

Cut and Paste Christianity Part 6

The Rapture

1 Corinthians 15:52- “In an instant, *in the twinkling of an eye*, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

This scripture is not unknown or misunderstood to those to whom God has revealed His Truth. From our reading and studies, we often refer to 1 Corinthians 15 as the Resurrection Chapter. This however, is another area in which “cut and paste” Christianity has a field day in deceiving those seeking God’s Truth.

The massive success of the “Left Behind” books and movies clearly show the world’s obsession with the idea of the Rapture. It’s also known as "the Blessed Hope." It’s no wonder that the idea of all believers will be taken up into Heaven, avoid the agonies of death and rotting in a grave is so appealing. We get back into the whole “float off to Heaven” and be with Grandma theology we spoke of awhile back. This concept was also negated by the very scriptures so many seem to skip over (**Genesis 3:19, Ecc. 9:5, 12:7, John 3:13**). So, what is the Rapture?

The rapture is an eschatological theological position held by some Christians, particularly within branches of Evangelicals. Eschatological theology relates to death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind. It primarily consists of all living Christian believers, along with those believers who have died, would rise up “in the clouds to meet Jesus Christ upon His return. The idea has its origins from back in 1830. There was a fifteen-year-old Scottish girl named Margaret MacDonald. She had a vision that detailed the return of Christ, a vision of what we’d know today as the Rapture. A British minister named John Nelson Darby, founder of a Christian denomination called the Plymouth Brethren, popularized the idea, and from there, it spread throughout fundamentalist Christian groups, gaining popularity as the years went by. Much like the erosion of God’s Truth within Christianity over the past 2000 years.

The closest idea to the “Rapture” they may have held is the image of believers being met by Christ in the sky. The events of the “Left Behind” books and movies we mentioned earlier would have seemed completely outlandish to them. Twisting scriptures to fit their doctrines is how we end up with 30,000 denominations. A fairy tale is an easier pill to swallow than obeying God’s Word and Commandments.

Several Biblical scriptures are often used to support the idea of the Rapture, primarily from the books of Revelation and Thessalonians (also 1 Corinthians), but

things aren't quite as straightforward as they seem. The Rapture may seem simple, but in reality, this is an idea that is drenched in interpretational problems, disagreements, and downright falsehoods.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18- “Because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with *a* shout of command, with *the* voice of an 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 for *the* meeting with the Lord in *the* air; and so shall we always be with *the* Lord. Therefore, encourage one another with these words.” In spite of not being mentioned anywhere in the Bible, it is a quite popular belief among the Protestant Church of today.

There are numerous references on line for your research but the some of the following information I actually obtained from the Billy Graham Evangelical Association website. According to their beliefs, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will occur in two phases. First, He will come for believers, both living and the dead. They believe that during the “rapture” it will be a transformation and catching up of *all* Christians, dead or alive, to meet with Jesus Christ in the air. They believe that this event will be *secret* and *unknown* to the world of unbelievers at the time. The effect of this “removal” of people will be evident on Earth. Then,

phase 2, after a period of seven years of tribulation on earth, Christ will return to earth with His Church, those who were raptured in phase 1. They further quote the following scriptures, Matthew 24:30, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:13, and Revelation 1:7. Jesus will then conquer His enemies and reign over the earth for 1000 years. I think it prudent to also mention **Daniel 12:1-2**- “And at that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands for the children of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even until that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered—every-one who shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Let’s see if their beliefs are supported by the scriptures they use.

Matthew 24:30- “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall ***all the tribes of the earth*** mourn, and ***they shall see*** the Son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Well, if this is a secret event, they should have picked a different scripture for support as Matthew clearly states that “all the tribes of the earth” that “they shall see.”

2 Thessalonians 1:7- “And to you, who are persecuted, rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels,” The context of

2 Thessalonians 1, Paul is praising the believers at Thessalonica for their faith and endurance. **1 Thessalonians 1:5-** “*Your faith and endurance are a visible testimony of the righteous judgment of God, so that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.*”

He is telling them to rest with them from the tribulation that they are enduring. Not the tribulation that is to come. Maybe it’s just me, but in reading all of 1 Peter 1, Peter is speaking to the elect in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (verse 1). It seems fairly clear he is telling them to continue in their faith and to be prepared. Revelation 1:7 further supports their mistake from Matthew 24:30.

Revelation 1:7- “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and *every eye shall see Him*, and those who pierced Him; and *all the tribes of the earth* shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.” Pretty obvious this will not be a secret event. Sorry Billy.

This is why it is so critical to keep the Sabbath and God’s Holy Days. It is a sign between our God and us for all generations. “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths, for it the keeping of God’s Sabbaths *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you.’”- **Exodus 31:13**. The blindfold comes off and our ears become unstopped. Our minds and hearts are opened to God’s Truth we would otherwise miss. And equally important is to live by every word that proceeds out of

the mouth of God (**Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4, Luke 4:4**). Every verse in the Bible gives us understanding and helps us to know God and His plan for mankind. This can be difficult for denominations who negate the Old Testament and believe the law was done away with. I should mention that not all of today's denominations believe in the Rapture. The majority of Christian denominations do not believe that scripture supports the Rapture at all. Catholics, Lutherans and Presbyterians for example, do not believe it exists. As none of these keep the true Sabbath and Holy Days, their view is moot.

Many other evangelical Christians believe that Christ's return and the rapture will not occur until the seven years of the tribulation have ended. Some of these folks must have read more than a line or two from God's Word as they do not agree either that this will be a secret event. Some interpreters at this point differ as to whether Christ's Second Coming will be followed with a literal 1000-year reign and the White Throne Judgment and the New Heaven will immediately appear. I guess they bought the Cliff's Notes on the Book of Revelation. **Revelation 20:4-** "And I saw thrones; and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and those who did not worship the beast, or his image, and did not receive the mark in their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Revelation 20:6- “Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” As far as the White Throne judgment, it takes place after the 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:7-11). The New Heaven is also after the 1000-year reign and can be read in **Revelation 21:1-** “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.” Again, pretty clear as to the time line.

Once again, we can see how taking scripture out of context and cutting it to fit a narrative comes to pass. Many of those who follow the Rapture theology omit the previous verses. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-15-** “But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep (those who have died in the faith), that you be not grieved, even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say to you by *the* Word of *the* Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede those who have fallen asleep.”

Another misconception associated with the Rapture is another twist on **1 Corinthians 15:52**- “In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” There are those who believe they will not “taste” death in the physical sense. **Matthew 16:28**- “Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they have seen the Son of man coming in His kingdom.” (**Mark 9:1, Luke 9:27**) Well again, God cannot lie nor contradict Himself (**Titus 1:2**).

Just how long is “the twinkling of an eye?” Yes, I even looked up how long it takes to blink. Again, there are numerous accounts and guesses on line. On average, the human eye blinks at a tenth of a second or 100 milliseconds. Several opinions and studies have it ranging from 5 to 8 milliseconds. Jack Van Impe (another TV preacher included in the Miracle Spring Water group) says it is 11/100’s of a second. We can let them argue until their eyes dry out, it’s pretty fast.

Even this is misconstrued to mean that some will not die. Well God does not contradict His Own Word. **Hebrews 9:27**- “And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, *the* judgment;”

1 Corinthians 15:21-23- “For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came the* resurrection of *the* dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made

alive. But each in his own order: Christ *the* Firstfruit; then, those who are Christ's at His coming." Our death may be the duration of a blink of an eye from our physical bodies to our glorified bodies at Christ's return, but we are all appointed to die once. It's the second death we'd better avoid.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5- "Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, That you not be quickly shaken in mind, nor be troubled—neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as if from us, *saying* that the day of Christ is present. Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not* come unless the apostasy shall come first, and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition, The one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things?" The Lord gave us a head's up on what to look for.

All Christians do not agree on every detail of what will occur in the final events of this world's history. Some of these events and their order of occurrence have simply not been made clear in the Bible while others have. It becomes quite clear for those who read His Word in its entirety. Living as God instructs us in His Word

gives us the understanding that so many miss for not doing what His Word tells us to do. “And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but you do not practice what I say?”- **Luke 6:46**.

What is important is that all Christians hold in common that Christ will ultimately return physically, visible to everyone, establish His Kingdom, and gloriously to reign and rule with His resurrected and transformed saints forever and ever. The details of this great event will be made known in God’s own time. Scripture teaches that no one, with the exception of God, knows when the world will come to an end. **Mark 13:32** tells us, “But concerning that day and the hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” And if Christ, Himself, doesn’t know when the end will come, how can we?

So, pay no attention to the Rapture, made up doomsday countdowns, visions, and prophecies which claim to give you some unique insight on when the end will come. Much less a complete and total falsehood, God’s Word has already settled the matter. God has revealed His Truth to us. Getting wrapped around the axle will only detract you from the mission at hand, growing in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, obedient to every Word of God. Just be ready for when He returns.

Amen.

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