

Does the Bible Teach a Secret Rapture of the Church?

- by Larry Dishman

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Introduction

In this message we will study twelve points concerning these last days. First, we will see what the Bible says about the last days of the world. Second, we will see that the saints as well as the sinners will be raised and judged on the last day. Third, both the righteous and the wicked will be at the Judgment. Fourth, the just and the unjust will receive their eternal reward at the same time. Fifth, we will answer the question. What is spiritual death? and sixth. What is the second death? Seventh, we will show you that there are only two resurrections and that the first resurrection is a spiritual one. Eighth, we will study the three appearances of Christ spoken of in the Bible. Ninth, we will discover what is meant by Christ's coming as a thief in the night. Tenth, we will show you what is going to follow the Day of the Lord?

Eleventh, we will show you, by the Bible, why the teaching of the rapture is an unprofitable teaching and that it is "another Gospel." Twelfth, we will show you that Christ will come quickly.

In this day and time in which we are living, we hear much about the rapture. Preachers are talking about it on the radio, and many songwriters have written songs about it. Where did men get this idea? Let us look at this doctrine. Premillennialists teach that the church will be raptured to meet the Lord in the air. They say that the church will be with the Lord for seven years (some differ concerning the number of years). Then, they teach that while the church is with Jesus, God will send great tribulation upon the earth.

To teach these false doctrines, men must teach two or more future literal appearances of Jesus Christ. Friend, you need to be careful when you listen to preachers or read booklets that use such terms as "it is evident," "will obviously," "will apparently," "it seems clear," "it seems that," "it seems to be," "probably," or "it may be regarded." So much of what is being taught on this subject is based on uncertainty. This is characteristic of the dispensational literature.

The word *rapture* is not found in the Bible, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New. If you look up the word in the dictionary, it means "to carry away quickly." Jesus is going to come only one more time, yet so many people in the religious world are talking about a *secret* rapture of the church. They say that after the rapture of the church, the newspapers will tell all about it. On the contrary, after Christ comes for His bride, no more newspapers will be printed, because this old earth is going to be burned up. The Bible lets us know that everything will end in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Millennialists say that if a Christian bus driver should be driving down the highway when the rapture takes place, he and all the passengers who are saved will be raptured. Then, all the sinners will be in a terrible

accident. They say that cars will be wrecked everywhere, because suddenly the saints are going to disappear.

According to this doctrine, Christian pilots and copilots will disappear and planes will crash all over the world.

They say that a man mowing his yard with a riding lawnmower will suddenly disappear. A lady in the house cooking supper will disappear, and the food will scorch and burn. They say that all babies are going to disappear. Let us see what the Word of God has to say.

The Last Days

According to the Bible, we are living in the last days, or the end of the world. Hebrews 1:1-2 says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Nearly two thousand years ago, Paul spoke of being in the last days then. In I John 2:18 John wrote, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

Peter stated in I Peter 1:20, "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." Hebrews 9:26 says, "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." These Scriptures are sufficient to prove that we are living in the last days; this is the last time.

The Righteous and the Wicked Will Be Resurrected on the Last Day

The saints as well as the sinners will be raised and judged on the last day, and we can prove this by the Bible. In John 6:39-40 the Bible says: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. [When is He going to raise it up? At the last day.] And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting

life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Verse 44 says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." All these Scriptures make it plain that the saints will rise on the last day.

John 11:23 states, "Jesus saith unto her. Thy brother shall ~ rise again." How did Martha answer Jesus? In verse 24 she said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Again, we read that the resurrection will take place on the last day. You may wonder, "Why use all these Scriptures to prove that the resurrection will take place on the last day?" Because so many in the religious world are trying to teach that these things are going to take place *after* the last day, or *after* the resurrection of the saints. Contrariwise, there will not be any more days after the last day. Saints and sinners as well will rise on the last day. Friend, there will be no more days, as we know them, after the last day; but it will be a never-ending eternity. All the New Testament writers testify that we are living in the last time and that Christ will come on the last day. There will be no time after the last day.

Saints and sinners will come out of their graves within the same hour. Daniel 12:2 tells us, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel understood it just as Jesus stated it in John 5:28, when He said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice (it will happen within the same hour)." When will they hear the voice of the Son of God? The answer is found in I Thessalonians 4:16, which states, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel."

John 5:28-29 says: ". . . in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Some people teach that there will be seven years between these resurrections. However, the Bible lets us know it will be

within the same hour. There is only one *literal* resurrection taught in the Bible. One must go outside the Bible to teach two literal resurrections.

Acts 24:15 reads, "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Notice that this Scripture says "there shall be *a* resurrection [singular]." The writer of the Book of Acts and Darnel understood it the same way that Jesus stated it. Paul positively stated there would be only one resurrection of the just and the unjust. According to the Word of God, neither a period of seven years nor a period of one thousand years will be between the resurrection of the saved and the unsaved. It is so evident from the Scriptures that there is a single resurrection of the physically dead in which both the saints and the sinners will take part.

Saints and Sinners Will Be judged on the Last Day

John 12:48 says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." This Scripture lets us know that the Judgment will take place at the last day. It will take place on the same day that the saints and the sinners are resurrected.

Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The saints and the sinners will be caught up to a final judgment. I want you to notice that the Bible says "after this [death] the judgment." He did not say, "After death, Armageddon," "after death, the millennium," "after death, the mark of the beast," or "after death, tribulation." No, *after death comes the Judgment.*

Revelation 20:11-13 says: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was

opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

The wording in those verses is quite sufficient to show that this is the last resurrection of *all* the dead. He said "the books [the Old and the New Testaments] were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life." Why would God open the Book of Life if all that was left were the wicked? Every man will be judged according to his works, showing that both the just and the unjust will be at the Judgment scene.

Acts 1:9-11 says: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said. Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Here the writer was talking about Christ's visible coming. When will this visible coming of Christ occur? According to the Bible, no one but the Father knows when this visible return of the Lord will occur. The Bible proves that in Matthew 24:36, which says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

People who believe in the millennium are quick to say it

will take place one thousand years after Jesus comes to this earth and sets up His Kingdom, which is another false doctrine. They say that they know when this will take place. Again, their theory falls apart, because no man knows the day or the hour. If their teaching were correct, they could pinpoint the exact time, one thousand years from that time.

Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen." Notice that this Scripture lets us know that both

classes of people will see Him when He comes. There is not one thing in the Bible that proves the thought of Jesus' coming to rapture the church and leave the rest of the people here for several years. The Bible plainly teaches that when He comes again, "every eye shall see him," not just the saints. There is only one coming of Christ in the future, and all that are in the graves will come forth when He comes again.

The Just and the Unjust Will Receive Their Rewards at the Same Time

Both classes of people, the righteous and the wicked, will be at the Judgment and will receive their eternal rewards at the same time, according to the Bible. Matthew 25:31-46 states: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying. Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them. Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I

was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

"Then shall they also answer him, saying. Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying. Verily I say unto you. Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." No scriptural teaching brings Christ any closer to this earth than the clouds. His work on earth in a bodily form is forever finished. Jesus' own words concerning this are found in John 17:4, which says, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

As you read in Matthew 25:31-46, the righteous and the wicked will be at the Judgment and will receive their eternal rewards at the same time. Second Thessalonians 1:7-10 says: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the

glory of his power." Again, we can see that both classes will receive their rewards at His coming, not a thousand years apart as some suppose.

Spiritual Death

What is the spiritual death spoken of in the Bible? Before you can understand what the spiritual resurrection is, you need to understand what the spiritual death is. Ezekiel 18:4 makes this clear: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." In the beginning of time. Genesis 2:16-17 says: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying. . . for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die." Adam and Eve did not

die physically when they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they died spiritually. They were cut off from God; that is what spiritual death is. In Isaiah 59:2 the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Sin separates a person from God.

The Second Death

The second death occurs when Jesus says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matthew 25:41). Revelation 20:14 says, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Revelation 21:8 states, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

The second death is eternal separation from God. Who will be cast into the lake of fire? According to Revelation 20:15, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The Two Resurrections

Only two resurrections are spoken of in the Bible: the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection, and the second is a physical resurrection. Jesus came in His First Advent to resurrect souls from spiritual death. He is coming the next time to resurrect bodies physically. If you will study the Bible, John 5:24-29 makes this clear. In verses 24-25 Jesus was dealing with the resurrection of the soul. In verses 28-29 He was dealing with the resurrection of the body.

Our Scripture text reads in verses 24-25: "Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come

into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you. The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Notice that He said, "The hour is coming, and *now is*" This resurrection started taking place nearly two thousand years ago.

Revelation 20:6 states, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." All who are saved have already taken part in the first resurrection. What does the first resurrection do for a man? It makes him blessed and holy, and it gives him power over the second death. Nothing is taught more certainly in the Book of God than the doctrine of a holy life. Speaking of the first resurrection, Jesus said in John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." That is the first resurrection.

When you get saved, you are resurrected. In Ephesians 2:1 Paul said, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Verse 5 says, "Even when we were

dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)." The first resurrection is salvation, on such the second death has no power. My friend, if you do not experience a spiritual resurrection before you die, the second death *will* have power over you. A spiritual resurrection, which is the first resurrection, prevents you from being cast into the lake of fire.

The Three Appearings of Christ

Next, I want to prove by the Bible that there are three appearings of Christ. Hebrews 9:24-28 reads: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

In these few verses the writer mentioned three appearances of Christ. First, notice that Hebrews 9:26 says, ". . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." This happened in A.D. 33: Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This was His past appearance, and it was His first appearance. This appearance brought forth redemption for us.

Another appearance is mentioned in verse 24: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." This appearance brings forth intercession. Christ appears this very moment in the presence of God for us. First John 2:1-2 states: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Hebrews 9:24 tells us, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Verse 28 reads, ". . . and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Millennialists teach that Christ is going to come the second time for those who look for Him; in other words, they say He is coming only to rapture the church. Again, the Scripture reads, ". . . unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Christ ~ will appear the second time to those who are without sin. However, He is not going to appear to the rest of the world in that way. The sins of the unrighteous will be brought out at the Judgment. There He will deal with sin in those who are *not* looking for Him. To those who are looking for Him, He will not be dealing with sin, because they will be ready.

Let me simplify it. The first time Christ appeared on Calvary's Cross to put away sin. John spoke of this in John 1:29 when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." This first appearance occurred m.A.D. 33. Second, He is now appearing at the right hand of the Father for us in intercession. Third, He will appear for those who look for Him. That appearing is yet in the future. Friend, are you looking for Him?

Where do millennialists get this thought of the rapture? They preach and teach that there is a difference between the *appearance* of Christ and the *coming* of Christ. However, on the authority of God's Word, there is no difference in the appearing of Christ and the coming of Jesus Christ. When John was writing the Book of I John, he used both terms in the same verse. He wrote in I John 2:28, "And now, little

children, abide in him; that, when he shall *appear*, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at *his coming*." There is no difference between His appearing and His coming. Both words are used interchangeably in this verse.

First Thessalonians 4:13-18 states: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

As we examine this passage, we find that only the righteous are under consideration. There is nothing in these verses about the wicked. The question dealt with was. Who will get a new body first at Christ's return, the righteous dead or the righteous living? That was the question at hand.

Again, verses 16-17 read: " . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [First before what?] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." The dead in Christ will rise before we who are alive and remain. For example, if you, as a Christian, were standing in a graveyard and the trumpet sounded, you might think you were being left out, because the dead in Christ will rise first. However, right after that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up also. The dead in Christ are going to rise with their new bodies first, and then we who are alive will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to be caught up together with them in the air to meet the Lord.

I want to emphasize that this passage is dealing with only two types of people: the saints who are in the graves and the saints who are still alive. Paul was giving words of comfort to the saints who had loved ones who had died. That is the reason he said in verse 18, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." He was talking about saints. To further prove this point, verse 13 says, " . . . that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." He was talking about people who have a hope. The saints are the only ones who really have a hope. The sinner who dies without Christ has absolutely no hope.

The Bible says the dead in Christ shall rise first. First before what? Do not insert "before the wicked," because the Scripture does not say that at all. The dead in Christ are going to rise before we who are alive and remain. I want you to read verse 17 again: "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." Who was the writer referring to when he said "them"? Those who are in the graves. The saints will be caught up into the air with Christ. Nowhere does the Scripture say they will come back down to this earth, because this earth is going to be destroyed with fire.

I like to picture Jesus putting His hand on the doorknob of Heaven, pulling it open, and starting down an unseen stairway. The moment He steps out the gate of Heaven, dead saints will rise and then the living saints on earth will

rise into the air to meet Him. These are the saved. What a day that will be! Job had something to say about this in Job 14:12: "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Job said that man lies down until the heavens be no more. He made it clear that when the saints rise, the heavens will be no more. Many religious people talk about things they think will happen after the saints rise; but according to the Bible, after the saints arise, the heavens

will be no more.

What Is Meant by Christ's Coming as a Thief in the Night?

This brings us to consider the thought. Does Christ steal?

Many radio preachers and Songwriters talk about Christ stealing the church. To that I say, you do not have to steal what you have purchased. Christ bought the church with His own precious blood. When the Scripture says that He will be "coming as a thief," it means coming at an unguarded time. I could illustrate it this way. If I were to call my father-in-law and say, "I just wondered whether it would be all right with you if I take my wife to a restaurant after church and buy her a sandwich?" I can just picture him putting his hand over the receiver and saying, "I know he's crazy now." You see, many years ago when the preacher asked him the question, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" he said, "My wife and I," and he gave her to me; so I do not have to steal her because she is mine. Likewise, Christ does not have to steal His bride, the church. He purchased her with His own blood.

First Thessalonians 4:16 says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." This threefold eruption of celestial commotion will raise the dead. Friend, it is not going to be a secret thing when He comes. It will be with a shout, the Bible says. This shout will be loud enough to awaken the saints who have been in the grave for

hundreds of years. Anything accompanied with enough celestial commotion to awaken the dead can scarcely be called secret. Not one place in the Bible says that a physical resurrection ever took place where there was not some noise. When Lazarus was resurrected, there was a loud noise. Christ cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." When Christ came up out of the grave, there was a loud noise.

Today many preach about the Lord coming as a thief in the night. The Apostle Paul did not change the subject in I Thessalonians, Chapters 4 and 5. He was still on the same topic when he said: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:1-7).

When Paul spoke of Christ coming as a thief in this passage of Scripture, he was speaking of His coming unexpectedly upon the world, or upon those ~ who are unprepared for His coming. Millennialists teach that He is coming as a thief on the church, but the Bible teaches that His coming will not be as a thief to the church. Look again at verse 4: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." While it is true that no one knows the exact time of His coming, God's people are **not** in darkness concerning this matter. We have been delivered from darkness. Colossians 1:13 states, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

What Will Follow the Day of the Lord?

Again, I Thessalonians 5:2 says, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." What is going to follow the day of the Lord? Verse

3 tells us, "For when they shall say. Peace and safety; the sudden destruction cometh upon them." What is going to follow the day of the Lord? Many in the religious world say there will be great tribulation. The antichrist is coming, they say, and a mighty battle (the Battle of Armageddon) is going to take place. They say that after the day of the Lord, people will receive the mark of the beast. No! My friend, this is false. What is going to follow the day of the Lord, according to the Bible? The same time that the saints rise, sudden *destruction* will come upon this world. Christ is not going to come on the church as a thief, but He is coming on the *world* as a thief.

Have you ever heard a great noise? I have heard some great noises, but the greatest noise that we will ever hear will be heard one of these days. Peter spoke of it in 2 Peter 3:10 when he said, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." False religion cannot preach the rapture from this passage of Scripture. They teach that Christ is going to come silently to steal the church away before the sinner even knows anything has happened. On the contrary, the Bible lets us know that when He appears, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise. You have never heard a noise like you are going to hear on that day. It will be so loud that it will shake the dead right out of their graves. Does that sound like someone coming secretly and stealing the church away? Not

Again, 2 Peter 3:10 says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The second that Christ appears, the elements will melt with fervent heat; then the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. The earth will not be burned over and purified and left for occupancy as some would have you to believe, but it is going to be destroyed, according to the Bible.

Second Peter 3:12 says, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" The Apostle Peter agreed with the testimony of Paul regarding the end of time. Regarding the day of God, or the Judgment Day, Peter did not embrace the current teaching of the rapture theory. In fact, none of the New Testament writers embraced this teaching.

First Thessalonians 4:17 says, ". . . to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." I like how Peter used the word *ever* in this verse. We will not stay there for seven years while a supposed tribulation takes place, and then come back to the earth. Peter said, ". . . so shall we *ever* be with the Lord." Notice that no seven-year period is hinted at in this Scripture. We will be with the Lord forever and ever.

Why the Teaching of the Rapture Is an Unprofitable Teaching

Many in the religious world believe that the teaching of the rapture is a profitable teaching. It is a very important teaching to them. Much of their preaching and teaching and many of their songs are centered around this subject. However, notice what Paul said in Acts 20:20-21: "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house. Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." If the teaching of the rapture were true, it would have been profitable for Paul to have taught it. Paul's silence on this subject shows that the rapture teaching is an unprofitable teaching.

On the authority of the plain teachings of God's Word, we dismiss the dispensational rapture teaching as gross error. It contradicts the truth concerning the end of the world and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is to be branded as "another gospel," and as such, it must be

rejected.

What did Paul say to the Galatians about another gospel? In Galatians 1:6-9 he said: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

The rapture teaching is not taught in the Bible. Paul never taught it, Christ never taught it, the Prophets never spoke of it, and none of the Apostles ever spoke of it. It is another gospel; therefore, the Bible says let that doctrine be accursed.

Second Peter 3:11 says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Seeing that the end of time is coming, it ought to cause us to live righteous, holy lives. Verse 14 states, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Friend, have you been diligent in your Christian experience?

Again, Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen." This assembly will be Christ's friends and foes: Annas the high priest; the scribes and the Pharisees; the fickle multitude that one day exclaimed, "Hosanna," but soon cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him"; Pontias Pilate who condemned Him; Judas who betrayed Him; the Jews and the Gentiles; and the great and the small will all be there. The Scripture says "every eye shall see

him." From Adam to the last born of our race, not one human being will be excused.

Christ Will Come Quickly

While we do not believe in the rapture of the church, we do believe the Lord will come. The dead in Christ shall rise first, and then those who are alive and remain will be caught up. It is going to be as a flash: as the lightning darts from the east to the west across the heavens, so will it be when Christ returns for His church. He is coming soon. He is coming suddenly, and He will find many people sleeping. There will be a sound from Heaven that will awaken the dead and strike terror in the hearts of the unprepared. Jesus will come with a shout. We will hear the Archangel's voice. The mighty trumpet of God is going to sound. Shouts of victory and triumph will be on one hand and cries of mourning on the other. Imagining the scene and the sounds is inconceivable to the human mind. Sinners will fear, and saints will rejoice over the return of our Lord.

As time goes on and the signs of the Lord's coming become more glaring, the very next thing on God's great program for this earth could well be the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven. I ask you this question in closing: Is there anything in your life that prevents you from saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" as Revelation 22:20 says? Jesus' coming will mean glory for the saints, but it will mean judgment to those who are unprepared. Friend, have you had part in the first resurrection? If you have, you are blessed and holy. If you are living a holy and godly life, have you been diligent in maintaining your experience? If Jesus were to come right now, would you be found in Him, in peace, without spot and blameless?