next event in the prophetic calendar, as two major events have to take place first: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 – the ‘falling away’ Greek ‘*apostasia*’ (v 3) and the revealing of the ‘*man of lawlessness*’ (Antichrist?)
7. Based on three major misunderstandings.
- There is a difference between the ‘Church’ (Matthew 16:18) and ‘churches’ (Matthew 18: 15-20)
 - There is a difference in Revelation between wrath (for the ungodly) and persecution (for believers)
 - The ‘saints’ . There is a difference between Israel and the Church.

The teaching of Jesus (Matthew 24:9-22)

- Persecution of believers (‘the elect’ v.22) in the midst of tribulation, reign of Antichrist (Daniel 11:31; Matthew 24:15) believers only being rescued through the Second Coming of Christ. Why did Jesus never teach the Rapture here?

The 5th seal (6:9-11)

- The souls of the martyrs under the altar. Their brothers and sisters ‘soon to be killed’ (v.11) – persecution; but wrath for the ungodly (6:16-17)

The sealing of the 144,000 (7:1-8)

- Symbolic: 12x12=144 (all God’s people through the ages – Rev 4:4)
- Literal: Jewish believers (Romans chapters 9 – 11)
- The seal is the sign of protection of God’s people. Rev 3:10

The blood-washed (7:13-17)

- A great crowd that no one could number who had come out of the great tribulation. V 14

The 5th Angel’s trumpet (9:1-6)

- The supernatural beings like locusts only torment those who do not have the seal of God. v. 4

The two witnesses (11:1-13)

- Like Moss and Elijah – who are they?
- The possibility of repentance (and conversion) during the tribulation?

The woman and her child (12:1-17)

- The Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus? (Matthew 2:13-15)
- Israel / The Church? (Matthew 21:43; Hebrews 2:10-11)

War on the saints (13:5-10)

- Who are the saints?

The call to endure (15:12)

Daniel 12:1 During the ‘time of great anguish’ your people shall be delivered. But how?

- Daniel 11:32: Be strong – take action!