

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

WHEN WILL THE RAPTURE TAKE PLACE?

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Every week I enjoy the preaching of Pastors Charles Stanley, David Jeremiah, the late Adrian Rogers and a few others. They are great men of God who aren't afraid to draw a line in the sand and called sin for what it is. They also urge you to live a holy life, study the Bible and to live for Christ on a daily basis. But like most evangelical and Pentecostal preachers, they are also Christian Zionists, including the teaching that all Christians will be removed from the earth prior to the coming of the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation period.

I used to preach and teach like them until a good Baptist preacher and friend of mine challenged me to find proof in the Bible that the "Rapture" would come before the Tribulation.

FALSE STATEMENTS

I was told the following as a brand new Christian:

1. Eve ate an apple in the Garden of Eden.
2. Jesus was born on December 25th and there were three wise men that came to honor Him at His birth.
3. Jesus was crucified on a Friday and resurrected Sunday morning.
4. It had been drilled into my head that I did not have to worry about the Antichrist since Jesus was coming to take home all Christians before that would happen. This is what I was told by my pastors, Sunday school teachers and this is what Hal Lindsey said in his book, "The Great Late Planet Earth."
5. God helps those who help themselves.

The truth is that none of these statements can be found in the Bible. I became angry when I was challenged on these different points, and in order to defend what I had been taught, I had to study and prove this Baptist pastor friend was in error.

TRUTH FROM THE BIBLE

Let me show you what the Bible has to say regarding these topics:

1. The Bible does not say that Eve ate from an apple tree; instead, it says that she ate the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. **Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-6**
2. The Bible does not say that Jesus was born on December 25th. All we know is that Jesus was conceived six months after Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, had conceived her son, John the Baptist. **Luke 1:26-41**



3. The Bible states that there was a group of wise men from the east that came to worship Jesus but it does not state how many were in the group. It is assumed that there were three because of the three gifts given to Jesus. **Matthew 2:1**
4. The Bible does not say Jesus was crucified on a Friday. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday. **Matthew 21:1-11**
On Monday He walked back into Jerusalem, cursed the fig tree and taught in the temple. **Matthew 21:23-46**
On Tuesday as Jesus and the disciples walked back to Jerusalem, they discovered the withered fig tree and that night observed the Passover meal. **Luke 22:13-20**. That night they walked to the Garden of Olives where Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest.
Jesus was taken early Wednesday morning to Pilate where He was physically abused all morning and finally was sentenced to death. By noon He was hung on the cross and three hours later He was dead. His body was placed in a tomb by six o'clock that night.
Sometimes between 6 p.m. Saturday night and 6 a.m. Sunday morning He rose from the grave. **Matthew 28:1-10**
5. The statement that "God helps those who help themselves" is not found anywhere in the Bible.

WHAT ABOUT THE RAPTURE?

Coming back to the rapture, there is no place in the Bible that undeniably states that Jesus will remove all believers in Christ prior to the coming of the Antichrist. This was an assumption made by a Jesuit priest named Manuel de LaCunza. He was born to a Jewish family in Santiago, Chile in 1731. The family had converted to Roman Catholicism under duress and were secretly "Crypto Jews." LaCunza became a Jesuit priest. When the Jesuits were expelled from Chile, he ended up in Italy. He wrote a book entitled, "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty" but it wasn't published until ten years after his death in 1801 when someone found the manuscript.

The book was banned by the Vatican in 1819. Someone sent the book to the Scottish clergyman, Edward Irving, who translated the book into English and published it in 1827. The book spread fast because Irving was well known in Christian circles.

The doctrine of a pre-tribulation rapture presented in this book was then picked up by the Irish-British evangelist John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), who traveled heavily in the United States to establish Plymouth Brethren groups.

There he met Cyrus Scofield (1843-1921), pastor and evangelist, who in turn passed on this teaching to D.L. Moody (1837-1899). Scofield had founded a church in Dallas, Texas, and when he died in 1921, the church was taken over by Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952). Chafer founded the Dallas Theological

Seminary in 1924, which became a stronghold for the LaCunza teaching on the rapture in the United States.

In 1958, a Korean War veteran and former tug boat captain named Harold Lindsey began attending Dallas Theological Seminary and became a strong convert of the LaCunza doctrine. Lindsey published a book in 1970, "The Great Late Planet Earth," which became a bestseller in the United States and convinced millions of Christians there would be a rapture before the Tribulation period and this period would only last seven years.

LaCunza's assumption went from being a fringe doctrine in the Christian community to a solid doctrine taught by all evangelical and Pentecostal churches.

I was fed this doctrine as a young Christian in 1966, and since it was taught by my pastor, I took it at face value and never questioned it until I was confronted by my friend in 1979.

When I tried to find support for the LaCunza doctrine in the Bible, I realized that I had bought into a lie by not searching out the Scriptures.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

There is no teaching on the rapture in the Old Testament. The concept is first brought up in the New Testament when Jesus referred to the end times:

1. Jesus told the parable of the wheat and the tares and its meaning.
Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43
2. Jesus said He would send out angels to gather the believers in Christ.
Matthew 24:30-31

Jesus did not give a timetable when this will happen nor did He talk about the Antichrist and his régime.

Only the apostle Paul gives additional information on the second coming of Jesus and how this would affect Christians.

1. In his first letter to the Corinthian Church, Paul told them about the resurrection of the dead, *but does not give a time table for this event.*
1 Corinthians 15:50-58
2. About the same time that Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church, he also wrote his first letter to the Church in Thessalonica in which he told them of the order of the resurrection. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**
3. Paul knew that the Christians in Thessalonica wanted pinpoint a date on this event and told them there was no need to discuss the times and the season of this event because God has not appointed us to His wrath. Paul doesn't further explain the kind of wrath he is talking about and we cannot tie this down to a specific verse in the Book of Revelation since it did not come into existence until some 30 years after his death.
2 Thessalonians 5:1-9

4. Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians stirred up lots of discussion and the people began to believe that the coming of this event was just around the corner and therefore they should stop everything and wait for Jesus to come back.

In his second letter, Paul told them not to be shook up and run around in confusion. The prophet Daniel had been given a prophecy some 400 hundred years prior of a world dictator at the end of time who was not of God. The second coming of Jesus would not take place until there had been a great falling away in the church and that Man of Sin revealed himself and taken his place as a ruler on the earth.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Paul told us that the Jesus won't come back until the Man of Sin (Antichrist) has taken up his reign on the earth; however, he stopped short of saying just how long the Antichrist would rule before Jesus came back.

5. Paul told the Thessalonians that the system of the Man of Sin was already working on the earth but that it was being restrained by the Holy Spirit from allowing their ruler to be set up. **verses 5-7**
6. The Antichrist and his organization will come to power with great deception and God will send lying spirits upon the people who rejected Jesus as their Savior. **verses 8-12**

CONCLUSION

Jesus is coming back one day but no man knows the hour. **Matthew 24:32-36**

There will be a resurrection and a catching away of believers in Christ. When will this happen? The Bible says it will be sometime after the Antichrist has started his reign.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?