

# WHICH WAY, AMERICA?

## Night 11

### Revelation's Rapture

#### 1. Won't the Second Coming of Christ be a secret rapture?

**Answer:** The secret rapture theory is relatively new to Christianity. However, many sincere Christians today believe this popular (but non-Biblical) concept of the Second Coming. The eight points of the secret rapture theory are as follows (keep in mind that this is a theory, not based on Bible facts):

1. The rapture is silent.
2. The rapture is invisible.
3. The rapture leaves the wicked alive.
4. God removes the righteous to protect them from the tribulation.
5. Christ's Second Coming will be in two stages: (1) the secret rapture, and (2) the actual coming, which will be glorious.
6. These two stages of the Second Coming will be seven years apart.
7. The rapture will take place before the revelation of the antichrist, who then will bring about the tribulation.
8. The wicked will at this point have a second chance to be converted and to serve Christ.

These eight premises have been so widely embraced that most people accept them as fact without pausing to investigate. But our only safety is to search the Scriptures daily to determine whether those things are so (Acts 17:11). Consider the following:

1. The rapture is not silent, but rather, is extremely noisy (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Psalms 50:3; Jeremiah 25:30–31).
2. The rapture is not invisible, but will be seen by all (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:27).
3. The rapture does not leave the wicked alive. They are slain by the brightness of the Lord's coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8).
4. God does not remove the righteous from the tribulation, but rather protects them from it (Psalm 91:5–12; Revelation 3:10).
5. Christ' Second Coming will not be in two stages—one secret and the other seen by all. There is only one Second Coming, and it will be seen by every living person on earth. There is no scripture to support a two-phase Second Coming.
6. The secret rapture teachers claim there is a seven-year period between the two second comings of Christ. This claim is unscriptural.
7. The antichrist does not appear three and one-half years after the Second Coming of Jesus. He has been active for centuries (1 John 4:3) and is even now at work.

8. The wicked will not have a second opportunity to be saved after the second coming. All sinners are destroyed at the second coming. There is no second opportunity for anyone to be saved after Christ's return (Revelation 22:11–12; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9).

The secret rapture theory has been based on a system of theology known as dispensationalism, taught in many of the Bible schools that prepare ministers for the pulpits of the world. The order of events taught by this system is:

1. The rapture (resurrection of the righteous, saints being caught up to heaven).
2. The great tribulation.
3. The second coming of Christ (really the third) in power in glory.
4. The 1,000 year reign of Christ.

This order of events is contrary to the order given in the Scriptures. Here are the records of the Biblical order of events:

#### **Matthew 24**

1. The tribulation (verse 29)
2. The darkening of the sun and moon, falling of stars (verse 29)
3. Glorious coming of Christ in power and majesty (verse 30)
4. Saints caught up to heaven (verse 31)

#### **Mark 13**

1. Tribulation (verse 24)
2. Darkening of sun and moon, falling of stars (verses 24–25)
3. Second coming in power and glory (verse 26)
4. Saints caught up to heaven (verse 27)

#### **Luke 21**

1. Tribulation events (verses 25–26)
2. Signs in sun, moon, and stars (verse 25)
3. Second coming in power and glory (verse 27)

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

1. Second coming in power and glory (verse 16)
2. Resurrection of righteous (verse 16)
3. Saints caught up to heaven (verse 17)

#### **Revelation 6**

1. Earthquake, darkening of sun, moon turned to blood, falling of stars (verses 12–13)
2. Second coming of Jesus in power and glory (verses 14–17)

#### **Joel 2**

1. Darkening of sun and moon (verse 31)
2. Second coming in power and glory (verse 32)

Isn't it amazing that there is not one Bible reference that gives the dispensationalist order of events?

## 2. Since the Lord is coming “as a thief in the night,” how can anyone know anything about it?

**Answer:** The answer is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:1–4: “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.” Notice, the day of the Lord comes as a thief *to the unprepared*, but not to those who are called “brethren.”

### History of the rapture theory

The foundation of the rapture theory was laid over 400 years ago, for a very specific purpose. Every Christian needs to understand how this unscriptural teaching was designed to neutralize the great Protestant Reformation. If the facts of history were known by Protestants today who defend with such great emotion the rapture theory and the futurist antichrist doctrine, they would be horrified.

Martin Luther and his fellow reformers boldly identified the pope as the “man of sin,” and labeled the Catholic Church as the antichrist of prophecy. In response to those charges, the Roman hierarchy assigned two Jesuit priests to develop counter-interpretations that would turn the focus away from the Catholic Church. These two Spanish priests flooded the sixteenth century with their counter-Reformation teachings. Alcazar of Seville applied all the beast prophecies to Antiochus Epiphanes, who lived long before the popes began to rule in Rome. His system of interpretation came to be known as the preterist school of prophecy.

On the other hand, a Jesuit named Francisco Ribera invented a system known as the futurist school of interpretation. He taught that the antichrist was to be some future superman who would appear near the end of time and continue in power for three and one-half years. It is his clever, unscriptural theory which has been resurrected by modern evangelical Protestant Christians. And today, millions of Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, etc., hold this anti-Protestant invention of the Jesuits as their preferred interpretation of end-time events. Yet these same denominations claim to be faithful supporters of Protestant theology. Luther and other stalwart protesters against Catholic errors would be astonished if they were suddenly resurrected, to hear what is being taught in the name of Protestantism.

In the early 1800s, the futurist view of Francisco Ribera passed through certain refinements and additions, including the seven-year tribulation and the snatching away of the saints. For the first time it was espoused by Protestant teachers who were seeking ways of reconciliation with Rome. Through the influence and writings of John Nelson Darby of the Plymouth Brethren Church in England, the new doctrine spread to the United States. During the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century, it received its biggest boost from Cyrus Scofield, who incorporated it into the notes of his Scofield Reference Bible, published in 1909.



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