



The “Rapture”?

There are supposed theologians who grabbed some scriptures out of the book of Revelation, and came up with some wild ideas about the times and events connected with Jesus’ second coming. (This is called “eschatology,” by the way, meaning essentially “study of the end times.”) Because they started from their ideas of the book of Revelation rather than the plain statements of the epistles and other clear points from Acts or the gospel accounts, they have to use a twenty pound post maul to beat on the scriptures to try to get them to fit. Proper understanding of the word of God, however, allows the scripture verses to connect perfectly, just as jig-saw puzzle pieces nicely drop into place when they are in the correct location. But these false teachers ignore many straightforward scriptures and come up with something called “the rapture,” followed by seven years of “tribulation,” during which “the antichrist” comes and has a tyranny of terror over the earth, after which Jesus in “the second advent” comes down and reigns as king for 1000 years while David reigns as co-regent over Jerusalem and the priests of the descendants of Zadok offer sacrifices in a rebuilt temple. Whew! Pretty farfetched, and definitely counter to the teaching and tenor of the new testament writings.

- **“Secret rapture” scriptures** — One of the main scriptures for this false teaching [called *pre-millennialism* because it teaches that Jesus comes back before (*pre-*) the 1000 year (*millennium*) reign of Christ] comes out of 1 Thessalonians chapter four. This passage describes how Jesus “will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall 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” (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). This is somehow interpreted to mean that Christians will silently be lifted off the earth and meet Jesus in the air, while everyone else wonders what happened to them. Then follows the “tribulation,” etc. It is absolutely amazing that people would believe in this “secret rapture” based on these verses. The concept that Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout using the archangel’s voice sounds like something loud enough to be heard all over the world; not exactly secretly or in stealth. Similarly, the sounding of the trumpet of God does not indicate a silent lifting of saints off the world. In a simple, obvious way, this pre-millennial doctrine is false teaching.
- **Denigration of Jesus’ sacrifice** — A key component of pre-millennial teaching is that after the seven years of “tribulation” and the coming of Jesus down to reign on the earth is the restoration of Old Testament sacrifices.

It is important that disciples of Christ focus on what the scriptures themselves teach!

The idea is that God’s real plan has always been with the nation Israel, that the church age is a temporary stopgap until God can get back to what He wanted to do all along. In the 1000 years, the sacrifices in a rebuilt temple once again are restored, and the priests of the descendants of Zadok are restored to the position of honor of being able to offer those sacrifices on a rebuilt altar in Jerusalem. This, of course, is totally contrary to the teaching of the scripture that those sacrifices were the stopgap until Jesus could be both the sacrifice and the high priest to offer the blood of His sacrifice in heaven, as illustrated particularly in the book of Hebrews. Thus, in pre-millennial teaching, Jesus’ sacrifice amounted to nothing compared to the wonderfulness of those Old Testament offerings!

There are many other problems with the whole pre-millennial perspective. The church, for example, — the very bride of Christ — is relegated to nothing more than a temporary fix until the pipeline of Israel could be restored. Such false doctrine totally turns the teaching and tenor of the new testament writings upside down, and clearly is a satanic attack on the Lord and His church. It is important that modern disciples of Christ recognize pre-millennialism for what it is, and focus on what the scriptures themselves teach.