

SECRET RAPTURE FACT OR FICTION

One of the most popular theories that is almost universally believed by professing Christianity, is that, Christ will secretly come to gather the saints and take them to heaven in order to protect them from the great tribulation.

Is this theory fact or fiction? Will Christ secretly come and take away the saints before the great tribulation? Or will most of those who truly follow the Sovereign God of the Bible have to endure much of Christ's punishment that he pours out of the nations of earth before he establishes his Father's kingdom on earth?

Believe it or not the Bible shows that Christ coming will neither be secret or silent and many of God's people will be punished along with the rest of humanity.

If you are interested in knowing what the Bible actually says about the return of Christ and how you can escape being punished with the rest of humanity you might want to pay careful attention to the information contained in this broadcast. Because, you will not find very many people who know or understand what I am about to tell you.

The beginnings of the Secret Rapture theory seems to have come from Emanuel Lacunza who had become a Chilean Jesuit in 1747. When the Jesuits were expelled from Chile, Lacunza settled north of Italy where he devoted the remainder of his years to writing his book, 'The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty', in which he speculated that Christ will come twice: once for his saints and again with his saints.

Although Lacunza had actually stumbled onto a Biblical truth, his speculation was to be the catalyst for the doctrine of the Secret Rapture. There does not seem to be any literature referring to a secret coming of Christ until after 1830 when many began to come forth with the concept of a secret coming. Among those who taught this concept were the Anglican Curate J.N. Darby, Newton, George V. Wigram, Andrew Jukes, and J.P. Tregelles.

Is there any validity to the secret rapture theory? Lets see what the bible has to say about the return of Christ.

Notice what the angel told Daniel about the prophecies that had be given to him to record:

The angel told Daniel:

"Go your way Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed until the end-time. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tested. But the wicked shall do wrong. And not one of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:9-10 KJV).

In the Book of Daniel as well as in the rest of the Old Testament, there is much information pointing to the end of the age. When this information is combined with the prophecies of the New Testament and specific events that will occur, it can easily be understood that Christ's coming will not be secret or silent, but will be an event that will be witnessed by almost everyone on earth.

Christians and the Tribulation

Those who subscribe to the belief in a secret return of Christ, believe Christians will be taken to heaven and spared the horrors and agony of the cataclysmic events just before his return. Others believe that Christians will be protected in some geographical place of safety on earth. But are either of these teachings true? Will there be Christians on earth during this great tribulation? Will Christians be subject to any of the terrifying events at the end of the age?

Christians Will be Hated

Many scriptures describe, with graphic detail, the time known as the great tribulation. There are also many scriptures that show the elect of God will be persecuted, betrayed by their own children and brothers in the faith, brought to trial because of their belief, made to flee for their lives, and made to suffer many other horrible injustices. The following scriptures speak of this time period.

Matthew chapter 24, verses 9 through 13 tells us this:

"Then they will deliver you up to affliction, and will kill you; and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, and they will deliver up one another, and will hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness shall have been multiplied, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, that one will be saved.

During this time of trouble, many of those who truly follow the teaching of the Bible will be persecuted, killed, hated by almost everyone, betrayed by their own, make foolish decisions concerning the truth, and forsake God.

Revelation chapter 6, verses 9 through 11 says:

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said to them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." See also Rev.12:17.

In both of these references, the elect of God are still on earth, even up to and including the opening of the fifth seal, which is clearly a part of the period of time known as the great tribulation. Notice also that they are to remain for some time after this seal is opened, so that others may also be martyred as a witness for Christ.

Between the Sixth and Seventh Seals we see the following in Revelation chapter 7, verse 1:

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, or on the sea, or on any tree" (Rev.7:1 KJV).

After the four angelic beings hold back the four winds, another spirit-being will come from the east, which is traditionally the direction from where divine manifestations come (Isa.41:1-2; Ezk.43 :2-3; Ma1.4:1-2). This spirit-being will instruct the four powerful spirit-beings not to proceed with their destruction of the earth, the sea, and the unrepentant wicked of earth's population. Also notice in verses 2 and 3 that this spirit-being has the seal of the living God with him, with which he and those who are with him are to seal the servants of God:

Verses 2 and 3:

"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Rev.7:2-3 KJV).

The sealing of these individuals happens before the seventh seal is opened in Revelation chapter 8, which begins the seven trumpet plagues. The seventh seal is also known as the Day of the Lord (Rev.6:17) and the great tribulation.

It is clear that these people who have been sealed are found worthy to escape the horrors of the coming plagues that are to be poured out upon mankind. But is also clear that these individuals are not caught up to heaven but are to remain on earth during the great tribulation until Christ returns.

In Ezekiel chapter 9, verses 6 and 7 the prophet was given a vision in which he saw many of God's elect who inhabit Jerusalem marked for protection against God's wrath in the end of the age.

In this prophecy angles are told to:

"Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. And he said to them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go you forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city" (vs-6-7).

The time setting of both Revelation chapter 7 and Ezekiel chapter 9 is right before the Day of the Lord, which is the time period called The Great Tribulation in which God will pour out his wrath upon all humanity. From this point in time until Christ returns, the faithful servants of God will be separated from the rest of humanity and will be protected from the wrath of God. However, the elect who have not been faithful will suffer along with the rest of humanity as God's wrath is poured out upon the earth, the sea, and the wicked in order to complete the preparation of the earth for the invasion of Christ and his army of spirit-beings.

The references to the sealing of the God's people in the books of Revelation and Ezekiel brings into question the time honored teaching of a secret coming of Christ to gather the saints in order to protect them from the great tribulation.

What does all of this have to do with you and your loved one's? For one thing it should be recognized as a warning that the Sovereign God is extremely serious about his intention to punish those who will not come into conformity with his way of life and show him the respect and worship that he deserves.

Secondly, there is a way to escape most if not all of God's wrath that will be poured on the earth in the end times if one will do as he instructs in the Bible. Not only is there a way of escaping most if not all of the great tribulation, but there are awesome rewards offered to those who will heed these warnings messages and make the right decisions concerning the Sovereign Father's offer of eternal salvation.

After Jesus had told his disciples about the future destruction of the temple, they came to him privately to find out when it would happen and when the end of the age would come.

Jesus said these things about his coming in Mark chapter 13, verses 10 through 19: Beginning in verse 10:

"And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations. But whenever they lead you away, delivering you, do not be anxious beforehand about what you should say or think, But whatever is given

to you in that hour, speak that. For you are not those speaking, but the holy spirit. And brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father the child. And children will rise up on parents, and will put them to death. And you will be hated by all on account of My name. But the one enduring to the end, that one will be saved.

What Jesus says doesn't sound much like the true Christians are off in heaven while the great tribulation is taking place. It sounds more like some are being persecuted during this time.

Continuing in verse 14:

But when you see the abomination of desolation, the one spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not he who reads, let him understand-then let those in Judea flee into the mountains. And he who is on the housetop, let him not go down into the house, nor go in to take anything out of his house. And the one in the field, let him not return to the things behind, to take his garment. But woe to those that are with child, and to those breast feeding in those days! And pray that your flight will not be in winter. For there will be affliction in those days, such as has not been the like from the beginning of creation which God created until now, and never will be."

This prophecy is clearly set in the end of the age at the very beginning of the great tribulation. Jesus tells those in Judea to be alert to the prophetic events surrounding the false worship system of that day and to flee for their lives when they see these events transpire. Now if true Christian were going to be secretly caught away to heaven before the great tribulation why does Jesus tell them to flee for their lives?

The Righteous Disappear From Earth

Matthew 24, verses 40 and 41 tells us this:

"At that time two will be out in the field; the one is taken away, and the one is left; two grinding at the mill, one is taken, and one is left" (Matt.24:40-41 KJV).

A casual reading of these scriptures seems to indicate that those who believe in a secret return of Jesus are correct; however, Jesus only states that when he sends his angels to gather his elect, they will only gather the righteous; all others will be left. He said nothing about a secret coming. Moreover, a careful study of this subject will show that Christ's return will not be secret or silent.

Notice the clear statement that Christ makes in Matthew chapter 24, verse 27 about one event that will accompany his arrival:

"For as the lightning comes forth from the east and shines as far as the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of man" (v27).

Here, Jesus gave a vivid picture of one of the signs that will accompany his return. Lightning is not a silent nor inconspicuous occurrence; it is always accompanied by a loud thunderous noise, which is very noticeable.

And in verses 28 through 31 Jesus said This:

"And immediately after the affliction of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the land will wail. And they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory. And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds; from the ends of the heavens to their ends" (vs.30-31).

The signs that precede Christ's return are awesome events that will occur in the heavens. The sun will become dark (Mk. 13:24-26), the moon will not reflect sunlight to the earth, and the stars (Greek, 'aster') will be moved out of their orbits. When Jesus returns in all his glory and power, his very presence will disrupt the physical universe. See Ex. 19:16-18; 24:17; Isa.13 :9-13; 24:1-5; Joel 2:10-12, 30; Hag.2:6-7.

Every person alive on earth at the time Christ returns will be aware of the awesome events that will occur in the heavens. Most people will be terrified and fear for their lives; some will be terrified because they know that Christ is returning to destroy them, and others will be in fear because they think that the world is coming to an end. The magnitude of the events that will accompany Christ's return will be far from secret or silent; they will be awesome and terrifying.

CHRIST TO RETURN TWICE

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, there are many references to God coming to earth to reward the saints and establish his government upon the earth in order to bring peace and prosperity to humanity. Most Bible scholars will agree that God says he will indeed come to earth to establish his government. The problem is not with what these references say, it is with the various beliefs of when and how this will happen.

A close review of each reference that details the presentation of rewards that are to be given to the Sovereign Father's earthly children and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth shows two distinct returns of Christ. His first return involves gathering the elect of God for their rewards and change into immortal spirit-beings. During his second return a short time later, he will conquer the earth and establish the Kingdom of God.

Jesus to Come in Clouds

When the high priest Caiaphas asked Jesus to tell him whether or not he was the Messiah, he did not expect the answer he received:

Caiaphas said to Jesus, "I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, You said it. And I will tell you more. From this time you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of the heavens. Then the high priest tore his garments, saying, he has blasphemed! Why do we have any more need of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard his blasphemy" (Matt.26:63-65 Para.).

Jesus told the high priest that the next time he sees him, he will be on his throne next to the Father, and when he returns, it will be in the clouds.

After Jesus disappeared into the heavens an angel told the disciples essentially the same thing Jesus told Caiaphas about the events surrounding his return:

Acts Chapter 9, tells us this:

"As the disciples watched, Jesus was taken up into a cloud. And as they were looking intently into the sky, two men in white clothing stood by them, and said, Men, Galileans, Why are you standing here looking at the sky? This Jesus, who is taken into the sky, will come in the way you saw him leave" (Acts 1:9-11 Para.). See also Matt.24:30.

CHRIST RETURNS TO GATHER THE ELECT

When Jesus enters the earth's atmosphere in his glorified form, the elements will begin to disintegrate under the power of his presence. The air will become supercharged with electricity, lightning, and thunder. And fire and smoke will fill the sky as his angels collect the righteous of the earth.

The Elect Rise to Meet Christ The apostle Paul said this:

"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." (1.Thes.4:16-17 KJV). See also 2.Thes.2:1-8.

What happens as the righteous of all ages rise to meet Christ in the clouds above the earth?

Paul said:

"Listen I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the

trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1.Cor.15:51-52 NIV).

The change to spirit-beings will be a spectacular event. It will be accompanied by the blast of a trumpet, lighting, thunder, and fire in the sky as the elect rise to meet Christ:

The apostle John said:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1.Jn.3:2 KJV). See also Rom.6:1-5; Phil.3:21; Rev.1:13-16.

The righteous will be changed to spirit-beings just like Jesus. At the instant of this change, the elect will become spirit Sons of God and they will shine with the brightness of the stars:

The prophet Daniel said of the kind of being that the saints would become:

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3 KJV).

What the prophet Daniel said is not the babbling of some wild eyed individual, it is a promise of God the Father and Jesus Christ that those who obtain righteousness will shine as the stars of heaven.

When Moses was told that God would appear on the mountain to speak with him, Moses was told to set a boundary around the mountain to keep other people and animals away; because, the mountain would be sacred and have God's presence on it. When God appeared, there was a tremendous display of energy, fire, and smoke as he came to the mountain. This account shows that when a God being appears in his glorified form on earth his presence consumes and disrupts the physical realm.

During the first resurrection at Christ's coming the Sovereign Father's earthly children will rise into the sky, and will be instantly changed into glorified

spirit-beings, and will begin to shine with the brightness and power of the stars. At the instant of their change, the very power of their presence will rip apart the atmosphere, dissolving its basic elements. The noise of this awesome event will be almost unbearable to the human ear as sonic booms, explosions, blinding light, thunder, and clouds fill the sky. The sights and sounds of this day will put terror in the hearts of all those who witness it. To many, it will seem as if the world is coming to an end.

Christ and the Elect Disappear

Between the time of Christ's first return to gather the elect and his second return to conquer the earth, Jesus promises to keep the elect from the final portion of the tribulation:

Jesus said in Revelation Chapter 3:

"Because you kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial which is going to come on all the habitable world in order to try those dwelling on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly, Hold what you have that no one take your crown" (Rev.3: 10-11).

But, how will Jesus protect the elect? After Christ's first return, the righteous of all ages will be spirit-beings who will have been taken to heaven. When the righteous are changed into spirit-beings and taken to heaven, there will not be one person alive on earth with the spirit of God. Because the elect will no longer be human, they will be protected from God's wrath that will come upon the earth.

CHRIST RETURNS TO CONQUER AND RULE

The Tribulation Cut Short

After all of the righteous have been taken from the earth and only the unrighteous remain, what will stop God from destroying the earth and the rest of humanity?

Jesus said of the time just before he returns to conquer and rule the earth:

"For there will be great affliction, such as has not happened from the beginning of the world until now; no, nor ever will be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved --but on account of the elect, those days will be shortened" (Matt.24:21-22).

Jesus said it is for the elect's sake that all of humanity will not be destroyed. Why will God not destroy the entire earth? It is because of his promises to the patriarchs and the elect concerning their inheritance, descendants and rulership, and because of his future plans for the rest of mankind.

John records this about Christ's return to earth:

"And I saw the heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God" (Rev. 19:11-13 KJV).

The Elect Return With Jesus

During the time period between Christ's first and second return, his armies will be preparing to invade and conquer the earth. Remember at this time the righteous of all ages will be immortal spirit-beings in the Family of God:

Revelation chapter 19, verses 14 and 15 says this:

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:14-15 KJV). See also Rev.2:26-27; 3:4; 19:8.

Speaking of Christ's army, Jude said:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes

with ten thousands of his saints [the elect], To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15 KJV).

When Christ returns as the conquering king, the elect of God will come with him as a part of his vast spirit army:

Christ's Rule Begins

The prophet Zechariah says this about the arrival of Christ on earth:

"And his feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall divide from its middle, from the east to the west, a great valley. And half of the mountain shall move toward the North, and half toward the South (v4). ... And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with him" (Zech. 14:4-5 Para.). See also Hag.2:6-7.

This is the time that the prophet Isaiah spoke of concerning Christ when salvation will begin to come to all of humanity through the Kingdom of God:

Isaiah said:

"For a Child is born; to us a Son is given; and the government is on his shoulder; and his name is called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. There is no end to the increase of his government and of peace on the throne of David, and on his kingdom, to order it, and to sustain it with justice and with righteousness, from now and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this" (Isa.9:6-7 Para.) See Lk.1:32-33.

No Secret Return

Jesus said nothing about a secret coming. Moreover, a careful study of this subject will show that Christ's return will not be secret or silent. Notice the clear statement that Christ makes in Matthew chapter 24:

"For as the lightning comes forth from the east and shines as far as the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of man" (v27).

Lightning is not a silent nor inconspicuous occurrence; it is always accompanied by a loud thunderous noise, which is very noticeable.

"And immediately after the affliction of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the land will wail. And they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory. And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds; from the ends of the heavens to their ends" (vs.30-3 1).

The signs that precede Christ's return are awesome events that will occur in the heavens. The sun will become dark (Mk. 13:24-26), the moon will not reflect sunlight to the earth, and the stars (Greek, 'aster') will be moved out of their orbits.

When Jesus returns in all his glory and power, his very presence will disrupt the physical universe. Every person alive on earth at the time Christ returns will be aware of the awesome events that will occur in the heavens. The magnitude of the events that will accompany Christ's return will be far from secret or silent; they will be awesome and terrifying.

THE BIBLICAL FACTS OF CHRIST'S COMING

The biblical facts clearly show the following two returns of Christ:

He will openly return to gather the saints three and a half days after the death of the Two Witnesses. See Matt.24:23-51; Rev. 11:7-13.

He will openly return with the saints and his heavenly hosts to destroy the governmental and religious system of the Antichrist and False Prophet

and establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. See Jude 14-15; Rev. 19:1 1-15; Rev. 11: 15.

The Bible shows, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that when Jesus returns to gather the elect of God, the event will neither be secret nor silent. The Secret Rapture Theory, is just that, it is a theory and a false one at that.

There are many things that people consider to be truth; however, what God reveals as the way of truth is not what most people believe as truth. It is God's way of truth that most people hate and ridicule. A number of prophecies tell us that these false prophets and teachers will speak blasphemous things against God and his teachings.

The only way that a person will be able to tell the difference between truth and error is to be well versed in what the Bible actually says about Christ and those who are teachers of God's truth and way of life.

Religious Deception

Throughout the centuries, many false teachings concerning what is written in the Bible have come and gone. The Secret Rapture Theory is just one of many false teachings that people believe today.

The major problem with this teaching is that those who believe it are being lulled into a false sense of security. Believing that they will escape the great tribulation just because they believe in Christ. However, many scriptures clearly show that belief is not enough to assure one of salvation and an escape from the great tribulation, one must also have the righteous faith and works in order to be assured of being one who is worthy of protection during the end of the age.

The scriptures reveal that during the time of trouble at the end of the age, religious deception will be so intense that the only ones who will not be deceived are the elect of God who are diligently following the true Sovereign God and his Son.

Almost all of prophecies that concern the end of the age have as their focal point two groups of people, the Sovereign God's holy nation of earthly priests and ambassadors and the scattered tribes of national Israel who are prophetically called the House of Israel and the House of Judah that comprise national Israel. Therefore, it is important to know who these peoples are today in order to understand the major signs that reveal the return of Christ.

I see that my time is up, if you want to know more about the prophecies concerning the return of Christ or the other subjects that I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org..

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