

# THE RAPTURE OF “THE CHURCH” AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The fundamental point of this lesson is that the rapture (*parousia*) and the revelation (*apokalupsis*) of Christ’s second coming are not two separate comings, but are one and the same event.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul states:

But I do not want you to be ignorant brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

From this passage, dispensationalists teach that “the Church” will be resurrected or taken out of the world in a secret rapture before the tribulation begins. To them, the wicked dead will not be resurrected until seven or 1007 years later.

In *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, Alexander Reese refers to the dispensational view of this passage and states, “The suggestion of Darby ... to prove from this most magnificent passage in 1 Thess. 4 that a secret coming, a secret resurrection, and a secret rapture are portrayed, followed by the rise and reign of Antichrist, is among the \_\_\_\_\_ in the whole history of freak exegesis” (Reese 1934, 146).

Jesus Himself stated that the righteous (believers) would be resurrected at “the last day,” not seven or 1007 years after the last day (John 6:39, 40, 44-54; 11:24). Jesus also taught that judgment for all would occur “\_\_\_\_\_” (John 12:48).

The coming of Christ in a secret rapture \_\_\_\_\_  
what these scriptures teach. Furthermore, Peter, Paul, and John all agree that both the righteous and the wicked will be judged at the same time, not seven or more years apart (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5; Rev. 11:18). To say otherwise is to pervert these scriptures.

First Thessalonians 4:13-18 is Christ's coming (*parousia*) rapture of His believers. The text states the following:

- The *Lord Himself descends* from heaven.
- It will be with *a shout*.
- It will be with the *voice of the archangel*.
- It will with the *trumpet of God*.
- The dead in *Christ will be resurrected*.
- Christ will bring *with Him* those who have died.
- Then all believers will be *caught up together with the Lord*.
- Christ will come *in the clouds*.

Dispensationalists claim 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 teaches that a secret rapture will culminate (\_\_\_\_\_ ) “the Church Age.” Then there will be a seven-year tribulation period, which is postulated on the false premise of the postponement of the seventieth week of Daniel that is to take place after “the Church” has been raptured. However, there is nothing secret about anything in the text. One must ask, where in Scripture are these things implicitly stated?

In *A Theology of the New Testament*, George Eldon Ladd, referring to Walvoord’s statements in his 1957 edition of *The Rapture Question*, states, “In fact, Walvoord goes so far as to admit that ‘pretribulationism,’ i.e. a coming of Christ before the great tribulation for the church, is not explicitly taught in Scripture” (Ladd 1974, 556). Ladd says this was deleted from his later printings.

To say that it is not explicitly taught means that it is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ in Scripture.

As to Daniel's seventieth week, Daniel 9:26 states that the Messiah was to be cut off *after* the sixty-ninth week, which would be \_\_\_\_\_. If God has postponed the seventieth week, then the Messiah was not yet cut off. On the other hand, if Scripture teaches that Christ has been cut off in Daniel's seventieth week and that the seventieth week has been fulfilled, then the dispensational position cannot be biblical.

In a May 1974 article in *Moody Monthly*, Dr. Earl D. Radmacher, president of the Western Theological Seminary in Portland, Oregon, says:

The prophetic signs that precede the second coming of Christ to earth to set up his kingdom and the imminent, or any moment, return of Christ, *for* His raptured Church,

Dispensational students of prophetic Scripture understand that these two events to be \_\_\_\_\_.

The Second Advent is preceded by signs (cf. Mt.24:3) but the rapture of the Church is without any necessary signs and may, therefore, occur at any moment . . . . No signs, as such were promised to notify the Church before He comes in the air and the “blitzkrieg” of tribulation begins. In this sense, then, we live in a “signless” age, that is a period of prophetic silence.

The Church age is an \_\_\_\_\_ age, both with respect to Old Testament predictions and New Testament signs. The Church today is simply told to “wait for his Son from heaven.”

Dispensationalists teach that “the Church” is Christ’s Body and does not include Israel from the Old Testament, as they were not a part of Christ’s Body. Therefore, the Old Testament saints will not

be caught up in the rapture. Is this biblically true? To the contrary, in Ephesians 3:6, Paul states that the saved Gentiles will become fellow heirs of the \_\_\_\_\_ as Old Testament Israel. Therefore, the elect of Israel were also called a Body: “The Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the *same body*, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.” Jesus stated the same in Matthew 8:11: “And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the \_\_\_\_\_.” This means the dispensational view is unscriptural and therefore invalid.

The question is: Where in the Bible are either of these positions found in the text; that is, the *rapture* being a \_\_\_\_\_ from the second coming of Christ? Exegetically, ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) these positions are not there. They are theories superimposed upon the text and unsupported by

scripture. In fact, they are part of the dispensational scheme of interpreting the Bible.

This scheme officially came into existence about \_\_\_\_\_ when it was introduced into Christianity by the \_\_\_\_\_ movement, a new doctrine that represented claims that had not been stated by the Church in the previous seventeen centuries. \_\_\_\_\_ was its promoter. He introduced the idea of a “secret rapture” in 1883 at a Powerscourt session. Then in 1908, C. I. Scofield put this theology into his Bible notes, which served to promote the dispensational ideals. Scofield was the first to put it into print as a way of interpreting the Bible.

Concerning the *Scofield Reference Bible*, E. Schuyler English wrote, “Most theologians credit J. N. Darby, a Plymouth Brethren scholar, with the first systematizing dispensational theology in the

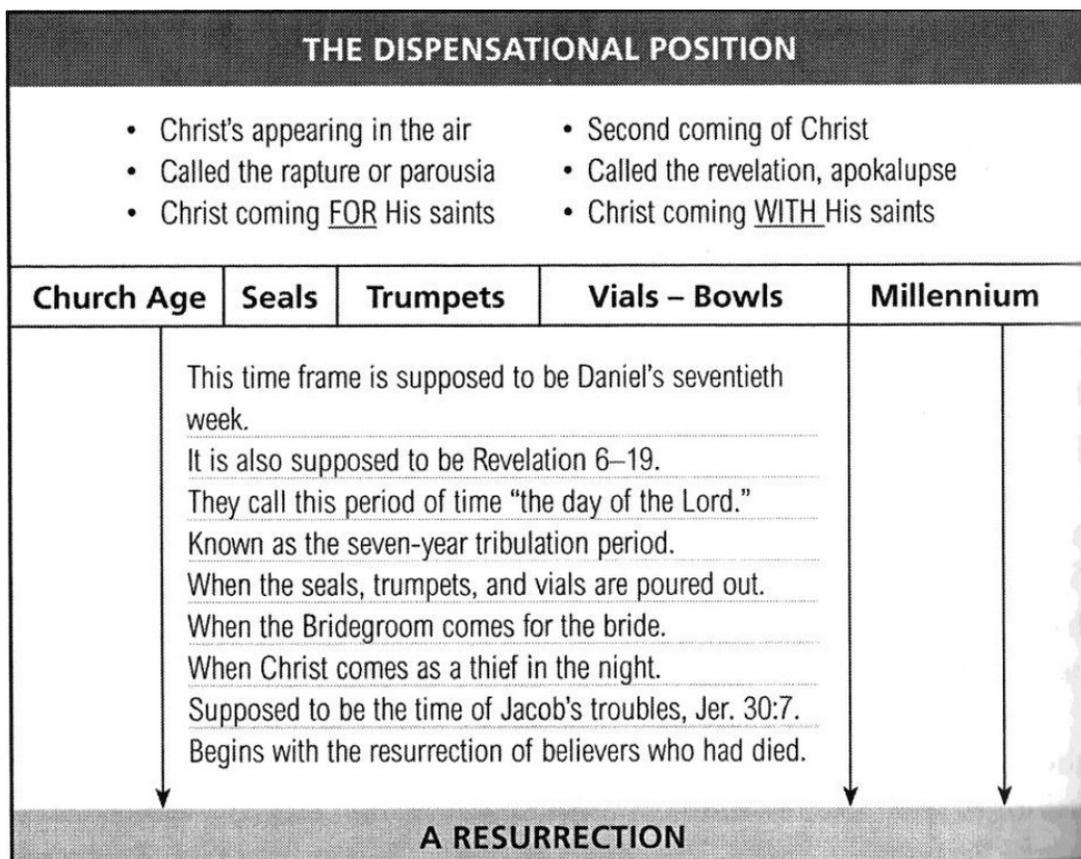
middle of the 19th century. But the work of Darby, humanly speaking, would have been lost or forgotten had it not been for a lawyer-turned-preacher: C. I. Scofield. In 1908, the first edition of his now famous *Scofield Reference Bible* was published” (*Christian Life Magazine*, September 1956).

Is Mr. English not saying that Darby was the originator of this theory as we have it today, but that it would have been lost were it not for C. I. Scofield?

By saying that this doctrine would not have been known today had the *Scofield Reference Bible* notes not been written, English basically assures us of its \_\_\_\_\_ in the history of the Church.

Tregelles, a Greek scholar and a member of the Plymouth Brethren in those days, says the idea of a secret rapture at a second coming of Christ had its origin in an utterance in Edward Irving’s

church, and this was taken to be the voice of the Spirit. Tregelles continued, “It was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose. It came not from the Holy Scriptures, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God” (G. Eldon Ladd 1864, 41).



Dispensationalists set the second coming seven years after the so-called rapture, yet Jesus says that no man knows the day or the hour of His coming (Matthew 24:36).

As to whether the rapture is pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation, those who believe either position must prove by direct and explicit Scripture that there will be a seven-year tribulation period. As to Daniel's \_\_\_\_\_, if the Bible teaches that the seventieth week is already fulfilled, there can be no basis whatever for a seven year tribulation—period!

In *The Rapture Question*, Walvoord starts his thesis on the rapture by stating that those who do not believe his position on the rapture are “\_\_\_\_\_ and neo-orthodox and that they contribute nothing to the rapture question” (Walvoord 1978, 8).

In other words, a person is to read the Bible through Walvoord's glasses, or they fall under one of these labels. What a great way to turn off your students from any questions about the rapture!

This means that we are not \_\_\_\_\_ the rapture theory.

Walvoord continues, "It is as impossible to discuss the questions pertinent to the time of the rapture without assuming the authority of the Scripture as it is to solve a problem in mathematics without accepting the normal meaning of numbers. *With these proper assumptions*, however, the Scriptural revelation casts a broad shaft of light on the entire problem of the rapture" (Ibid, p. 8, emphasis mine).

It is not the normal meaning of numbers or the authority of Scripture that is at stake but the \_\_\_\_\_ these dispensationalists have made in order to prove their point.

One of their *assumptions* is transferring patterns of time stated in one period and then, without scriptural warrant, transferring them to another period of time to which the scriptures do not speak. By this, I mean the canceling out of Daniel's seventieth week from its immediate-following sixty-ninth week, as the sixty-ninth week so followed the sixty-eighth week. By this *assumption* dispensationalists produce a seven-year tribulation period beginning with a secret rapture of the Church.

Because Daniel's seventieth week has been \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ fulfilled, there can be no seven-year period of tribulation to come. This, then, automatically eliminates a secret pre-tribulation rapture.

In reality, the scriptures that dispensationalists twist to the secret rapture actually belong to the second coming.