

Another Failed “Rapture” Prophecy – What Went Wrong?

Harold Camping predicted the rapture of the saints would occur on May 21, 2011. He was wrong, and became a laughing stock to millions. Others were dismayed and saddened, and some no doubt lost faith due to their disappointment. It’s not the first time rapture proponents have failed in their prophecies. What does the Word of God REALLY teach on the rapture question?

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The **2011 end times prediction** made by American Christian radio host [Harold Camping](#) stated that the [Rapture](#) and [Judgment Day](#) would take place on May 21, 2011, and that the end of the world would take place five months later on October 21, 2011, turned out to be another “false alarm.” Once again a minister cried “wolf” and there was no wolf!

Why was the predicted return of Christ a miserable failure? Millions of sincere believers think that Christ could come “at any moment.” Billy Graham and others say it could occur today, tomorrow, or (they hedge their bets), a thousand years from now.

The Rapture, in a specific tradition of [premillennial theology](#), is the taking up into heaven of [God's](#) elect people. Camping, president of the [Family Radio](#) Christian network, claimed the [Bible](#) as his source and said May 21 would be the date of the Rapture and the day of judgment "beyond the shadow of a doubt". Camping suggested that it would occur at 6 p.m. local time, with the rapture sweeping the globe time zone by time zone, while some of his supporters claimed that around 200 million people (approximately 3% of the world's population) would be 'raptured'.

The vast majority of Christian groups, including Protestant and Catholic believers, did not accept Camping's predictions; some explicitly rejected them, citing Bible passages including those stating "about that day or hour no one knows". Camping had previously predicted that the Rapture would occur in September 1994.

Failure is a hard pill to swallow. Following the failure of the prediction, Camping stated that May 21 had been a "spiritual" day of judgment, and that the physical Rapture would occur on October 21, 2011, simultaneously with the destruction of the universe by God.

What is the real problem with Camping's predictions? Isn't it time to go back to the drawing boards, search the Scriptures, and prove once and for all the TRUTH about the Rapture theory?

Is the "Rapture" really Biblical? Will the saints be taken to heaven BEFORE the onrushing "Great Tribulation" engulfs the world and horrendous times spill over the whole earth?

What does the Bible REALLY say?

Countdown to the Messiah

The rapture belief entered the Plymouth Brethren through John Nelson Darby, their most influential prophecy teacher. Its origin traces back to 1830 when a certain Margaret McDonald had a "vision" of the end-times. She had been ill and bed-ridden for a year and a half. She read Matthew 24:40 about someone being "taken", and then read in II Thess.2:7 about a "restraining" influence being "taken out of the way." She put the two passages together and reasoned that the "one" taken out of the way, before the rising of the Antichrist, must be the church! Darby and others subsequently took up this belief, and he popularized it in the Scofield Reference Bible, from where it has entered mainstream Protestantism like a "thief in the night," catching millions unawares.

People have speculated for generations as to when Jesus Christ would return. Those who lived around the year 1000 A.D. thought Jesus would come back in their time. Europe was panic stricken with fear, worried about the end of civilization at that time.

The Millerite Prediction

In 1844 William Miller thought Jesus Christ would return *then*. *Thousands heeded his words of prophecy, and waited upon the tops of hills, climbing trees, and watching the heavens* for any sign of Jesus' return. While waiting, one person fell out of a tree and broke a leg!

Why did Miller think that Jesus would return in 1844? He simply made a mistake in his calculations (which shows how dangerous it is to try to "calculate" prophecy!). Frankly, prophecy is *not* something you can calculate, or figure out mathematically, or by using a computer. Jesus inspired Peter to write: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20-21).

William Miller made several errors in judgment. First, he interpreted Daniel's vision of Daniel 8 incorrectly. In verses 13-14 we read: "Then I heard one saint speaking and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, *How long* shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two

thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Miller *assumed* that this prophetic period began in 457 B.C. with the decree of Artaxerxes. He counted 2300 years from that time (a day for a year), and came to 1844, when he assumed "the sanctuary would be cleansed" by the return of Christ. When Christ did not return in 1844, his group got together and figured out an alternative explanation. Rather than simply admit they had been wrong, they said Christ did return to the sanctuary *in heaven*, and cleansed it and the prophecy did not refer to His coming to earth at all. Rather, they said, He began looking over the books -- He began the "investigative judgment" in heaven at that time, and when He finishes, then He will return to earth!

Miller made a fundamental error. He assumed the prophecy began in 457 B.C. But the Scripture nowhere says any such thing. That was his private, personal belief. Secondly, the prophecy in Daniel 8 does not even mention the "return of Christ." It rather deals with the subject of the "cleansing of the Temple." It was an assumption on Miller's part that this marked the return of Christ, and that it would occur 2300 years after 457 B.C. Two assumptions -- two fundamental errors -- and one big prophetic blunder resulted!

Christ Warned of False Predictions

Jesus' disciples wondered about the return of Christ and the end of the world. "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of *thy coming*, and of the *end of the world*?" (Matthew 24:3). The Greek word translated "world" in this verse is *aion* and actually means "age." They were referring to the end of this present evil age, not the end of planet Earth itself, but the end of this present evil civilization under the sway of Satan the devil.

What did Jesus tell them?

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; *and shall deceive many*' (verses 4-5).

Can you imagine that? The very first thing Jesus warned His followers was to beware of deceivers -- false prophets -- who would deceive MANY! How true His words were! Millions are deceived, confused, today, even about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ! His words have been misinterpreted, misunderstood, misconstrued, and manhandled by many who simply refuse to believe He meant exactly what He said!

The Coming of the Lord

We read in I Thessalonians, "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will be no means

precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend FROM heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise *first*. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord *in the AIR*; and so we will be with the Lord forever" (I Thess.4:15-17).

Notice! Christ will return FROM heaven, and arrive in the AIR – the atmosphere surrounding planet Earth. THEN we will be caught up to MEET HIM, as He is returning to the earth!

The prophet Zechariah goes on to explain, "Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on the day of battle. *On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives*, which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that one half the Mount shall withdraw northward, and the other half southward" (Zech.14:3-4).

When the Messiah returns, His feet shall stand *in that very day* upon the Mount of Olives! How plain it is!

Pre-Tribulation Rapture – a Great Deception

Let's really understand this! The "secret rapture" theory espoused by Tim LaHaye and most "Christians," today, is a serious and fatal error. It will likely cause immense multitudes to be unprepared for the diabolical reign of the Beast, or the Antichrist! They assume they will be taken up to heaven *before* the Great Tribulation, but God promises no such thing! Be sure to read our article, "The Secret Rapture – Fact or Fallacy?" They will be completely, utterly *unprepared* for the great travail and suffering that will come upon them!

Joseph Goode and other teachers claim that Christ will take His church up to heaven for a period of seven years. While there, the marriage feast will occur in heaven. The saints then will have to watch the horrible agony of the people "left behind" on the earth! They will have to see the poor Jewish Messianic believers go through savage hell on earth.

Is this what God really intends?

Others claim that the Messiah returns to take His flock up to heaven after 3 ½ years of the seven-year tribulation period have passed. Still others say the saints are taken to heaven for only a few months, and then return with the Messiah to this earth.

All these theories are DEAD WRONG! The "secret rapture" is a serious deception of Satan the devil, to destroy God's people by misleading them into a totally false sense of security!

When Christ returns, it will be a loud, shining, shattering, incredible event. The archangel will blow a loud trumpet. Paul wrote, “Listen! I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the LAST trumpet*. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (I Cor.15:51-52, NRSV).

When the Messiah returns, there will be a mighty shout – the thundering voice of an archangel – which will shake up the nations (I Thess.4:16). It will be heard worldwide, and at that point the dead in Christ will rise, and the living saints will be changed and given a glorious new body, and rise to meet Him in the sky as He returns to earth.

When the Messiah comes, and the saints are resurrected, and meet Him in the air, it will be accompanied by THUNDER! And the nations will “SEE the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with POWER and GREAT GLORY. And he will send out his angels with a LOUD TRUMPET CALL, and they will gather his elect, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt.24:30-31, NRSV).

The saints will be with Him as He sets His feet on the Mount of Olives (Zech.14:4), “in that day” – that *very* day. Not 3 ½ or 7 years later! He will come in “clouds of heaven with power and great *glory*” (Matt.24:30), and “every eye shall *SEE* him” (Rev.1:7).

Does that sound like a “secret” coming? The only thing “secret” about it will be its TIMING! No one will know the “day or the hour” (Matt.24:36). In that sense, His coming will be like a thief – totally unexpected by the vast majority of people (v.42-44).

The Second Coming will not be a silent, clandestine, secretive, invisible event, with people “disappearing” suddenly from wherever they are, as rapturists proclaim. Such a theory is in denial of the plain scriptures. Such a hope is a false hope, a satanic delusion, a deception of the devil who seeks to entrap and seduce God’s people into a false sense of security. They will stumble unwatchful and heedless into the Jaws of Great Tribulation.

Great Tribulation Comes FIRST!

The very next sign or event to look for, He said, is *war in the Middle East!*

Notice it! Let’s pick up the story flow in Matthew 24: “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoso reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judaea *flee* to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take any thing out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But WOE to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

“*For then will be GREAT TRIBULATION*, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were SHORTENED, no flesh would be saved; but for the *elect’s* sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:15-22, NKJV).

The abomination of desolation will involve foreign Gentile armies surrounding Jerusalem – the standards of an invading army hoisted, raised, over the Temple Mount in Jerusalem! Luke’s account of this same prophecy makes the picture even clearer. Notice: “When you see *Jerusalem surrounded by armies*, then know that its *desolation* has come near. Then those in Judea must flee *to the mountains*, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are DAYS OF VENGEANCE, as a fulfillment of all that is written.

“Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be GREAT DISTRESS on the earth and WRATH against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-24, NRSV).

Notice! We have seen there will be awesome, devastating events which will presage the coming of Christ, including the Great Tribulation itself – and up to this point, Yeshua has said absolutely NOTHING about the “rapture of the saints”! How could He have left it out? If it is supposed to occur somewhere in the middle of those fateful signs and events, then why didn’t Christ even MENTION it?

The answer is simple – *because it isn’t going to happen that way!* Modern proponents of a rapture before the Great Tribulation have it all backwards!

In this prophecy, Yeshua told His elect, His true disciples, who are living at the End Time, “So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), then *those in Judea must FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS*; the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your FLIGHT may not be in winter or on a Sabbath” (Matt.24:15-20, NRSV).

He made no mention whatsoever of a secret plan to RAPTURE the church to heaven. But He DID warn His saints – His elect – to be ready to FLEE to the mountains, to pray that their FLIGHT would not have to occur in winter or on a Sabbath, when travel is curtailed. These things would not matter if they were to be whisked off to heaven!

AFTER the Tribulation

What will happen after the Tribulation?

“*Immediately after* the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the

moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: AND THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man [Jesus Christ] in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN with power and great glory. And 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” (Matthew 24:29-31).

Notice the proper sequence – First, Great Tribulation! Next, heavenly signs! Afterwards, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ – Yeshua Ha Moshiach!

What could be clearer, more plain, than that? Yeshua makes it perfectly plain, so simple a child can understand it. He said the heavenly signs would occur “*immediately after*” the great tribulation of those days, not before. And Christ Himself would return AFTER the heavenly signs, and therefore also AFTER the tribulation!

Notice, too, that when this occurs, Yeshua will send his angels to “GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT” (verse 31).

Who are the “Elect”?

Let’s let the Bible interpret this for us.

Peter spoke of *Christians* as being God’s elect. He began his first epistle, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *ELECT according to the foreknowledge of God* the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1: 1-2).

Christ said to His disciples, “And shall God not avenge His own *elect* who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?” (Luke 18:7).

Paul wrote, “Who shall bring a charge against God’s *elect*? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Rom.8:33-34).

Paul declared, “Therefore, *as the ELECT of God*, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering” (Col.3:12).

Paul also spoke of “the faith of God’s elect” (Titus 1:1). Peter warns us, however, “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and *election* sure” (II Pet.1:10).

It should be perfectly clear! We who belong to Christ, Yeshua the Messiah, are the true “elect” – “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (I Peter 2:9-10). Jesus Himself is the true corner stone; “elect, precious” (verse

6), and if we are in Him, then we are the *elect* of God also!

It is for the sake of God's "elect" – true servants of God, true Christians – that God will cut short the days of coming Tribulation, so that the whole world will not perish in nuclear flames! Yeshua promised, "And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of *the elect* those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:22, NRSV).

Notice that these same *elect* will be gathered up to meet Christ "with the great sound of a trumpet" (Matthew 24:31). *Obviously, they have not already been gathered prior to this time in some sort of "secret rapture"!!!*

Christ will be *seen* by the nations as He comes, Matthew recorded (Matthew 24:30). "Every eye will SEE Him" (Rev.1:7). He will not be invisible or secretive.

Why, then, does Paul also say, "The day of the Lord will come like a *thief* in the night" (I Thess.5:2)? Why did Christ declare, "I will come like a thief" (Rev.3:3)?

Does this contradict all the other Scriptures, and mean that He will come invisibly? Does a thief ever come "invisibly"? Of course not! No man can be "invisible" – although a man can "hide," or come secretly, by stealth.

How will Christ come as a thief? He Himself answers that question. He goes on to say, "and you will not know at what hour I will come" (Rev.3:3 again). In other words, He will come unexpectedly, when most people are sound asleep, totally unalert, and oblivious to the signs around them. Solomon wrote, "For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time" (Eccl.9:12).

Now let's notice another Scripture which spells out very clearly the Second Coming of Christ. Paul wrote that the saints would be resurrected at the "LAST TRUMPET" (I Cor.15:51-52). This is the trumpet which is blown when Christ returns for His saints.

Does this trumpet announce a secret rapture? Which trumpet is the "last" trumpet blast?

The "Last Trumpet"

In the book of Revelation (which means a "revealing", not a concealing of information), we read a prophetic *outline* of the future. According to this outline, the future is sealed with *seven* seals which will be opened consecutively (Revelation 5:1-9). Notice that the seventh seal will consist of "seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given *seven trumpets*" (Rev. 8:1-2). When each of these trumpets are sounded, various events will take place on the earth. The first angel sounds his trumpet, and plagues are poured on the earth. So it is for the next three angelic plagues,

accompanied by trumpet blasts (Rev.8). When the fifth angel blows his trumpet, another plague – a terrible war – erupts on the earth (Rev.9:1-12). This is followed by the sixth angelic trumpet blast, and an army of 200,000,000 men from Asian nations attacks westward, killing one third of mankind (Rev.9:13-21).

But notice, now – *notice* what happens when the SEVENTH, or LAST, trumpet will sound!

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD HAVE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, and he shall reign forever and ever!’ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying: ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the TIME OF THE DEAD, *that they should be judged*, and that You should REWARD Your servants the prophets, and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great; and should destroy those who destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:15-19).

Here again, spelled out in careful detail, is what will happen when the last trumpet blasts forth its shrill clarion call. Christ will return; the dead in Christ shall be raised; the saints will be judged and rewarded, every man according to his own works; and, the wrath of God will be poured out upon a rebellious, defiant world.

“Taken”

But what about this passage in Matthew 24:40-41 about two people, one being “taken” and one being “left”? What does it mean?

We read, “But AS the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and did not know till the *flood came and took them all away*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be *taken* [that is, killed, as the flood “took them all away,” in Noah’s day], and the other left [alive]. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be *taken* [die] and the other left [alive]. *WATCH therefore, for you do NOT KNOW what HOUR your Lord is coming*” (Matt.24:37-42).

Notice that it was the “Flood” that “took them all away.” The masses died as a result of the Flood! They were not “taken” to heaven to be spared! Likewise, Yeshua is telling us, when He comes, and when the Tribulation is about to begin, one person will die in the melee, and invasion, and one will be left alive. That is the import of His statement here. Those “taken” and who die are those who have not been alert, watchful, and vigilant, observing the “signs of the times.” Those who are left alive are those who will be more heedful, watchful, and prudent (see Proverbs 14:26 again).

On the other hand, what about the passage in II Thess.2:6-7? Paul tells us, “And you know what is restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work but only until the one who now restrains it is removed.” What is restraining the arising of this key end-time figure? In the ultimate sense, of course, it is God Himself and His Spirit, His influence on the earth. God is holding it back until His time comes for the final revelation. He is holding it back, I suggest, to give His people time to prepare themselves, to grow spiritually strong, to overcome and get ready.

The one “taken out of the way” to prepare for the rising up of the Antichrist is not specifically identified in II Thessalonians 2:7. However, it would appear that this could also refer to a person or nation which stands in the way of the arrival of this supreme Dictator – one who must depart the political scene before the “Beast” can take his place in full power. This restraining power could well be the United States and President George Bush! When the power of the United States is diminished due to onerous debt and over-extending its reach, the resultant world configuration will be free to elect a man over the United Nations – the end-time “Beast” – who will fulfill the prophecies of the Antichrist!

In other words, the passage Matthew 24:40 does not mention a “rapture” at all. The ones who are “taken” are going to be KILLED – their lives “taken,” as occurred in the Flood. The ones who are “left” are left ALIVE – as survivors – during the coming Great Tribulation and Holocaust that are fast approaching.

Are You Prepared?

Yeshua warned: “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, *keep awake* – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: *Keep awake*” (Mark 13:32-37).

How clear it is! The theory of a secret rapture, to whisk away the saints to heaven *before* the Great Tribulation, is unbiblical, unscriptural, unfounded and unsound! It is unthinkable! Jesus Christ, Yeshua, never taught it. The apostles did not teach it. It did not become a teaching in the Church until the nineteenth century.

Millions have been deceived into expecting a FALSE return of Christ, before the Great Tribulation and end-time woes on the earth, brought about by the inhumanity of man to man.

What about you? Will you also be deceived?