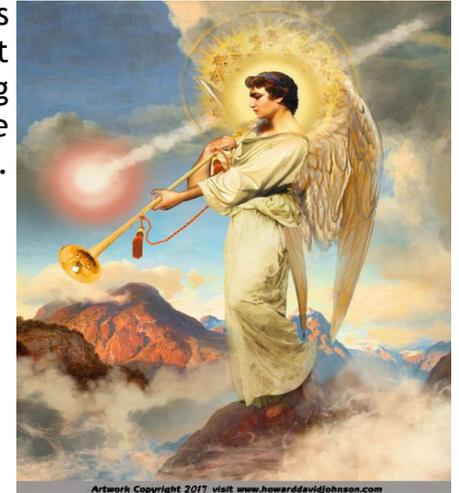


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You may never have heard of this word, “rapture”, so we had better start with an explanation of what “rapture” means. Its only in the Bible three times, and comes from the Greek *harpazo*, which literally means ‘to seize by force or snatch up suddenly’. Until 1830 all the Bible teachers since the early church taught that there is to be a “snatching up” of the church at the time of our Lord Jesus’ return. They got this from...



...the apostle Paul who wrote a letter to the Church at Thessalonica and said...  
“For the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive and are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

There we saw those words “caught up”, and we can see that it will be a noisy, public time. We know that it will be noisy and public also by what Jesus said in Matthew 24.27.

“For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

Immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.



At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky in power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and

they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Over the years since Jesus left the earth, many predictions have been made about when this great Day would be, and the gathering of the saints to Him. But Jesus goes on to say...

No-one knows about that Day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

For those who will be waiting for Him it will be a thoroughly exciting day, but for the rest it will be a terrible day, it even says, “all the nations will mourn because of Him”. They will mourn, even be terrified, because they will suddenly realise the one whose name they had used as a curse word, was returning as the Lord of all the earth, and to deal with His enemies.

Now I mentioned near the beginning that all the churches believed that this was the only rapture until 1830, and then an unfortunate false doctrine came into the church, called the ‘secret rapture’. It was based on a prophecy given in Scotland at a meeting, and picked up by a Brethren preacher, John Nelson Darby. He built teaching around the

prophecy by taking some scriptures out of context, and during his visit to speak in the USA, made the secret rapture theory very popular. Basically the new teaching says that the church will be raptured before the great tribulation that Jesus said would be during the last three and a half years of this age. The anti-Christ will be ruling the world for this short time, and it will be the hardest time that the world has ever seen. So naturally this teaching is very popular.

However, it centres around a main verse in 1 Thessalonians 5.9 “For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath, but to inherit salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Using this verse is overlooking the deliverance God gave the nation of Israel when He was pouring out His wrath on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. There was darkness over Egypt, but light in Goshen where the children of Israel were. Finally when the first born of Egypt died, the angel of death passed over them because the blood was applied to the doors of their houses.

When God was going to destroy Sodom He sent two angels to take Lot and his family out to safety in a small town called Zoar, not too far away for them to flee to.

The new teaching says that it will be a silent, secret rapture, because a verse in the same chapter says He will come “like a thief in the night.” But the explanation Paul gives for using that analogy is because it will be “unexpected”. He doesn’t say it will be “silent”. He has just finished in Chapter 4 saying that the Day of the Lord will be with a loud command, and the voice of the archangel, so Jesus’ coming is certainly not silently.

You have a look for yourself, and prepare to be used by God right up to His coming. There will be thousands wanting to know what is going on, and Daniel says in 12.3, when speaking about that last time, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”

Stay in tune with God,

Ron

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