

# The Rapture # 2

by Danny Brown

## No Stages of Christ's Return

We are told that Christ's return is divided into two stages. At first he will return "for" his saints, at which time they will be raptured for seven years after which he will come to earth "with" his saints. In order to establish this doctrine appeal is made to three terms that refer to Christ's return: (1) Parousia -- translated "coming, presence, advent;" (2) Epiphaneia -- translated "appearing, manifestation, brightness;" (3) Apokalupsis -- translated "revelation." Advocates of the theory hold that "coming" refers to the Rapture that occurs seven years before the "appearing" or "revelation." Accordingly, at the Rapture, Jesus comes for his church only, while at the "appearing" or "revelation" Jesus will return with the church and put an end to the great tribulation.

The distinction made in the use of the words mentioned to establish a two stage coming of Christ is untenable. Languages, including the Greek, allow that different terms may be employed to refer to the same event or action. For example: "Calvary," "the cross," "Jesus sacrifice," "he shed his blood," etc. Using these different terms does not suggest different deaths. Neither should using different terms to refer to Christ's second and final coming prove that different comings are involved. Notice the use of these words in three passages:

"And then shall be revealed the lawless one, who the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation (epiphany) of his coming (parousia)." (2 Thess 2:8). The two words epiphany and parousia are employed to refer to the same event. There is no seven years between them. Jesus will come with and for his saints at the same time.

"To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming (parousia) of our Lord with all his saints." (1 Thess 3:13). The coming parousia here described is "with" his saints. This is contrary to the theory for he comes "for" his saints at the parousia and "with" his saints at the epiphany. Paul has Jesus coming "with" his saints at the parousia which does not fit the Rapture theory. We conclude that Paul did not teach nor believe the Rapture theory.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing (epiphany)." (2 Tim 4:8) According to 1 Thess 3:13 above the Christians reward is received at the coming (parousia), but 2 Tim 4:8 says that it is received at Jesus appearing (epiphany). The truth is that his coming and appearing are at the same time. There is no Rapture of seven years between his coming and his appearing. John said, "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him," (Rev 1:7).

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints," (2 Thess. 1:7-10). This passage is of particular significance for the rest promised to those who are being persecuted will be at the same time that Jesus comes with his angels to punish the lost. Clearly the beginning of rest for the persecuted, the coming of Christ with his angels, the judgement of unbelievers, the glorification of Christ by the saints all take place on the same day. These events are not separated by years. Paul does not teach that the saints are raptured (receive rest) and then seven years later Jesus appears with his angels and after another thousand years he punishes the unbelievers. We conclude that the words parousia and epiphany are employed to refer to the same event for they are used interchangeably. The Bible makes no distinction between Jesus coming for his saints and coming with his saints. The alleged Rapture has no Bible support and is therefore false.

## **Antichrist**

The rapture theory tells us that when the saints are raptured there will arise on the earth. Overnight he will arise to power. He will be a man of such magnetism, such power, and such influence that he will be for a time the greatest dictator the world has ever known. At first he will reveal himself as a peace maker in the Middle East. However, at the mid-point of the seven-year rapture he will break his covenant with Israel. He will persecute severely those converted to Christ. He will proclaim himself to be God and demand that he be worshiped. He will set up an idol of himself in the rebuilt temple. Rather than bringing peace will be the cause of one massive catastrophe after another.

The thing wrong with this theory is that it is just not so and the Bible does not teach it. John is the only writer of the New Testament to employ the term "antichrist" in speaking of those who were opposed or against Christ.

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." (1 John 2:18).

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the son." (1 John 2:22).

"And ever spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John 4:3).

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (2 John 7).

John said here are "many." Then it does not refer to a single person as such. He said that "antichrists" were already in the world. In John's day it probably referred to the advocates of gnosticism who claimed that the body of Jesus was not real, but an illusion, and that the sufferings on the cross were apparent and not actual. In teaching this falsehood they were deceivers and caused division among the people of God. It is being taught that Paul's statement about the "man of sin" (2 Thess 2:3-9) is a reference to the "antichrist." This reference has been attributed to Nero, Constantine, the Papacy, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, Stalin, etc. for various reasons. The "mystery of iniquity" that culminated in the "man of sin" was already at work in Paul's day.

Those who look for antichrist to appear in a single personality miss the whole point. All false teachers, doctrines, systems of religion, including those in the world today, which are opposed to Christ, his church, and his people, they are of the antichrist. No doubt there are those who oppose, are against, Christ in the world today. They are antichrist. There are many antichrist, not just one.

## **Time of Tribulation**

The rapture theory calls for a seven-year period divided into two 3½ year periods. Both are periods of tribulation for those left on the earth, however, the last period is the period of great tribulation, such as the earth has never seen before. The claim is that this time of trouble is mentioned by Jeremiah, Daniel, Christ, Paul and John. Jeremiah does speak of the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), but only in connection with Israel's captivity in Babylon (Jer. 30:30:10ff). That mentioned by Daniel (Dan. 9) refers historically to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes about 170 years before Christ. The tribulation mentioned by Christ in Matthew 24 came to pass in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Other references to tribulation by Christ and those by Paul and John refer to Christians having troubles in this age. A careful reading of the New Testament reveals that there are many things written about the believer's suffering for the cause of Jesus Christ. For example, Peter wrote:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf (1 Peter 4:12-16).

The only time a great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this day, is mentioned in the Bible is in Matt 24:21 in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70. A seven-year period of tribulation at Jesus' second coming is not taught in the Bible.

## Last Day

The Rapture Theory along with its parent theory of premillennialism teach that there are a number of resurrections. The first, at the beginning of the seven year rapture of the church, of all the righteous. The second, at the end of the rapture, of all those who were converted and died during the tribulation while the church was raptured. The third, at the end of the millennial reign of Christ, of all the wicked. There are a number of scriptures that show this multiple resurrection theory to be false. Of this number is that group of passages which speak of the "last day." Please note these passages and the conclusions drawn from them.

1. "And this is the will of him that sent me of all that which he hath given me I should loose nothing and should raise it up at the last day." (John 6:39).

2. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40).

3. "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day." (John 6:44).

4. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:54).

5. "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (John 11:24).

6. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48).

In those passages from John the sixth chapter, it is the righteous which are resurrected at the last day. In John 11 nothing is said as to whether righteous or wicked are referred to. However, it takes place on the last day. John 12:48 refers to the judgement of the wicked at the last day. There cannot be two or three last days. If the resurrection is to occur on the "last day," how can it be imagined there will be another resurrection of the righteous seven years later and yet a resurrection of the unrighteous a thousand years after that. Strange indeed is a theory that makes the "last day" not the last. The Scriptures teach that the resurrection of all the dead will take place on the same day, the last day.

"And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:15). Paul believed that there would be a resurrection (singular), not resurrections (plural), of both just and unjust persons. One resurrection for all.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28-29). There is no seven-year rapture between the resurrection of the

righteous; some being resurrected at the beginning others at the end. There is not a millennial reign and a little season between the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. All are resurrected at the same time, in the same hour.

The dead are raised and the living are changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye at the last trump. (1 Cor 15:52). The trump will sound when Jesus descends from heaven with a shout. (1 Thess 4:15). There are not two or three last trumps, just one. There is just one resurrection of all the dead. This resurrection of the just and unjust will take place at the same hour on the last day at the last trump. The Rapture Theory with more than one resurrection is wrong.