



I Want to Be Left Behind Matthew 24:36-44

Recently a movie was in the theatres called Left Behind. What might happen when the secret Rapture takes place. Watch the trailer, available on the internet. People suddenly missing from planes, school buses careening off a bridge and crashing on a freeway below. Pictures of chaos, bewilderment, and people questioning God. So many Christians watching saying, Yeah!! Many unbelievers say, What, that doesn't make sense. What kind of God? Others Christians say, "Not so fast!!"

How should we respond? How do we answer those who believe in the secret rapture?

How not. Approach them by calling the SR a doctrine of demons. Raises barriers. Read to you a non-SDA reference to those who believe in the Secret Rapture, "It was astonishing to me how many people in the denominations I visited were sucked in –hook, line and sinker—by the travesty of the two stage doctrine of the SR...entrenched in their stupid doctrinal non-sense."

Once again, is there another way? One of the problems is that there is not just one doctrine of the Secret Rapture. At least three. And there are even variations in each of those. Perhaps we should begin by asking them, "Help me to understand what you believe the Bible says about the Secret Rapture.

Having said that, Let's look at a basic overview of the SR.



Christ Comes Secretly for the Church

The SR is the doctrine that teaches when Jesus comes back, he comes secretly to take the church, the believers, to heaven, leaving behind those who had not accepted Jesus.

The saved will live in heaven with God.

At this time the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth.



Seven Years of Tribulation

While the redeemed enjoy the bliss of heaven, important events take place during a 7 year time period on the earth. This 7 year period is seen to be prophesied in Dan 9. It is the 70th week prophecy that is taken out of the 2,300 day prophecy and placed at the end of time.

During this time a one world gov't. will be in place, led by the AntiChrist. The tribulation will begin with the wrath of God being poured out as the 7 last plagues.

During the 1st 3 ½ years, the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt and the sacrificial system restored. Jews will be saved under conditions of the Old Covenant, by obedience to the Law.

During the 2nd half Gentiles will be converted by the Jews.

At the end of the 7 years Christ will return gloriously with the saints.



At that time Christ will begin the 1,000 year millennial reign of Christ on the earth. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. All alive will be forced to obey him. Towards the end of the millennial reign, all who have been born during the 1,000 years will have the opportunity to accept or reject Christ. At that time the wicked will be cast into hell to burn forever.

5 Key Concepts

1. The 70th week is at the end of time
2. The meanings of parousia and apokolupsis
3. The wicked are left behind
4. The Church avoids the tribulation
5. Promises to Israel must still to be kept

How do we respond or interact. Surprise you to learn that many of the text we as SDA's use to prove a visible, literal coming, such as 1 Th 4, are used by those who believe in the secret rapture. In order to be able to talk with them, we must understand 5 key concepts that are the basis of their belief in the secret rapture.

They are:

1. Applies to the rule of the Anti-Christ
2. Parousia refers to the SR, apokolupsis to the glorious appearing at the end of the 7 years.
3. Righteous secretly taken to heaven, wicked are left behind
4. This is one of the most appealing aspects. Christians cannot experience God's wrath, therefore, they will not be on earth during the secret rapture.
5. God is faithful to his promises. They are unconditional

Some questions for each concept I would like to ask them to show me from the Bible.

The 70th week is at the end of time

Why?

What happened to the rest of the time?

Why is the 70th week taken out of the 2,300 years.

What happened to the reminder of the time, 1810 days/years? To what do these years apply?

The meanings of **parousia** and **apokolupsis**
parousia = Coming, presence

Matthew 24:37 (ESV) 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the **coming** of the Son of Man.

apokolupsis = revealed

Luke 17:26, 30 (ESV) 26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.
30 so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is **revealed**.

The vocabulary of the Blessed Hope knows nothing of two aspects of Christ's Coming, one secret and one glorious.

Proponents of th

On the contrary, the terminology points to a single, indivisible return of Christ.

Matthew and Luke use both words to refer to the same event.

"Scripture says nothing about a secret coming of the Lord."

George E. Ladd, The Blessed Hope, 1960

The Church avoids the tribulation

Revelation 16:1-2 (ESV) 1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” 2 So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

In the 10 plagues of Egypt, only the 1st three fell on the Egyptians and the Israelites. At the end of time there are only 7 plagues and they fall on just the wicked who have the Mark of the Beast. The “church” does not have the wrath of God fall upon them.

Of course proponents would say, of course not, they are in heaven. I would like to ask them to explain what takes place in the 6th plague.

The Church avoids the tribulation

Revelation 16:12, 15-16 (ESV) 12

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. 15 (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) 16 And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

SR proponents believe that Christ coming as a thief takes place at the SR. How is it His coming during the 6th plague at the end of the SR is described as “coming as a thief”. Shouldn’t this be the glorious appearing?

Promises to Israel must still to be kept

Galatians 3:7, 26-29 (ESV) 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Please explain to me how this passage fits your theory that promises to Israel (Abraham's offspring) apply to literal Israel and not the church. Furthermore, Romans 9-11 makes no sense if God must fulfill the promises made to Israel to end time Jews.

The wicked are left behind

Matthew 24:36-44

Pew Bible, p. 830

Luke 17:34-37

Pew Bible p. 877

In Matt. 24 it was the wicked who were taken away in the flood and the Noah's family, the righteous, who were left behind.

Luke 17 confirms this when the disciples ask Christ where are those who are taken away taken to? Christ's answer – where the vultures gather. In other words a place for the dead.

I want to be left behind, don't you?

2 Peter 3:10-13 (ESV) 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

How does this passage fit into the SR?

Why Important? God's Character

Unjust – Different methods of salvation

Unfair – Second chance at end

Sin not destroyed

Denies free will

Denies Christ's sacrifice

Unjust – Church saved by grace. Jews saved by works. Gentiles saved by force.

Unfair – Only the wicked alive at the SR get a second chance. People who died in prior dispensations only had one chance.

Sin not destroyed – Christ reigns on earth while sin still on earth. Eternal hell keeps sin or rebellion against God ongoing.

Denies free will – during the Millennial reign. Why didn't God do that in the garden of Eden?

Denies Christ's sacrifice – 1st by reinstating the sacrificial system. 2nd by Old Covenant for Jews. Through the law.



G. Campbell Morgan, Congregational Preacher and Bible Scholar, colleague and friend of Charles Spurgeon and Dwight Moody. 1863-1945. Pastor of Westminster Chapel, evangelical church. Originally accepted the doctrine of the secret Rapture, was asked near the conclusion of his ministry, whether he still accepted the doctrine of the SR. He replied, "Emphatically not! I know this view very well. In the earlier years of my ministry I taught it and incorporated it in one of my books (God's Method with Man). But further study so convinced me of the error of this teaching that I actually went to the expense of buying the plates from the publishers and destroying them. The idea of a separate and secret coming of Christ is a vagary (fancy) of prophetic interpretation without any Biblical basis whatsoever.."