

# DISCOVERY 2000

## Examining the “Secret Rapture” Teaching

The rapture teaching originated during the mid nineteenth century. John Darby, (died 1882) first proposed the idea that God's people would go to heaven before the final tribulations prophesied in Revelation. From England the idea spread to America where many religious groups, new and old readily accepted it. Today many denominations and Bible schools teach the rapture with only minor variations. We can say that all rapturists agree on the following basic order of events:

1. First, they say, comes the **"rapture"**. This is the "first phase" of Christ's second coming. He comes in the air alone and secretly snatches the righteous living from the earth. He unites them with the great multitude of resurrected saints
2. Then, they say, comes the **"tribulation"**. This is a short period of time. Evil develops rapidly. Antichrist appears, establishes and then breaks a covenant with Jewish Israel. The events of Revelation 6 to 19 occur. Some say this period lasts three-and-a-half years others seven or ten years
3. Finally, they say, comes the **"revelation"**. This is the second phase of Christ's second coming. He appears in glory with the saints in the clouds. He descends to the earth and sets up his throne for 1000 years.

But does the Bible teach such a "snatching away" of the righteous, a two part coming -one secret, the other open. If it does, where is the evidence to be found? This guide has been prepared to help you study the Scriptural evidence for yourself.

### 1. Texts which are quoted in support of the “Secret Rapture”

**a. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.** Does this sound like a silent secret coming?

**b: John 14:1-3.** Does this passage describe the manner of Christ's coming or just state that he is coming.

*[For more information on the manner of his coming see Acts 1:9-II. Did the disciples see Jesus ascend? They' were told, "This same Jesus ... will come back in the same way you have seen him go...]*

**c. 1 Cor 15:51,52.** What parallels are there between this passage and 1 Thessalonians 4? Does it teach a secret coming?

### 2. Like a thief in the night ???

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of the "Day of the Lord" coming like a *thief*? Those who believe the secret rapture say that as a thief comes silently, so Christ will come silently and steal away the believers.

The following are the only places where the idea of a thief is used:

**a. Matthew 24:42-44.** Is this passage speaking of the manner of Christ's return, or the unexpectedness of it?

*A thief does not send a postcard informing you that he will call on a certain day, or at a certain time. He comes when you least expect him.*

**b. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.** Is Paul speaking of timing or manner of Christ's coming?

*This passage is speaking of the "day" of the Lord. The day may come like a thief, but that does not mean the Lord will come like one*

**c. 2 Pet 3:10-13** Does this sound like one most of world will miss until the event is over? Does it support the view that the wicked will continue on earth after the rapture?

**d. Rev 16:15** This verse is right in the middle of the seven last plagues. Thus it applies to a time after the rapture is supposed to have taken place, and shortly before the rapturists would have the "revelation" coming.

### 3. Two will be in the field, one will be taken, the other left

An examination of the context of these passages makes them very clear.

**Matt 24:36-41.** This passage compares the time when Christ returns to the time of Noah. It was life as usual until the flood came and **took** them all away"

Who were the ones who were **taken away** in Noah's time? It was the wicked' Noah and those in the ark were the only ones saved. Jesus said, *"that is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man"*. vJ9

Note the parallel passage in Luke 17:26-35. In the days of Noah and Lot the wicked were destroyed. Jesus said, *"It will be just like this on the day when the Son of Man is revealed"*. v. 30

So when Jesus said, *"two men will be in the field, one will be taken, the other left"*, He was referring, not to the catching up of the righteous, but the destruction of the wicked.

### 4. Jesus parables of the end of the world

In his parables, Jesus gave clear teaching on his coming.

**a. The parable of the wheat and tares** Matt 13:24-30, 36-43..

v.30 *"let **both** grow together until the **harvest**"*.

What does the harvest symbolise? v.39

What is gathered first? Wheat or tares?v30

What does it symbolise? v36

*According to the rapture theory, the wheat should have been gathered first and the weeds left to grow a little longer.*

**b. The parable of the net** Matthew 13:47-50.

The fish are sorted into good and bad. Jesus said, *"this is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ..."* v49

Jesus is teaching that the separation of good and bad is one event, and takes place at his coming. There is no evidence of his coming being divided into two events several years apart.

**c. Parable of the sheep and goats Matt 25:31-36**

How many separations are there? When do they occur?

*Jesus does not come and snatch the sheep and leave the goats to butt for a while. all are gathered, separated and get their rewards. when one group is saved, the other is lost!*

The second coming of Jesus will be one glorious event. It will affect every person living on the earth. If we miss that, we miss everything.

*"Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him*