



Has the Rapture Been Called Off?

By: Dan Betzer

Recently I walked through the Tower of London where the crown jewels are on display. The breathtaking finery reminded me of the late Queen Victoria, as sturdy and fearless a monarch as has graced any throne. Like her royal Chaplain Dean Farrar, Queen Victoria believed passionately in the second coming of the Lord.

A visiting chaplain spoke at Windsor on the second coming of Christ. Following the service, the queen turned to Farrar and sighed, "How I wish the Lord would come during my lifetime." "Why so?" asked the Dean. To which Queen Victoria replied, "Because I should so love to lay my crown at His feet."

How wonderful it would be if every theologian shared that concern and sound biblical doctrine. If every Christian leader believed as Queen Victoria did, there would be a lot less emphasis on the now and a lot more impassioned insight into eternity. There would be a lot less spiritual pabulum and a lot more solid meat of the Word.

The fact is the Rapture has not been called off. Christ is still coming to catch His bride away. Let the scoffers deride all they want. Let the would-be theologians write their mocking treatises on what they term "the Rapture hoax." It doesn't change a single fact about the reality of His coming.

I get a lot of inquiries about this subject: "Mr. Betzer, how can you be so dogmatic about the Rapture?" Because it is taught in Scripture, and you can always be dogmatic when your source is right. The source? Jesus. Let me quote Him: "Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words remain forever. But no one knows the date and hour when the end will be — not even the angels. No, nor even God's Son. Only the Father knows. The world will be at ease — banquets and parties and weddings — just as it was in Noah's time before the sudden coming of the flood; people wouldn't believe what was going to happen until the flood actually arrived and took them all away. So shall my coming be. Two men will be working together in the fields, and one will be taken, the other left. Two women will be going about their household tasks; one will be taken, the other left. So be prepared, for you don't know what day your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:35–42, The Living Bible).

Jesus made that plain — no date setting. One need not attempt to be sensational when dealing with prophetic truth. Scriptures stand well on their own merit without all the fictional folderol. For example: No, there is no massive computer in Brussels embedded deep within the bowels of the Common Market Building; no, buzzards are not laying four eggs to their normal one in Israel. These things — often told as truth — are fairy tales. So don't attempt to set firm dates for the Rapture either, "for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:13).

But you can examine the fig leaves. Jesus said, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:32,33).

1. The spirit of Antichrist. Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4,5,11).

It defies imagination — this terrifying buildup of cults and would-be Christs. There seems to be no insult to intelligence that is not cheerfully brooked by the populace at large. NBC News estimated there are currently 8 million members of

of cults in the United States alone, and that figure is skyrocketing.

What is a cult anyway? It is any religious group that differs substantially from the doctrines and practices of historic Christianity, or from those churches considered to practice “normal” religious behavior. How can these groups flourish? Listen — when the body of Christ, the Church, no longer contains divine life; when it abandons the Living Word; when fountains of eternal waters no longer flow from within it; when true signs and wonders have ceased; when liturgy replaces the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Body quickly dies. And the cult vultures fly in from everywhere.

These cults are unable to generate any life-giving attributes for society and able only to feed on the dying or dead remains of something that once lived. Jesus said that shortly before He returns, the vultures would gather around the carcass. We are seeing that thing happen now in our day. This spirit of Antichrist is only one of the fig leaves. Watch that leaf carefully. It tells of the coming Rapture.

2. The vacuum of leadership. There are some chilling words concerning this vacuum in Revelation 13: “And I beheld another beast [false prophet] coming up out of the earth ... [and] saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast ... And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast” (Revelation 13:11–15).

For years those verses bothered me. How could anyone get intelligent people to bow to an image? Then it hit me like a bolt of lightning: People running for office today are often far more concerned with their image (the way they are perceived by the public) than they are the issues. Beware of anyone who has made his or her reputation through the media alone. It is nothing more than fantasy. Image. Image becomes vital when there is a leadership vacuum.

Leadership during the Tribulation period — those 7 years following the Rapture — will be little more than image — fantasy. Already the public is being conditioned to respond to image. It’s frightening. Antichrist will be helped in his takeover because there will be precious few human leaders of merit left to stop him.

3. The church of Laodicea. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, Christ showed John His picture of the seven stages of church development, depicting them as seven literal churches in Turkey. The last of those churches was the church of Laodicea. The divine description is scathing. (See Revelation 3:14 17.)

This ancient church of Laodicea was a listless Christian community. It was just like its well-known spring water — neither cold nor hot. Does such a church remind you of anything you know? They were a self-indulgent bunch. The decay had set in. They still had all the form and trappings; they weren’t quite yet spiritually dead — but very, very close. They were already lukewarm. Much of today’s free-world church has declined into this precarious state. They think they have need of nothing, and they are blind to their pitiful condition.

There are many other fig leaves for our consideration, but space does not permit it. Otherwise we would dwell on the swelling tide of nations deriding Israel; on the obsession with the peace issue; with the deadly increases of pestilences; of the rampant spread of false doctrines that deceive even the very elect. Never have I met more wounded front-line soldiers of the Cross.

Today’s liberal theologians have just about jettisoned the Rapture. And so have many of today’s well-heeled “Laodiceans,” who frankly would be quite miffed at God for taking them out of their comfortable country club setting. “No thank You, Lord. Not now, if You don’t mind. Come back some other time, some other place. You don’t bother us, and we won’t bother You.”

That’s what will make the Rapture such a jarring occurrence — when the skies unzip, shouts of unearthly voices rend the heavens, the golden trumpets will peal the overture to eternity, and the clouds will be filled with Christ’s glory. The dead in Christ shall be raised first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the aft.

How I thank the Lord for the blessed hope of Christ’s coming. That shout of victory will split the heavens wide open, and we’ll be taken into His presence. What a marvelous victory is ours through Jesus.

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