

THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE DOCTRINE

By David R. Hughes

In modern Protestant Christianity, the Rapture is a belief that all true believers, both living and deceased, will be suddenly taken up or caught up to meet Jesus in the air, before the great tribulation period prophesied in the bible books of Daniel, Matthew and Revelation. According to some interpretations of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. (see scriptures below) this event is often seen as an earlier separate and secret event from the Second Coming, which is when Jesus returns to Earth with his saints. The concept of the Rapture is primarily based on interpretations of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:50-54, Revelation 10:3, Matthew 24: 37-42 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (see scriptures below). Almost all Christians believe there will be a Rapture although it is not mentioned anywhere in the bible by that word. The Latin Vulgate uses "rapiemur" meaning "we will be caught up" to translate the Greek word "harpazo" which is where the English word Rapture comes from. It is usually described as an event prophesied to happen in the future at a time not disclosed to mankind. The bible does reveal all the major events leading up to the Rapture so we can be ready for it. The most extremely important question to Christians is not if there will be a Rapture but rather when it occurs according to the Holy Bible. This composition will explore the pre-tribulation view and the post-tribulation view, the two most prevalent interpretations in the modern Christian world. These views are associated with Futurism and Historicism respectively, which will be explained later in this discourse. The following scriptures are mainly where the discrepancies in interpretation occur.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 kjv ¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ 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: ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:50-54 kjv ⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Revelation 10:3 kjv *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

Matthew 24: 37-42 kjv *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² “Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come*

1 Thessalonians 5:9 kjv *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The first bible was printed in the mid-1450s in Mainz, Germany, by Johann Gutenberg. He used the printing press to mass produce Saint Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation of the holy scriptures from around 500AD. Although the bible was becoming available to the masses, the scriptures were still hidden from the general laity of the church since it was only translated in Latin and spoken in Latin in Roman Catholic services. Other vernacular translations were strictly prohibited so that anyone found with one or speaking scripture from one was subjected to inquisitions for heresy or sedition and treated with extremely harsh punishments, even up to torture and death. The Roman Catholic was the only Christian Church visible to the world in the Middle Ages and to keep unity of doctrine among all its widespread members it prohibited any other translations to exist. However, the Lollards in England who were mostly followers of John Wycliffe and his English translation of the bible, revolted in 1414 and suffered persecution. Going underground they set the stage for the coming English Reformation. Knowledge of the scriptures in local languages was the actual beginning of the reformation as they exposed discrepancies in the bible with Roman Catholic doctrine and practices.

German theologian Martin Luther's 95 theses in 1517 calling for reform of the Catholic Church marked the start of the Protestant Reformation. One major complaint was against Indulgences or being absolved from sins in exchange for making donations to the church. Key reformers such as Scottish John Knox, German Martin Luther and John Calvin claimed the pope's elevation of title to Vicar (one who exercises authority in place of another person) of Christ, and of the Catholic Mass as being worthy of merit, taught that the Roman Catholic Papacy, specifically the institution of the pope, was the Antichrist. They believed the papacy was the little horn of Daniel 7:25 and the Man of sin 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

The papacy or the succession of popes being the antichrist became part of the progressive fulfillment interpretation of Daniel and Revelation prophecies which later became known as Historicism.

THE CATHOLIC COUNTER- REFORMATION: THE DIVERSION

In 1540 Spanish ex-soldier turned priest Ignatius Loyola established a secretive order, The Society of Jesus known as the Jesuits, who took the usual monastic vows and also swore to obey the pope. Their purpose was to defend the Papal power and destroy Protestantism by any means necessary. Also, the Council of Trent in 1545 to 1563 convened to counter the loss of Catholic authority and the loss of millions of church members to Protestantism.

Around 1590 Jesuit Francisco Ribera published a commentary on the book of Revelation that denounced the Protestant's Historicist interpretation and claimed the antichrist would be only one evil individual who would rule at an unknown future time for 42 months or 3 ½ years, and not a system or succession of popes using the year for a day principle of prophetic interpretation which is 1260 days meaning 1260 years. His commentary was the beginning of the Futurist School of interpretation. Ribera also presented a new gap interpretation between the 69th and 70th weeks in the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. This interpretation pushed the 70th week into the far unknown future claiming that the 70th week was about the antichrist instead of Christ at His first coming. Therefore, the pope at that time (the early Reformation) could not be the antichrist. He claimed that none of the prophecies of the beast, the little horn or the antichrist were about the medieval church or the reigning Pope. The reinterpretation managed to make remaining Catholics feel confident in the church doctrine and its interpretations of prophecy thus slowing the loss of membership. Ribera also said the man of sin referenced in Paul's 2 Thesalonians 2:3 was not the Papacy but one future single man.

Italian Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine drew on Ribera's anti-Historicist ideas and published the influential work "Disputations on the Controversies", a major work published between 1586 and 1593. This comprehensive and influential book served as the standard Roman Catholic rebuttal to the Protestant Reformation for centuries and defending the Catholic faith. He was also a cardinal, a Jesuit, and in 1616 was involved in the Galileo affair, admonishing Galileo to present his heliocentric theories as hypotheses rather than scientific fact.

THE PROTESTANT SWITCH FROM HISTORICISM TO FUTURISM

In the late seventeen hundreds, Manuel De La Lacunza, an exiled Chilean Jesuit, using the Jewish sounding pseudonym Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra wrote a book on prophecy, "The coming Of Messiah in Glory and Majesty". Since Protestants were wary of reading books by Catholics, under the Jewish name he presented himself as a converted Jewish

Rabbi to mislead Protestants into reading the anti-Historicist and pro-Futurist interpretation of Revelation developed by Francisco Ribera 200 years earlier and persuade them to accept Ribera's Futurist interpretation. His book was first published posthumously in Spanish in 1812 after he died in 1801. Lacunza's book was later translated into English in 1827 by Edward Irving.

Edward Irving, a Church of Scotland, Scottish Presbyterian minister and forerunner of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements was introduced to futurist ideas by reading the work of Manuel Lacunza, which advocated for a future single Antichrist. Around 1830, Irving added his own futurist interpretation of prophecy by teaching a "two-stage" return of Christ. He taught that a "secret rapture" of believers would occur before the rise of the Antichrist and the tribulation, followed later by a public second coming of Christ. The first known promotion of the new doctrine in print was in the September 1830 issue of Irving's periodical "The Morning Watch". Irving was subsequently expelled from the Presbyterian Church, at which time he formed the Catholic Apostolic Church. The services of this church were characterized by frequent interruptions by members "prophesying" or "speaking in tongues." It was their belief that, because of the imminent Second Coming of Christ, they had been empowered in the same manner as the early Christians of the first century, as described in the Book of Acts and other places in the New Testament. He also taught a prophetic futurist viewpoint of a pre-tribulation rapture which he picked up from Margaret MacDonald, a member of his congregation.

In early 1830 Margaret MacDonald (born 1815 and died c.1840), a young Scottish visionary, had a vision of believers being caught up to meet Christ before a period of extreme suffering and tribulation. In 1820's Scotland there was a spirit of religious fervor growing that was calling for a revival of the Holy Spirit gifts exhibited by the early church. During that time prayer meetings at the home of the MacDonald family attracted charismatic believers who would speak in tongues at the meetings and Margaret's visions became well known. At that time Edward Irving became aware of Margaret's visions and visited the MacDonald's meetings. He interpreted her vision and developed the idea of a two-stage return of Christ with a pre-tribulation rapture into a theological doctrine.

In the summer of 1830 John Nelson Darby who had earlier left the Anglican Church as Priest, formed a religious movement called the "Brethren" or the "Plymouth Brethren". Darby also visited the Macdonald family gatherings and investigated the visions of their young teenage girl, Margaret. Darby suspected that MacDonald's visions were demonic, and some sources say that he developed his pre-tribulation rapture view before visiting her, but the essence of her vision was also included in his rapture theory. It is not known for sure if Irving and Nelson worked together or confided in the development of the pre-tribulation rapture, but ultimately their futurist system of interpretation melded with Margaret MacDonald's vision, and later spread to the United States.

Darby is also considered to be the father of dispensationalism which holds that there are seven dispensations or ages throughout history in the bible. They are in order: 1. Innocence: (Adam and Eve before the fall) 2. Conscience: (Adam after the fall to Noah) 3. Human Government: (Noah to the Tower of Babel) 4. Promise: (Abraham to Moses) 5.

Law: (Moses and the law to Christ) 6. Grace or the Church Age: (Pentecost to the Rapture) 7. The Millennial Kingdom of God: (The future 1000-year reign of Christ on earth). It also holds that mankind has failed and will fail in each dispensation until eternity comes at the end of the Millennium with a new heaven and a new earth. It requires a literal interpretation of some scriptures rather than those scriptures being considered as metaphorical. Dispensationalism also teaches that Christians are not bound by the law of Moses in this dispensation of Grace, the Church Age, and that there are different destinies for Israel and the Church of God. This doctrine contradicts Ephesians 2:14-18 where Paul explains the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Jesus making them one people.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. NKJV

Darby's dispensationalism asserts that there will be a literal restoration of Israel when Christ returns to establish the Millennial Kingdom, but the rapture of the church will occur first at a secret coming of Christ before the tribulation. His dispensationalism with the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine and the 70th week of Daniel 9 prophecy gap (now called dispensationalism's Grace or Church age) interpretation of Ribera were combined to form a comprehensive new doctrine which eventually became known as the Rapture Doctrine. Darby first presented this new comprehensive "pre-tribulation secret rapture of believers eschatological doctrine" to his Plymouth Brethren at Powerscourt, Ireland in late 1830 or early 1831.

THE RAPTURE DOCTRINE COMES TO AMERICA

The new Rapture Doctrine quickly spread to Britain and the United States through prophecy conferences and charismatic preachers. In the late 1800's at the Niagara Conference in the U.S., Darby's dispensationalism and futurism gained a large following. Now the Roman Catholic Jesuit reinterpretations of Daniel and Revelation prophecies to exonerate the pope from being the Antichrist during the early reformation years had come full circle and entered into the modern evangelical Protestant world. Cyrus I. Schofield attended the Niagara Conference taking in Darby's new dispensationalism and the Rapture Doctrine and he spoke at the Niagara conference in July of 1888. The Rapture Doctrine had now been successfully exported to the Evangelicals in the United States where it began to spread rapidly.

Cyrus I. Schofield was a well-known speaker at bible conferences in the U.S. teaching dispensationalism, the Rapture Doctrine and 70th week of Daniel 9 prophecy gap theory placing a single Antichrist and the Tribulation at a time in the unknown future. He served in the Confederacy during the American Civil War and afterwards experienced

serious personal problems with alcoholism and marital issues. Scofield studied law in St. Louis, Missouri and moved to Kansas in 1869 without his wife and daughters and his wife eventually divorced him for abandonment. He spent time in prison for forgery in a railroad scam, and later accusations of bribery and corruption lead him to resign from public office as a U.S. Attorney and later, more accusations of fraud and theft surfaced against him.

Despite his shadowy past he professed a religious conversion in 1879 and got involved with some prominent evangelists. In 1882 he became the pastor of the First Congregational Church in Dallas, Texas. In 1909 the Scofield Reference Bible was published which popularized futurism and dispensationalism among fundamentalist Christians in the U.S. His reference bible used the King James version and included extensive notes and interpretations that popularized the dispensational theology in the United States. Since the notes were included on the pages along with the respective scriptures and the King James English was sometimes difficult for Americans to understand, many relied heavily on the notes for clarification and eventually began to accept the notes as part of the truth of the bible without question.

More recently in 1984 researcher Joseph Canfield's book, "The Incredible Scofield and His Book" which was at first privately printed, critically examines the life and work of C.I. Scofield challenging the common perception of Scofield and his dispensationalist theology, arguing that Scofield's life and teachings were not as reputable as often portrayed. In 1901 Arno Gaebelein, a Zionist began the annual Sea Cliff Bible Conference on Long Island. It was there that C. I. Scofield first mentioned his desire to publish a study Bible and asked for Gaebelein's assistance in the project. Canfield spent a lifetime trying to determine what happened between the Sea Cliff Bible Conference and 1909 when the Scofield Reference Bible was published. He concluded that the notes had been written by Gaebelein who followed Scofield around all the time. Canfield surmises that Arno was the man behind the curtain. He created the illusion of the incredible Scofield, when in reality, Gaebelein was the real wizard of dispensationalism in the notes.

In his book, Joseph M. Canfield also suggests, "The admission of Scofield to the exclusive Lotos Club in New York City, which could not have been sought by Scofield, strengthens the suspicion that has cropped up before, that someone was directing the career of C.I. Scofield." That someone, Canfield suspects, was associated with one of the club's committee members, the Wall Street lawyer Samuel Untermyer.

John S. Torell, born in 1919, founder and president of European-American Evangelistic Crusades received reading material sent to him by Mr. Canfield and spoke to him over the telephone. Canfield's communication with Torell made it clear to him that the dispensational teaching hurt him (Canfield) greatly as a young man, since it was hammered into him that there was no real point of doing anything on this earth, since the return of Jesus was imminent, and Christians should basically just lay back and make no plans for a long life on this earth. As a result, Mr. Scofield and his generation lost all hope of doing something on this earth, they only existed from day to day, waiting until Jesus removed them from the earth. Here is what Mr. Canfield wrote himself:

“My venture in writing about things of the Lord developed after I read Iain Murray’s ‘THE PURITAN HOPE’ and I realized that there was something unsavory about the beginnings of premillennialism, something that British Evangelicals would not think about. I was amazed to find no biography of C.I. Scofield and had no idea of the can or worms I would uncover.” (From “JOSEPH M CANFIELD, A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY JOHN S. Torell”)

Torell also makes this statement in his biographical sketch of Canfield:

By 1948, Christians in the West fell like ripe plums for the propaganda that God was opening the door for a Jewish state. The hype in the Fundamental churches, even Pentecostal churches, went into overdrive and a number of prominent ministries began pushing hard for Israel. Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Jack van Impe, Kathryn Kuhlman, Hal Lindsey, Jim Bakker (PTL), Pat Robertson (the 700 Club), Jerry Falwell (Moral Majority), John Hagee, Paul and Jane Crouch (TBN), Ulf Ekman from Sweden, and many more became fanatical supporters of the State of Israel. In 2006, the hype has gone into overdrive with a new theology being pushed that Jewish people do not need to come through Jesus, God has a special salvation plan outside of Christ for them. Christians are (to) support them financially and send as many of them as possible to Israel but do not preach Jesus Christ crucified to them.

THE RAPTURE DOCTRINE AND THE ZIONIST CONNECTION

As Canfield intimates, Scofield’s theology was “most helpful in getting Fundamentalist Christians to back the international interest in one of Untermeyer’s pet projects—the Zionist Movement.” According to news sources at the time, Untermeyer who knew President Woodrow Wilson from his campaign met with him after he was elected with letters written by Wilson to a former girlfriend while he was married saying that she would not expose the illicit affair for a payment of \$40,000. Wilson admitted to sending the letters but couldn’t pay so Untermeyer offered to pay the bribe for him in exchange for Wilson choosing a Supreme Court nominee of Untermeyer’s choosing. Wilson agreed and selected Louis Dembitz Brandeis, a political and highly influential Zionist Jewish man who was appointed as a Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States.

In 1916 there was a meeting between the British War Cabinet and the World Zionist Organization which would result in the 1917 Balfour Declaration. The World Zionist Organization was established by a world congress of Zionists in 1897 after Austrian atheist, Theodor Herzl founded the political form of Zionism, a movement to establish a Jewish homeland. His pamphlet *The Jewish State* (1896) proposed that the Jewish question was a political question to be settled by a world council of nations. Brandeis knew about the deal between President Wilson and Untermeyer, and possibly to return Untermeyer’s favor for

getting him nominated for the Supreme Court, Justice Brandeis became instrumental in convincing President Wilson that Congress would be justified in declaring war on Germany, so the president requested it, and Congress declared war in April of 1917. This assured the defeat of Germany, and the hope was that Palestine would be turned over to the Zionists via the Balfour Declaration and they would have a Jewish national home protected by the British.

An excerpt from anti-Zionist investigative journalist, political commentator and author Maidhc Ó Cathai's book "The Scofield Bible --- The Book That Made Zionists of America's Evangelical Christians" explains:

*SINCE IT WAS first published in 1909, the Scofield Reference Bible has made uncompromising Zionists out of tens of millions of Americans. When John Hagee, the founder of Christians United for Israel (CUFI), said that "50 million evangelical bible-believing Christians unite with five million American Jews standing together on behalf of Israel," it was the Scofield Bible that he was talking about. Although the original Scofield Reference Bible contains the text of the King James Version, it is not the traditional Protestant bible but Cyrus I. Scofield's annotated commentary that is problematic. More than any other factor, it is Scofield's notes that have induced generations of American evangelicals to believe that God demands their uncritical support for the modern State of Israel. -----
--Notwithstanding this more orthodox reading, The New Scofield Study Bible, published by Oxford University Press in 1984, intensified Scofield's interpretation by adding, "For a nation to commit the sin of anti-Semitism brings inevitable judgement."*

Right or wrong, the influence of the Schofield Bible notes has directly or indirectly influenced presidents and most of America's Protestant evangelical leaders to support the modern nation state of Israel monetarily and militarily since the time Samuel Untermyer got involved with Schofield in the early twentieth century.

RAPTURE DOCTRINE SPREADS AMONG U.S. EVANGELICALS

Scofield died in 1921, when the reference bible was selling briskly. At this point Gaebelein and his backers decided to open a seminary on the buckle of the bible belt. In place of Scofield, Gaebelein chose a close friend, Lewis Sperry Chafer to be the first President of Dallas Theological Seminary. A famous American author of eschatology and theology, Harold (Hal) Lindsey graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1962 with a master's in theology. His bestselling 1970 book "The Late Great Planet Earth" and his 1973 book, "There's a New World Coming" popularized End Times Dispensationalism, tying contemporary events to cataclysmic biblical prophecies. Thanks to Lindsey, tens of millions of evangelical Christians, and others, anticipated a possible cosmic Apocalypse in

their lifetimes, preceded by a “Rapture” in which the redeemed are carried to Heaven and spared the ordeal. In 1983 Lindsey published “The Rapture: Truth or Consequences” and in 1999 “Vanished Into Thin Air: The Hope of Every Believer” continuing his discussions of eschatology and Baptist theology concerning the pre-tribulation Rapture Doctrine.

More recently, Don Felumlee, Author & Speaker who wrote "The Troubling Roots of the Rapture Theory" states that Clarence Larkin, a Baptist Minister, was personally responsible for drawing up the numerous Charts and Diagrams concerning the "BOOK OF REVELATION", which the majority of our current Bible Prophecy teachers such as JOHN HAGEE, PERRY STONE, JACK VAN IMPE, TIM LAHAYE and many others, are currently teaching from. Larkin's book "DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH" is one of the most widely circulated publications concerning Biblical Prophecy of all time.

CONCLUSION

During the Reformation the early Protestant leaders such as Martin Luther believed the Papacy or the succession of Popes was the antichrist of the bible because of their corruption which is a tenet of the Historicist interpretation of the bible. They had witnessed the Pope's and Church's corruption and cruelty firsthand and were persecuted for speaking out against it.

The Futurist interpretation of biblical scriptures related to the second coming of Christ originated with Roman Catholic Jesuits during the early period of the Protestant Reformation to protect the Church's power and exonerate the current Pope at that time from being the antichrist. They moved Daniel 9's 70th week prophecy to some unknown future time to accomplish their goal.

Most modern Protestants today have accepted the Catholic Jesuits interpretation of Futurism but with the added doctrine of a secret pretribulation rapture of believers caught up in the air to meet Christ at His return. Many Protestants are not aware of the Historicist view, and most Futurist teachers won't mention it.

Some scriptures used to promote and support the Rapture Doctrine are the same scriptures that can also disprove the Rapture Doctrine. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Revelation 3:10 and Matthew 24:37-42. For example, Jesus pointed us to the days of Noah in Matthew 24:37 so if we consider verses 38-42 in the context of the Genesis account of Noah, it reverses the Pre-tribulation Rapture interpretation of who is left behind and who is taken. Matthew 24: 37-42 kjv, ³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them (sinners) all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken (sinners), and the other left (the righteous). ⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken (by flood of destruction and death), and the other left (to inherit the earth). ⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Christ returns at the seventh and last trumpet and not before. Revelation 11:15 kjv
¹⁵ And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.

There will be Christian martyrs during the tribulation. Revelation 6:9-11 kjv ⁹
And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? ¹¹ And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

There is only one First Resurrection when Jesus comes, and it is not in secret or in silence. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 kjv *¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede NKJV) them which are asleep. ¹⁶ 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: ¹⁷ 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.*

There could be some negative results from believing in a pretribulation rapture:

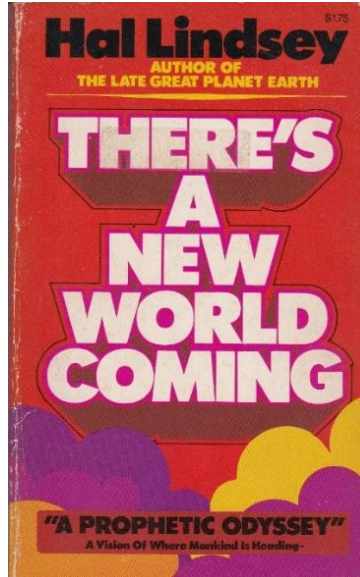
1. Believing you will not be on earth during the coming great tribulation might cause a Christian to become complacent and not be diligent to prepare and train for an extreme spiritual struggle if the Rapture Doctrine is false.
2. If the Rapture Doctrine is incorrect and you have not studied the Bible thoroughly, you might be inclined to judge God unfairly because He allowed you to be in the tribulation since you believe that in the bible, He said Christians would be removed to Heaven with Jesus before it occurred.
3. You might become angry and turn against God and allow your fear of the tribulation to sway you into accepting the mark of the beast leading to death.
4. Belief in the pretribulation rapture can lead to social problems including escapism, decreased focus on this life, and fractured relationships with non-believing loved ones.
5. If you find yourself in the tribulation because the Rapture doctrine was false, you might still have a chance to repent and be tried by the fire of tribulation if you are not angry with God, but it would be too late to be part of the Church kept from the Tribulation according to Revelation 3:10. *¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on*

the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. And you would not escape into the wilderness for safety according to Revelation 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. Thus, the pretribulation rapture belief could actually trap you in the tribulation.

6. Fear of the great tribulation can keep our minds from opening up to truth and consideration that the pretribulation Rapture Doctrine could be an incorrect interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Trusting in God and His perfect and righteous good will toward us can unlock our fear so we can discern the correct interpretation.

On a personal note, I was miraculously introduced to Hal Lindsey's books in 1976. After studying several of the Occult sciences since 1972 before my conversion, I was taking some time off from music jobs and while visiting my parents, I was in bed late one night reading my third book by Carlos Castaneda titled "Tales of Power" about a Yaqui Indian shaman who was teaching him how to interact with the spirit world by using psychedelic mushrooms and other plants like peyote. I fell asleep while reading and had a dream of demons tossing me around and yelling angrily at me "SO, YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE!!!" while tearing pages out of bibles and throwing them at me. The dream frightened me into waking and confused me because I hadn't been involved in Religion or the Bible since my high school years. The next morning, I noticed a book with a colorful orange spine on a bookshelf across the room where I was sitting that I decided to look at. It was Hal Lindsey's book "There's A New World Coming" and I inadvertently opened it up to a page around the middle of the book where there was an article warning about Carlos Castaneda's books about Don Juan possibly leading people into sorcery and eventually into demon possession and worship. So, I got rid of all those Castaneda books and started reading Hal Lindsey's book and found my bible to read that had been sitting at my parent's house for years. After reading "A New World Coming" I became extremely fearful of the coming Great Tribulation prophesied in the Bible. Then at my first job back in music, my group got a booking at an apartment complex restaurant and club with furnished rooms for each member. I got the key at the office to one of the rooms and walking into the bedroom discovered the very book by Hal Lindsey that I wanted to read next. A copy of his book "The Late Great Planet Earth" was sitting there on top of the dresser waiting for me to read it which I did. I remained fearful of the Tribulation for several years until I read his books "The Rapture: Truth or Consequences" and "Vanished into Thin Air: The Hope of Every Believer". Then after reading those books about the Rapture, I came to believe in the Rapture Doctrine whole heartedly and was no longer fearful of the seven-year Tribulation that Hal Lindsey taught about. Therefore, no worries or urgency because I would be Raptured beforehand. I could just sit back and wait to be raptured when Jesus would come to take me away to heaven at the mid-point of a seven-year tribulation for the last 3½ years when the Antichrist would persecute all Christians, which would be happening very soon. Believing in the Rapture Doctrine along with the

misused Doctrine of Grace teaching once saved, always saved because all future sins are forgiven, I slipped into spiritual complacency, which is one of the dangers of believing in the Rapture Doctrine. It was many years later when I learned of the Historisist view and began serious study of the bible to grow in knowledge of God and His ways that I was freed from fear of the tribulation and the escapism of the Rapture Doctrine.



In our day, drug addiction has swelled into a flood across the nation. With it has come an unprecedented tide of witchcraft and demonism. I've talked with people who've been on LSD for a long time, and they've told me, "Demons are no strangers to me!" Demons and drugs are very similar in their effect on the human mind. They can take over a man to the point where he's completely altered in personality.

An article in *The International Journal of Social Psychiatry* (Spring, 1971) dealt with the reality of demon possession and how to diagnose it, and gave the following instruction: "There is a need to ascertain if there is any involvement in *drug addiction*, as it is common that addicts, especially with heroin and alcohol, become involved in black magic and vice versa. . . . (Some) have been known in some cases to have been very religious people who defaulted, and thus left themselves open to some power other than God to control their lives."

The interesting thing to me is that in many cases with which I am familiar the person first used drugs, then got into witchcraft. But when a deep involvement with the occult followed, drugs were eventually dropped in favor of the more powerful experience with spirits.

CASTANEDA'S STRANGE JOURNEY

A powerful writer of our time, Carlos Castaneda, has written of his own personal experiences along this line in his bestseller of the 1970's, *Journey to Ixtlan*. In this book and his two previous ones, he tells of his initiation into the practice of Indian sorcery in Mexico through such hallucinogenic drugs as peyote, Jimson weed, mushrooms mixed with other plants, and other natural drugs.

While Castaneda was on his "trips" he had all kinds of encounters with "beings" he couldn't understand. He was continually urged by an old Indian sorcerer named Don Juan to seek to really "see" the other world. Whether Don Juan really exists or is simply a creation of Castaneda's pen, no one knows for sure. But Castaneda

has spent ten years of his life seeking to "see" by negating the routine use of the five senses and to experience firsthand the world of spirits and psychic phenomena. For his efforts in this field UCLA gave him a Ph.D. for *Journey to Ixtlan*!

One of the most important things that Castaneda discovered in his journey to becoming a sorcerer is that drugs are only necessary in the beginning. As a seeker becomes fully committed to sorcery, a "spirit entity" attaches itself to the seeker and gives him unimaginable power.

The reason I've taken so much space to mention Carlos Castaneda's writings is that these three books of his, *The Teachings*, *A Separate Reality*, and *Journey to Ixtlan*, have sold in the millions and are now considered by many in the academic world as among the most important anthropological research of all time. And do you know what it is they are so excited and stimulated about? The Bible calls them *demons*!

According to the prophecies of the Book of Revelation, those who reject the truth about Jesus Christ will become so deceived that they will not only *believe* in the reality of demons, but they will actually *worship* them through the coming one-world religion called "mystery Babylon" (Revelation 17).

THE PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY

The third prominent sin of the Tribulation will be rampant immorality. *Porneia*, the Greek word used in this verse, refers to all kinds of sexual activity outside of its Biblically-sanctioned function between a married man and woman. The marriage vow will be virtually unknown at this time, and there will be a complete breakdown in family relationships.

The *Futurist* magazine devoted the whole April 1973 issue to "Man-Woman Relationships in the Future." In the lead article Dr. Herbert Otto says, "A psychologist foresees a society in which men and women will explore new depths of intimacy, and the pursuit of joy will become an art form. . . . More people will indulge in group sex . . . and the ideal life will not be marriage,