

The Bible reveals that *“then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory... then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from... the uttermost part of the earth...”* (Mark 13:26, 27) The ears of the elect await the sound of *“the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised...”* (1 Cor. 15:52) Indeed, Christ foretold *“a great sound of a trumpet...”* (Mt. 24:31)

The Biblical record contains no secret rapture, no whispered voice, and no muted trumpet. Rather, it narrates Christ’s coming as an observable, audibly-evident manifestation of power. Soon *“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence...”* (Ps.50:3) Are you ready?

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A similar passage, in 2 Peter 3:10, contrasts the time, *“the day of the Lord”*, that is as a thief, with a distinctly observable manner of appearing. *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the 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.”* There can be nothing too secretive about an event that comes with a great noise.

Perhaps the most perilous aspect of the doctrine of the secret rapture is the concept that, if you are not ready the first time, there will be a second chance. It is a dangerous concept to teach that mankind will have seven years in

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One of the favorite topics of many who occupy the pulpits of our land is the secret rapture. As one of them summarized, *“This is the doctrine that Jesus’ second coming will be in two stages. In the first, He will come secretly and silently and “rapture” or take the Christians out of the world to heaven. Then later He will come back in a public appearance and begin to reign on earth for one thousand years... There are many different variations of the details. Some teach that there will be seven years of tribulation between the secret coming and the public coming; others teach that there will be only three and one half years—just about all teach that there will be a tribulation of some kind.”*

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*and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”*

According to the popular teaching, Jesus appears to those who look for Him, but He is invisible to those who don’t look for Him. However, the text doesn’t say that!

In fact, the description of this event found in Revelation 1:7 says *“every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him...”* reiterating the fact, that the righteous and the wicked will both see Christ’s coming.

Ironically, many people who teach the secret rapture also use 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. However, one doesn’t have to look too closely in order to see that these verses teach just the opposite.

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*But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”* Luke 17:26-30 In both of these biblical examples, those who ignored the warning were destroyed; there was no second chance. In the last chapter of Revelation, we see portrayed the close of probation, when every person will already have made that irrevocable decision that forever seals his fate. It is declared, *“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly;*

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God’s claims are the same throughout time. The principles of His government as presented in the law and the prophets and the gospel are the same. For all proceed from Him *“with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”* (James 1:17)

Let’s move on and look at another text that is popular in secret rapture circles, Revelation 16:15, *“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”* Many “rapturists” think that this means that Jesus will return silently, secretly, the way a thief goes about his work. In order to best understand this text we must allow the Bible to explain itself.

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Secret rapturists use these verses to teach that at the rapture the Christians will disappear from wherever they are or whatever they are doing. If they are driving a car when they are raptured, the driverless car will go crashing into a tree.

However, when this is read in the context of the whole chapter, it is obvious that this is not talking about a secret coming at all, but that Christ’s coming will be open and visible to everyone.

For example, Matt. 24:27 says His coming will be as visible as lightning, and verse 30 says, *“all the tribes of the earth... shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”*

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One of the basic premises of the secret rapture is that God deals with different people at different times in different ways. These periods are called “dispensations” and usually numbered at seven. The rapture’s part in the concept of dispensationalism is explained thus: *God had a certain plan for the Jewish dispensation, but since the Jews didn’t accept the Messiah, God interrupted it with the Christian dispensation. But God never changes His word, and so the time will come when He will go back to the Jewish dispensation. To do that, He will take the Christians out of this world silently, with no warning. Then the Jewish dispensation will be back in force and Jesus will come publically. This is the secret rapture doctrine.*

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Luke is just as specific. *“Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed... in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”* (Luke 17:30, 34 -36) The word “revealed” used here is the Greek “apokalupto” meaning literally “to take off the cover.” There can be nothing secret about that which is revealed.

The other main text used by secret rapturists, is Hebrews 9:28. *“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;*

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However, even this basic premise of the secret rapture is wrong. God does not have different dispensations to the extent that He has a different plan of salvation for different people. He is *“the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”* (Hebrews 13:8) He says *“For I am the LORD, I change not...”* (Malachi 3:6) Abraham was saved by faith just as we are. (Romans 4:3, 16; Hebrews 11:8, 17) This is why the gospel is called the *“everlasting gospel”* (Rev. 14:6). Abraham had to believe that the Son of God would come and give His life as a sacrifice for our sins: we must believe that He did so—that is the significant difference, but it is all the same gospel. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”* Acts 16:31

which to change their minds, when the Bible teaches there is no second chance. Undoubtedly, many would put off turning to Christ and wait for their “second chance” in the future and end up being eternally lost.

In the book of Luke, we find, this is exactly what Christ warned His disciples of. *“And as it was in the days of Noe [Noah], so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*

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The Jews with their sacrifices of lambs looked forward in type to the antitype, *“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29) Likewise, John records that he saw that the saints *“overcame...by the blood of the Lamb...”* (Rev 12:11) Indeed, this is the gospel found in John 3:16. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Galatians 3:26-29 expounds, *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus...There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

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Some evangelists even teach a seven stage rapture, with each secret rapture separated from the next by a year of time for more Christians to be converted and “ready for rapture.”

Despite the sincerity, eloquence, charts and pamphlets of many of these evangelists—did you know the word “rapture” is not even mentioned in the Bible? Not once!

However, there are two main texts that secret rapturists use in their arguments. One is Matthew 24: 40, 41. *“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”*

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These verses state, *“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”* 1 Thess. 4:16,17

The resurrection of the righteous, and the taking of the righteous living up to heaven is a wonderful thought and this verse makes it clear that it does not happen secretly or silently. Those who believe the secret rapture imply that this is a silent shout, a whispered voice and a muted/silenced trumpet.

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*and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”* (Revelation 22:11,12)

When Jesus comes in glory, the wicked will say *“to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:”* (Rev. 6:16) The wicked will not be able to stand in the presence of a holy God. Instead, they will be destroyed *“with the brightness of his coming:”* (2 Thess. 2:8) Today, searchers for biblical truth are not looking for a secret rapture, but instead, for a worldwide, visible event. They are *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”* (Titus 2:13)

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There is a related text found in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4. It follows Paul's description of Christ's coming in the clouds. Here Paul states, *“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 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...and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”*

Two things immediately become obvious: #1 Paul is here discussing the time rather than the manner of Christ's coming. And #2, it is not the righteous, but the wicked that are surprised.

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