



God's Bail Out Plan?

- Truth about the rapture -

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The sign outside a local church reads "God's Bailout Plan is the Rapture." This statement is eye catching but is it Biblical?

To find the truth of this subject, simply do a Bible search for the word "rapture." Flip through the entire Bible and look for that word. No luck? This term just can't be found in the Scriptures. It isn't in the Bible. Anywhere. The idea of Christians being suddenly taken to heaven comes from preachers who misinterpret the timing of 1 Thessalonians - "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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," 4:16, 17.

Today, this popular doctrine asserts that the saints will suddenly disappear at the beginning of a seven-year period of Tribulation. The time of the anti-Christ will then begin, until the visible Second Coming of the Savior. This theology is fairly new when compared to the major tenets of the Christian faith. The Messiah, the Apostles, and the early church fathers did not teach a pre-tribulation catching away of the saints. Proverbs 10:30. "The righteous shall never be removed: the wicked shall not inhabit the earth."

In fact, the idea of a bailout before the bad times first surfaced around the 1830's. It was then that a thirteen-year old Catholic girl had a vision that those baptized in the Spirit would be raptured before the antichrist came to power. She also saw that a second group of believers would be raptured at the end of the tribulation. About the same time, a book was written by John Darby about the Savior coming first to rapture His church and then, again to defeat the anti-Christ. Bible publisher C.I. Scofield heavily promoted these ideas in his study Bible and the church hasn't looked back since. From movies to TV preachers and church signs, many are convinced of the pre-tribulation rapture. Too bad the Christian Savior didn't teach such an idea.

Matthew 13:49, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." This correlates exactly of how the righteous remained on the earth while the wicked were destroyed by Noah's flood. "People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man returns," Luke 17:27-30.

The Messiah indicates that the second coming occurs after the events of the Great Tribulation in Matthew 24 and elsewhere in the Scriptures. The Bible does not teach a pre-tribulation catching away where unbelievers are "left behind." Man teaches this idea. Don't get caught up in this false hope. Strengthen your faith for whatever the future holds. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; for I have overcome the world," John 16:33. There is NO verse in the Bible that says, "Verily verily, before the Great Tribulation and the beginning of God's wrath, the end-time Christians will be miraculously air evacuated off of Planet Earth."

Revelation 20 verifies that during tribulation people will make a choice to take the mark of the beast or face persecution. There will be many Saints who refuse the mark and therefore are murdered. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection," Revelation 20:4-5. According to this passage, the rapture does not and can not take place before the mark of the beast!

The Savior clearly states when He will return in regards to the rise of the anti-Christ and the time of Jacob's trouble. "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 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," Mathew 24:29-30. It is critical that one understands the timing of the Messiah's return. Numerous signs have been given to warn believers of when the great tribulation will begin and how to prepare for such trouble. Don't be misled by a funny church sign and don't hope for a bail out program. Be ready for the hard times ahead by strengthening your faith for whatever the future holds.