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Keeping Time On God's Prophetic Clock

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Is the Word “Rapture” in the Bible?

by James Collins

I recently spoke at a church in Kansas. After the service, an upset woman walked up to me. She had a frown on her face. With an angry tone, she said, “I didn’t like what you said in the sermon.” I replied, “Which part did you not like?” “That part about the Rapture,” she snorted. “Oh, why didn’t you like that part?” I asked. “Because it is unbiblical,” she said, “Don’t you know the word ‘rapture’ is not even in the Bible.”



The upset woman was only half right. She was wrong about the Rapture being unbiblical, but she was right about the word “rapture” not being in the English translation of the Bible. However, just because a word is not in the Bible does not mean that those things are not real. The word “Bible” is not in the Bible either. Is your Bible not real?

It is true that if you were to search all the 783,137 words in the King James Bible, you would not find the word “rapture.” However, you would find the doctrine of the Rapture. The event is described in Paul’s first letter to the church in Thessalonica:

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet 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.

—1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

The Christians in Thessalonica were troubled that those believers who had died might miss out on Christ’s Second Coming. So, the Apostle Paul wrote to assure them that they should not be concerned about the departed believers because they will experience the Rapture together with

God’s people who are still alive when Christ returns. Paul reveals the “dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 **Thess. 4:16**) to receive their resurrection bodies a moment before living believers are transformed into their new glorified bodies.

Paul uses the expression “caught up” (1 **Thess. 4:17**) to describe the catching up of both the dead and living Christians. The Greek word for “caught up” is *harpazo* (which means to snatch, seize, or take away). *Harpazo* was translated in Latin versions of the Bible with the word *rapturo*, which is the English word *rapture*. So, while it is true that the word “rapture” is not in the Bible, the doctrine of the catching away of believers is definitely presented (1 **Thess. 4:17**; 1 **Cor. 15:51-55**).

The doctrine of the Rapture is found throughout the Bible, even in the Old Testament. The first recorded rapture was Enoch. The Bible says, “**And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him**” (Gen. 5:24). Enoch is an exception to all the other patriarchs who died. Instead of letting him die, “God took him.” Enoch was caught up and went directly to heaven without dying.

The prophet Elijah was also raptured. Second Kings 2 begins, “**And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal**” (2 **Kings 2:1**). The Bible uses the

expression “take up” to describe the Lord’s rapture of Elijah. The event is expounded upon a few verses later. The Bible says, **“And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kings 2:11)**. Thus, Elijah was caught up and went directly to heaven without dying.

In the New Testament, after finishing all that the Father had given Him to do, the Lord Jesus Christ was raptured:

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

—Acts 1:9-11

Jesus was raptured to heaven forty days after His resurrection. While the disciples stood and watched (probably with their mouths hanging open in amazement), two messengers from God appeared. God’s messengers said that Jesus would return one day in the same way. Jesus left by being “taken up” and was “received” by a cloud. Someday, Jesus will return to take up His bride into the clouds (**1 Thess. 4:17**) for their marriage in heaven (**Rev. 19:11-16**). Seven years later, Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives (**Zech. 14:4**) to set up His Millennial Kingdom.

Philip was raptured after his encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch. The experience is detailed in the Book of Acts (**Acts 8:25-40**). Philip was led by an angel to meet with the Ethiopian eunuch. After the eunuch was baptized, God snatched Philip away (**Acts 8:39**). The Bible does not say whether Philip went up into Heaven and came back. It just says that he was snatched away and later found himself at Azotus.

The Book of Revelation details the future rapture of the two witnesses. At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will kill the two witnesses. He will leave their dead bodies in the streets of Jerusalem for three-and-a-half days, in which time all the population of the world will celebrate. The celebrations will stop when the two witnesses suddenly come back to life. Then they will follow the Lord’s command to **“come up hither,”** and they will be raptured to heaven (**Rev. 11:3-12**).

Also, in the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John describes his own personal rapture. The Bible says, **“After this**

I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter” (Rev. 4:1). Here, John is a type of church. He was told to “come up hither” just as the church will be called up to Heaven at the Rapture.

It is worth noting that the focus of the Book of Revelation changes after Revelation 4:1. Up to that point, Revelation was focused on the church, but there is no mention of the church again until the end of the book (**Rev. 22:16**). The prophecies of Revelation 4–19 concern them that dwell on the earth (**Rev. 6:10**). There is only mention of “saints,” who are those who hear the Gospel and accept Christ during the Tribulation. The church is not on the earth during this period which is in line with the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. John, who was one of the first true members of the church of Jesus Christ, is a fitting symbol of the church being taken out of the world before the Tribulation begins.

Like John, the Apostle Paul describes a personal rapture in his second letter to believers in Corinth. He refers to “a man” who was caught up into Heaven. He writes, **“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:2)**. Even though he does not directly identify himself as “the man” in this passage, it is clear from the context that he is speaking of himself. Paul says that he was not sure if he was “in the body” or “out of the body.” However, he did know that he was “caught up” into the third heaven either physically or spiritually. Second Corinthians was written after 1 Thessalonians. Paul had already used the word *harpazo* (caught up) to describe the Rapture of believers. He uses the same word to describe what happened to him here.

I would like to point out that Paul says this rapture happened to “a man in Christ.” According to 1 Thessalonians 4:14–16, only those “in Christ” will be caught up in the Rapture. Only those who have trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior will be taken up. The lost will stay behind. If you are not a Christian, you need to get ready or get left.

So, while the word “rapture” may not be in the Bible, the concept is clearly a biblical concept. However, if you don’t like using the word “rapture” just because it is not in the Bible, you can just say, “I am looking forward to 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17.” Or “I am excited about the day when we will be caught up.” Or “I can’t wait for the translation of the church.” Or “I am anticipating the snatching away of the saints.”

I think I will stick with Rapture if you don’t mind.

Race War or Race Peace?

Pastor Larry Spargimino, Ph.D

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men.”

—Acts 17:26

Tensions were high one Saturday in April 2021 when Democrat representative Maxine Waters spoke in Brooklyn Center, the Minneapolis suburb where Daunte Wright, a 20-year-old black man, was shot and killed by police. Waters said, “We’ve got to stay on the street and we’ve got to get more active, we’ve got to get more confrontational. We’ve got to make sure that they know that we mean business.”

Waters, a highly confrontational figure, sometimes known as “Kerosene Maxine,” was notorious for telling her constituents to follow and hound Trump supporters and make life miserable for them: “Wherever you find them, at the gas station, in restaurants, go right on and harass them.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a different approach for the civil rights movement. Bishop Jim Lowe, senior pastor of the Guiding Light Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and distinguished fellow at the Alabama Policy Institute—where the emphasis is on free markets, limited government, and strong families—believes that the current-day civil rights movement, marked by violent protests, is very different than the civil rights movement of the 1960s under Dr. King’s leadership. Lowe pointed out that King, in his “Letter From Birmingham Jail,” believed that in any non-violent campaign there are four basic steps to be followed: (1) collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist, (2) negotiation, (3) self-purification, and (4) direct action (Lowe’s comments can be found at southeastsun.com).

Unfortunately, says Lowe, these steps are lacking in many of today’s protests, many of which turn violent and lead to the destruction of property and businesses in the black community. “In some cases,” says Lowe, “injustice may seem apparent but in reality, it is non-existent. Thus righteousness is not on the side of the protester.”

The second step that Dr. King followed was negotiation. King felt that was extremely important. Lowe points out, however, that today, negotiation does not get very far. Try to negotiate and you are shouted down. Reasonable and helpful discourse is impossible. “Disrespect,” says Lowe “is shown to those who are made in the image of God.”

The third step followed by Dr. King that is completely bypassed today is self-purification. This was a time of personal

and intensive self-examination for the leader of the protest. The person needs to be honest with himself and check his motives, his manners, and see if confession to God needs to be made. Does this sound like something the BLM people would do today?

The fourth step recommended by Dr. King is direct action. If the previous three steps have been followed and there is no progress, a peaceful protest is necessary. Dr. King believed in justice and he did not believe in capitulation. He took direct action that was non-violent. Lowe believes that protests should hold a special place for Americans who realize that we have a Bill of Rights to protect the people from the government. Protests have been catalysts for progress for centuries and are essential to the American experiment. Lowe believes that when legislation “with the potential to affect protesting comes up for debate ...our representatives should be extremely careful. Any effort, even good intentions to prevent violence, that limits the right to protest or gives law enforcement undue power to restrain or jail citizens exercising their first amendment rights, should be carefully examined.” However, non-violent protests are unacceptable today in the modern civil rights movement. Why is that? Because the issue is never the issue. The revolution is.

Critical Race Theory and Marxism

Critical race theory (CRT) is quickly becoming America’s new institutional orthodoxy. What is it and where did it come from? Patrisse Khan-Cullors, BLM co-founder, has said she is a “trained Marxist.” What are the connections between Marxism, CRT, and BLM?

Marxism was initially built on the theory of class conflict. Marx believed that the primary characteristics of industrial societies was an imbalance of power between capitalists (property owners) and workers, an imbalance between the oppressors and the oppressed. Marx said the only answer to this problem is revolution. Workers must rise to power, seize the means of production, overthrow the capitalist class, and usher in a new socialist utopia. In other words Marx believed in a Millennium without God.

During the twentieth century a number of governments underwent Marxist-led revolutions that left up to 100 million people dead. The Soviet Union, China, Cambodia,

Cuba, and others violently destroyed the existing capitalist structures through mass murder, purges, and gulags. By the mid-1960s, Marxist thinkers in America realized they had no hope of success in a country where the people were happy and successful. A growing and prosperous middle class was enjoying the “American dream.” Fortunately, the civil rights movement of the 1960s led by Dr. King did bring change and justice through peaceful means. It brought the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

But the Marxists are historically resilient, a social cancer that destroys the host and thereby, ultimately, destroys itself leaving death. Rather than abandon their plans for societal change, Marxist thinkers in America simply adapted their revolutionary theory to the social and racial unrest of the 1990s. Abandoning Marx’s economic dialectic of capitalists and workers, they substituted race for class and sought to create a revolutionary coalition of the oppressed based on racial and ethnic categories. For them, the new imbalance of power is between the whites and the non-whites. While Dr. King was looking for a society where people would “not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,” BLM makes skin color everything. Tell a BLM supporter that white lives matter too, and you will be in big trouble, maybe even violence.

For some CR theorists, even “white” science is suspect. James Lindsay writes, “Since modern science was predominantly produced by white, Western men, Critical Race Theory views science as a white and Western way of knowing. Critical Race Theory maintains that science encodes and perpetuates ‘white dominance’ and thus isn’t really fitting for black people who inhabit a culture of Blackness” (newdiscourses.com).

CRT is not a unifying movement but thrives on division and social anarchy. It is based on fanning the flames of racial unrest. Several states—Oklahoma, Idaho, Louisiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Tennessee, and others—have drafted bills that ban the teaching of CRT. It is a national tragedy that Democrat lawmakers favor its teaching.

Believe it or not, CRT is not an idea that promotes liberty. It is against the idea of liberty and sees a free society as a way to structure and maintain inequities by convincing racial minorities not to agitate for radical racial identity politics. It is very different than the civil rights movement it incorrectly claims to continue.

Racism is wrong, as is the notion of racial superiority. The idea that whites are superior because they are white is

to forget that Hitler and Stalin (as are most American mass murderers) were also white. The whites who made America great did so not because they were white but because of the Judeo-Christian values they held. These are values that are available to anyone and have nothing to do with skin color.

Why then is America so hated by the radical left? It is not really hated for its slavery. Yes, slavery was a dark and ugly blot on American history but, in the words of social commentator Dennis Prager, “If it were, given the ubiquity of slavery throughout world history, every country and ethnic group on earth would be hated. America is hated for its values and its successes” (*WND*, 4/19/21).

There is an internationalist conspiracy to remove America as a sovereign nation because America is the single most potent opposer to globalism. In his 1991 Bilderberger speech, David Rockefeller made it clear that he and his family are part of a “secret cabal” to overthrow America. And “I am proud of it,” he said. CRT is an effective way to tear down the American Republic and make way for the one-world government of the Antichrist (see [Revelation 13](#)). Fortunately many Americans, including notable black Americans, understand.

On April 28, 2021, Senator Tim Scott delivered the Republican response to President Biden’s address to a joint session of Congress. Among other things, Scott who is a black American said, “America is not a racist country.”

Senator Scott said he was blessed “with a praying momma.” He bemoaned the closing of churches during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Becoming a Christian transformed my life, but for months too many churches were shut down.” Senator Scott said: “Black, Hispanic, white, and Asian, Republican and Democrat . . . we are not adversaries. We are family. We are all in this together, and we get to live in the greatest country on earth. . . . So I am more than hopeful. I am confident that our finest hour has yet to come.”

The world is in desperate straits but, “God is still on the throne and prayer changes things.” Jesus Christ is still saving souls and He hasn’t changed His mind about saving more—“red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight.”

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