

In our last study together we studied the great prophecy of Daniel Chapter 2 that accurately predicted world history from Babylon right down to our day and even the coming of Jesus. But there is probably no other subject that has created more hype, more misinformation and more wild speculation than the topic of the Rapture and the Second Coming, which we are covering in this lesson. We are going to see what the Bible says about the greatest prophecy yet to be fulfilled in human history—the second coming of Jesus.

So you can be sure that God's archenemy, the Devil, will do his utmost to prevent people from making it to God's kingdom. In fact the very name 'devil' means 'deceiver' And Jesus specifically warned us about deception as it relates to the teaching of His second coming. This is what He told His first disciples:

Matthew 24:3 <sup>3</sup>*As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"* <sup>4</sup>*Jesus answered: "**Watch out that no one deceives you.** <sup>5</sup>**For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.** <sup>11</sup>**and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.** <sup>24</sup>**For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.***

**The Bible says that we need to be careful about being deceived when it comes to the subject of His second coming.**

So, we enter this study with prayerful, humble and teachable minds - open to the true teachings of God's Word. We are cautious of human interpretations on this topic. Only God's Word will do.

**Let's begin by thinking back to the first coming of Jesus:**

When He came as a babe in Bethlehem almost 2000 years ago, most of the religious people of His day had the Old Testament of the Bible just as we do today. But even though there were many Old Testament verses that told people exactly **how** Jesus would come, **when** he would come, and **in what manner** He would come, the reality is that the *vast majority* of religious people missed His first coming!

**John 1:10-11 says:**

**How could they have missed His Coming?**

**There are two reasons:**

1. Few were reading the Scriptures and seeking the truth for them selves. Most people relied on the religious teachers and leaders to guide them.
2. Sadly the religious leaders had created a teaching about the first coming of Jesus that was wrong. It sounded good...but it wasn't what the Bible really taught.

They even took a couple of scriptures to support their theories of a conquering Messiah, who would restore national pride and dominance over their enemies. This false teaching was very pleasing to them, but it wasn't scriptural. By teaching something that appealed to the people, they deceived millions

How did this happen?—the religious leaders pulled a few texts out of context, and at the same time, they ignored many others. **A hallmark of a false teaching is the use of one or two verses to support a teaching in the Bible.** They seemed to have overlooked the weight of Scripture which told of a Suffering Servant on a mission to set up God's kingdom in the hearts and minds of people.

**Looking for Truth?** If we are looking for rock solid Bible truth we need to compare all that Scripture has to say about a topic and avoid building our beliefs on obscure or unclear verse/s.

Very few religious people were ready for the first coming of Jesus and hence many people never recognized the Messiah. We can learn much from this for history often repeats itself.

No wonder Jesus warned us in advance in Matthew 24: 4 when the disciples asked Him about the signs of His coming and the end of the world Jesus' first words were: "Watch out that no one deceives you." That's good counsel!

We can be sure of one thing. If Satan tried so successfully to deceive people about Christ's first coming, you can be sure he will try even harder to deceive people about Christ's second coming.

Jesus foresaw this and in love revealed the *deceptions* that would be most prominent regarding His second coming.

**Let's allow the Bible to speak for itself.**

Matthew 24: 24-26 <sup>24</sup>*For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.* <sup>25</sup>*See, I have told you ahead of time.*

**Notice this deception,**

- False prophets will appear to deceive and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect (those committed to Christ)." History records the following false prophets:

**Jim Jones**, - 914 suicides – 638 adults, 276 children died

**Sun Myung Moon** - April 2002 vision - Moon learned that he had been selected as "the Savior, Messiah and King of Kings of all of humanity" by God

**David Koresh** – branch davidians - Vernon Howell changed his name to David Koresh (Koresh is a form of Cyrus). He chose this name from Isaiah 45, which states that Cyrus "was the only non-Israelite who was given the title 'anointed' or 'a messiah' or in Greek, 'a christ'." Koresh regarded himself as the Lamb from Revelation 5.

**Marshall Appelwhite** – Heaven's Gate movement (39 suicides), and countless others all claiming to be the Messiah. Jesus says don't be deceived.

**Maitreya** – from website "He has been expected for generations by all of the major religions. Christians know him as the Christ, and expect his imminent return. Jews await him as the Messiah; Hindus look for the coming of Krishna; Buddhists expect him as Maitreya Buddha; and Muslims anticipate the Imam Mahdi or Messiah."

Matthew 24: 26 warns:

*<sup>26</sup>"So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.*

The idea that Christ has appeared on earth and that someone else should have to point him out to you is not found anywhere in the Bible. And while most of us would realise that these and similar characters to them are not the Christ, there is another deception that is much more subtle. It has to do with the way in which Christ will come.

**Have you heard of the Secret Rapture?** The idea that Christ will secretly rapture his people away, ushering in a period of 7 years in which those left behind will have a second chance to turn to Christ. As the theory tends to go, the antichrist is to appear half way through the 7 years and wars against the saints, and Christ returns at the end of the 7 years to take these saints home.

Mere fictitious theory popularized by Tim LaHaye and Terry B. Jenkins' books from the Left behind Series. Amazingly this "secret" coming of Jesus is not merely the work of fiction, it is also a very popular teaching today, even in Christian churches.

**The fact is that the Bible teaches that there is nothing secret about the second coming of Christ.**

So how can we not be deceived? Good Question!!

**FIVE FACTS about the 2<sup>nd</sup> COMING:** The Bible gives five crystal clear facts of how Jesus will come. With these five biblical facts, no one ever needs to be deceived.

**FACT 1. IT WILL BE LITERAL!**

Matthew 16:27 *<sup>27</sup>For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.*

Matthew 24:44 *<sup>44</sup>So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

Philippians 3:20 <sup>20</sup>*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

Titus 2:13 <sup>20</sup>*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

Hebrews 9:28 states, <sup>28</sup>*so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

1 John 2:28 <sup>28</sup>*And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.*

There is nothing secret about Jesus' Second Coming. The Bible tells of a LITERAL return of Christ. Acts 1:9 supports this most conclusively:

Acts 1: 9-11 <sup>9</sup>*After he said this, he was taken up **before their very eyes**, and a cloud hid him from their **sight**. <sup>10</sup>*They **were looking** intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup>"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here **looking** into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back **in the same way you have seen him go** into heaven."**

This was clearly a visible event! These all indicate a literal scene. And the angel said, "as He left, so He will return." The Bible tells us very clearly, that Jesus will return "**in the same way**" as He left.

**FACT 2. IT WILL BE VISIBLE!**

Revelation 1:7 <sup>7</sup>*Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.*

Now if it says that every eye on earth will see Him; what does that mean? It means that both the wicked and the righteous will see him.

Matthew 24:30, <sup>30</sup>*At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will **see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.***

NOTICE: All the nations will see Christ coming in the clouds.

**FACT 3. IT WILL BE AUDIBLE!**

Look at the very next verse...

Matthew 24: 31, <sup>31</sup>*And he will send his angels with a **loud trumpet call**, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

The trumpet will sound! And it's going to sound so loud it will even penetrate the graves!

1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17, <sup>16</sup>*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

What a wonderful day as Christ comes and we are caught up (raptured) to meet Him, to be re-united with our loved ones and forever live in the mansions and glories of paradise He has prepared.

### **What about the Secret Rapture Theory?**

Jesus warned if they say "He is in the secret chambers"? What did He say we should do? **Do not believe it!**

Today, this false theory is growing. The "secret" rapture of God's people is being taught in just about every church and every circle. It has been taught for so long, by so many, that it is just accepted.

The secret rapture theory is a very dangerous teaching because it lulls people into a false security: 'why repent now, we'll have another chance after the Christians are 'secretly raptured.'

It is an exact parallel to the false teachings about Jesus' first coming which deceived millions of people. It sounded pleasing, but was not biblical. Sadly history repeats itself!

There are four errors **of the Secret Rapture Theory:**

#### **Error #1**

1. Jesus will come secretly and rapture only the saints. They'll just disappear from wherever and whatever they were doing at the time and they'll be gone to be with Jesus.

#### **Error #2**

2. Following the rapture will come seven years of tribulation in which all who missed the secret rapture will have a second chance to "get right with God."

But in fact, **the Bible proves this to be in error** very clearly in Matthew 24. It emphatically states that the time of tribulation will occur **PRIOR** to the Second Coming of Christ.

Matt 24:9-14

Matt 24:21

Matt 24:29-31

We will study WHERE this 7 year period comes from in our study of the Time of the End (seminar 5).

**Error #3**

3. In the middle of this seven-year tribulation, the Anti-Christ is to appear, and the people left on the earth will wage war with him.

**Error #4**

4. After seven years Jesus will come again and end all things.

**The Secret Rapture is simply not taught in the Bible.** It is contrived from a few texts taken out of context, while ignoring many others.

Where did this theory come from? It was invented by the antichrist. We will cover more of that in our next study when we cover "Identifying the antichrist – part 1".

The secret rapture is based on two verses in the Bible, but ignores all the other scriptures that we covered in this lesson.

**The first text** is "the Lord will come as a thief in the night." This text is in the Bible, but it has to *be* half quoted *and twisted* to make one believe Jesus is coming secretly.

Let's read the whole text and context.

2 Peter 3:3, 4,10 " <sup>3</sup>*First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup>They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."*

VS 10 <sup>10</sup>*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*

Obviously a thief in the night does not mean "secretly" for there is "a great noise," the "heavens pass away," and the "earth is burned up!" Does this text say that the rapture is secret? Does it suggest that life will continue on as normal for those who are not ready? **The point here is the Lord will come when people who are scoffing least expect it –it will be a total surprise to them!**

**The second text** quoted is always "One shall be taken the other left."

Luke 17:24 <sup>24</sup>*For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. <sup>25</sup>But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup>Just as it was in the days of Noah, so*

*also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. <sup>27</sup>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. <sup>28</sup>It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. <sup>29</sup>But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup>It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup>On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. <sup>32</sup>Remember Lot's wife! <sup>33</sup>Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. <sup>34</sup>I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup>Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." <sup>37</sup>"Where, Lord?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."*

Again parts of these underlined verses are taken out of context to try to support a secret coming of Jesus. A simple look at the verses make it clear that a secret coming is not even under discussion! The Bible is simply saying, when Jesus comes some are taken, others are left – separation will come to even spouses or work associates.

**Look at the context.** God draws a parallel between Noah's day and the second coming. Some were saved others were destroyed. God draws a parallel between Lots day and the second coming. Some were saved, others destroyed.

Does the Bible teach there will be a second chance for those who are not ready for the second coming? Absolutely not.

Revelation 22: 11-12, *<sup>11</sup>Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy." <sup>12</sup>Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.*

**Every case is decided when Jesus comes.**

Matthew 24:14 *<sup>14</sup>And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

What is it that Jesus is waiting for? For everyone to decide and then what? The end shall come. Why in the world would Jesus be waiting until everyone has heard the gospel if there is going to be a second chance?

**Another false teaching** of the secret rapture is that the Antichrist will rise to power AFTER the rapture.

Paul clearly tells us the second coming of Jesus and rapture would *not* take place until Antichrist, and the man of sin had *accomplished* his work.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 *<sup>1</sup>Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>3</sup>Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness<sup>[a]</sup> is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. <sup>4</sup>He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*

Paul clearly says *that day* (second coming and rapture) will *not* take place till this man of sin is revealed. And then in verse 7 Paul says this power is already working. We are going to talk more about the Beast in our next presentation together.

**Gravely Dangerous assumptions:** You see, the danger of the secret rapture is incredible. For people are holding onto a false hope.

***1. I don't have to worry about the tribulation, I won't be here.***

Matthew 24:29 *<sup>29</sup>"Immediately after the distress of those days " the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' <sup>30</sup>"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup>And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

***2. In case I miss the secret rapture I still have seven years to make it to heaven.***

The bible says as it was in the days of Noah, did they have a second chance? NO. As it was in the days of Lot, - did they have a second chance? NO.

***3. I don't have to worry about worshipping or following the Antichrist Beast because I won't be here.***

Following this false security millions of people are being led astray just as in Christ's day. Let's follow the truth what do you say?

Too many people don't believe they even need to know about antichrist. The book of Revelation was written to believers. It is there that God warns us about worshipping the beast. We need to understand that this issue affects us immensely! We have found out the second coming will be literal, visible, and audible. Let's get the *next* fact.

**FACT 4. IT WILL BE A GLORIOUS EVENT!**

Psalm 50: 3, <sup>3</sup> *Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages.*

Matthew 24:30 <sup>30</sup>*At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup>And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

**OK, what are these clouds? Let's take a look at a few verses...**

Psalms 104:3 <sup>3</sup> *and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. <sup>17</sup> The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary.*

Matthew 16:27, <sup>27</sup>*For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.*

The Bible says in Matt 28:2-4 that the glory of single angel caused the entire Roman guard to fall as dead men. Now according to Rev 5:11 there are at least 100 million angels. Multiple the glory of that one angel times 100 million. Then add the glory of Jesus AND the glory of the Father. He will come and not keep silent, but will come in the glory of the Father with all the angels - certainly not secretly. It will be GLORIOUS!

**FACT 5. IT WILL BE A CLIMACTIC EVENT!**

Matthew 24:27, <sup>27</sup>*For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*

As lightning from East to West! The second coming will be the most wonderful event of all time! Families will be reunited, no more death, or sorrow, or pain. No more sin or temptation. Praise God! Are you ready!

There will be only two groups the day Christ comes. Those that are unjust, and filthy, and those that are righteous, and holy (Revelation 22: 11).

The anguish of the first group is portrayed in Revelation 6: 14-17:

Revelation 6:14 <sup>14</sup>*The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. <sup>15</sup>Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. <sup>16</sup>They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup>For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

Let's decide now, not be in that group! They are afraid when Jesus comes because they never made the decision to follow Him or His Word.

However there is another group who is ready. Their joy and anticipation of Jesus' coming is found in Isaiah:

Isaiah 25:9 <sup>9</sup> *In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."*

Application:

1. In our last Seminar we discovered that God is Omniscient. Tonight we've learned the **God is Omnipotent: He can do all things!** He can come so that all people on earth can see Him. He can call dead people out of their dark graves and cause them to be carried up to heaven in the care of His mighty angels.
2. Our last Seminar also told us that God's kingdom will soon be smashing earth's kingdoms. Aren't you glad that God has made it very clear how He plans to come to put an end to human history as we know it? In **John 14: 1-3**, Jesus promised each a mansion that He has prepared. Tonight we've learnt very clearly how He will do just what He promised.
3. But the truth is that He will only come and take those who are ready for Him. In Matthew 25 Jesus told the parable of the Ten Virgins – five wise and five were foolish. It was the foolish who were 'LEFT BEHIND' because they didn't have sufficient oil to keep their lamps burning.

Notice the following:

- The bridegroom (Christ) delayed His coming for the his bride (church).
- All the virgins (spiritually pure) slept = current state of Christianity?
- Only those who had their lamps (Bibles) and the Oil (Holy Spirit) were ready when the Bridegroom (Jesus) came.

**Our only hope of being ready for Jesus' Second Coming is to be studying and following our Bibles with the help of the Holy Spirit.** The study of Scripture is vitally important to prepare us and our families for what is going to take place before the end of the World and the Second Coming of Jesus, which is soon to take place.

*Next Lesson #3: Identifying the Antichrist Beast - Part 1*