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A Secret Rapture?

Part I

Two Words - Two Comings?

Like a Thief in the Night

One Taken - Another Left

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Scripture is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted

Thousands of Christian believers today are waiting to be “raptured.” They expect to be caught away in an instant, to be with Christ in Heaven. They will simply disappear - all of them at the same moment. Seven years will follow, with great trouble on the earth. At the end of the 7 years, Christ Jesus will return in glory, to judge and to rule the nations. Does the Bible teach this doctrine of a secret invisible “coming in presence” to rapture only His church, followed seven years later by a glorious coming? Let’s examine the evidence.

Like a Thief in the Night

Luke 12:39-40 “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Luke 21:34-35 describes those who will be surprised by Christ's coming - those who spend their time on everything but the Word of God. To them, He will come like a “thief in the night.” God’s people will be expecting Jesus, and they will keep themselves ready.

1 Thessalonians 5:2&4 “For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.”

Revelation 3:3 “... if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”

2 Peter 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

This coming “like a thief in the night” will be a surprise to those who are not expecting Him, but it will definitely NOT be secret! This is a very noisy thief!

What other Bible verses describe the return of Jesus?

Matthew 24:27 “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

1 Corinthians 15:52 “for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised...”

Psalms 50:3 “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence,”

Revelation 1:7 “... every eye shall see Him...”

Matthew 24:31 “...He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Doesn't sound very “secret.”

Two Comings?

Those who believe in a “secret rapture” say there will be two different comings, with 7 years between them.

- first: **an invisible coming “in presence”** to rapture Christian believers,

- second: **His coming “in glory,”** when He will stay to rule the earth.

Some of those who were “left behind” at the first coming, will be “saved” into His kingdom at the second coming. They have since repented of their unbelief. He will also slay the evil doers who have managed to survive the last plagues.

What I Believe

1. The sealed people of God **will be on the earth** during the Trumpet Judgments.
2. When the 7th Trumpet sounds, Christ will return in glory.
3. The final Bowl plagues will be unleashed on this day AFTER Christ has removed His people to safety with Him in the clouds.
4. The redeemed will go with Christ to the “Father’s House,” where the New Jerusalem is prepared for them.
5. The last Bowl plagues will destroy everything that supports life. Vegetation, clean water, and oxygen will all be gone, or severely diminished. A massive worldwide earthquake will liquify the surface of the earth, causing mountains and islands to sink.
4. This earth will remain an “uninhabited place” for a good part, if not all of the 7th millennium.

See our studies “[Millennium](#),” “[Trumpets and Bowls](#),” “[Judgment Day](#).”

Two Words:

Two Greek words - **parousia** (#3952) and **apokalupsis** (#601) are BOTH translated into the English KJV, as “**coming**.”

The Greek word “**parousia**” is translated as: “coming” - 22 times, and “presence” - 2 times.

parousia: Those who teach a “secret rapture” say that the “**parousia**” will be **the secret coming - in presence only**.

apokalupsis: Those who believe in a “secret rapture” say that “**apokalupsis**” refers to the **visible, glorious coming - in power**.

To study the use of these words for yourself, go to a Bible concordance. Notice carefully the use of these words, **in context**.

Matthew 24:37 “**As the days of Noah were**, so also will the coming [**parousia**] of the Son of Man be.”

Luke 17:26,30 “**As it was in the days of Noah ...** so it will be also in the day when the Son of Man is revealed [**apokalupsis**].”

Noah's flood was no "secret." Matthew says the "parousia" will be like the days of Noah. Luke says the "apokalupsis" will be like the days of Noah. Both apostles were quoting Jesus. Do you think the two apostles were describing two different events?

2 Peter 3:12 "looking for and hastening the coming [parousia] of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat."

If "the heavens will be dissolved" because of the "parousia," this cannot be the "secret coming" - "in presence" only. This is the glorious coming in power!

IT CAN'T BE BOTH WAYS

Those who teach the secret rapture say that the "man of sin" (the Antichrist) will reveal himself and come to power, AFTER the saints are raptured.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 "Now, brethren, concerning the coming [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Here Paul writes that the parousia - the "gathering together to Him" will not come UNTIL AFTER the Antichrist is revealed, sitting in the Temple of God.

It can't be both ways.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 continued: "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming [parousia]."

The Lord will destroy "the lawless one" (Antichrist) with the brightness of His parousia - His secret coming?? Brightness doesn't sound very secret.

Aren't there verses that speak of one being taken and another left behind?

Matthew 24:40-42 "Then two men will be in the field: **one will be taken and the other left.**
Two women will be grinding at the mill: **one will be taken and the other left.** Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming." (Also Luke 17:26-37)

Yes. But **where are they left?**

They are left where "vultures gather" (v.34-37).

Those who teach a pre-tribulation rapture say those who are "left behind" will have the opportunity to repent during the tribulation period.

Matthew 13:36-42, 47-50 Read this passage carefully. **One harvest is described - not two.**

Notice: (A) "Let both (wheat and tares) grow together until the harvest" (v.30).

(B) "The harvest is the end of the age" (v.39).

After the harvest, the fields were burned - not left for another seven years (Matt. 13:39).

It will be **like the days of Noah** (Matt 24:37, Luke 17:26).

"The flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:27).

It will be **like the days of Lot.**

"The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:29).

Revelation 14:14-16 and 17-20.

These verses describe the final "harvest of the earth."

God's harvest is gathered in (v.14-16);

The "vine of the earth" is left to destruction.

Matthew 25:1-13 Study the parable of the 10 virgins.

Notice: Those who did not go in with the Bridegroom were left in darkness.

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Doesn't Paul say that some will go first and others follow?

Yes! The righteous DEAD are raised to life and ASCEND FIRST. Then the LIVING are caught up to the clouds. **Everything happens on the SAME DAY.** A “shout,” the “trumpet of God,” and “the voice of the Archangel,” will NOT be “secret.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, And the dead in Christ will rise first. **Then** we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.”

“Rapture” versus “translation.”

I personally do not like the word “rapture,” because it is not in the Bible. The word describes the way that the people will feel when they are caught up to be with Jesus - rapturous. I prefer the word “**translation.**” It means “**to go up.**”

“Enoch was **translated** without seeing death” (*Heb. 11:5*). He was a TYPE - a living representation, of those living people who will be “caught up” to meet Jesus in the clouds. Elijah was also a TYPE of those who will go up into the sky.

Didn't Jesus say that He would keep us from the final “hour of trial?”

Revelation 3:10 “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

All parties agree that Jesus promised preservation. The question that divides us concerns the nature of that preservation. Yes. Jesus promised to keep us. He will “keep” us by the power of His Spirit, not by removing us physically from the trial.

John 17:15 [Jesus prayed to His Father] “I do NOT pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.”

In the Bible are many stories of God's people who were sustained through times of trouble - great believers like Daniel and his three friends, Queen Esther, Joseph, Job, Elijah, and Jeremiah. God did not remove them from their hour of trial. They are examples for us in the last days to come.

In **Part II** of our series on The Rapture, we will consider the history of the “secret rapture” doctrine, and it’s chief teachings.

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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