



CHECKLIST: WHY THE RAPTURE IS NOT A NEW DELIRIUM

By Wilfred Hahn



Whenever we mention that we are pre-millennial, pre-tribulational, and—absurdity of all absurdities—believers in the doctrine of the Rapture, we receive responses. Apparently, to believe that a Rapture will occur brands one as “low brow,” “gullible,” and “escapist.” But, even as a spirit of derisiveness and smugness is becoming more prevalent among the Rapture naysayers, the reality is that their arguments have generally been invalidated as perhaps never before.

These “nay” respondents will usually agree that any differences in perspectives are nothing over which to lose fellowship (as long as both parties are pre-millennial), and that it is not a salvation issue. Yet, “nay Rapture” proponents seem to adamantly want to convert Rapture believers ... even to “deliver” them to a post- or mid-tribulational perspective.

We wonder why there is such an opposition to the Rapture view. Just what

spirit—or irritation—is behind these attacks? The range of counter arguments and viewpoints range from the thoughtful to pure vitriol.

Conversely, those who hold the Rapture view do not feel it an imperative to expunge the world of Rapture naysayers. As mentioned, it is not a salvation issue. The Rapture believer knows that the non-Rapture-believing Christian is given salvation through grace as anyone else, and moreover, will be taken up in the

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Rapture even while they remain doubters.

So, why “proselytize” them to the Rapture view, other than to gain the blessing of a full Biblical alignment of one’s views? While not every variant of doctrine threatens one’s salvation, every deviation from Biblical truth does have its price.

It would be fine to debate the Rapture doctrine based upon Biblical exegesis. However, increasingly, Rapture-deniers have resorted to mostly unfounded and unbalanced allegations. They have not come to their opinion by way of “scholarly” study, but rather shallow, anti-Rapture propaganda. We will cite evidence to support our position.

Shallow or not, some Christians do succumb nevertheless to the notions of the naysayers.

Recently, a friend (with an evangelical background and who was raised with the Rapture expectation) rather suddenly changed his mind, announcing that he no longer believed in the Rapture. This writer was curious about what was behind this “conversion.” Apparently, my friend had swallowed the argu-

ment that the Rapture was a “new” doctrine, supposedly popularized by a delusional young woman named Margaret MacDonald in the 1800s.

This couldn’t be further from the truth in many respects. To fall for such a shallow falsehood is to ignore Scripture and the full history of the Christian church. Anyone expounding on the Rapture, pro or con, must have a perspective on these and, as well, must decide for themselves on a number of key foundational points. And, the good news is that there has been much research done in recent years that sheds additional light on the unfounded allegations of the naysayers.

Dear reader, what is your view on the Rapture, and can you support it in the face of mockery and derision?

We present here a short “checklist” of five points that will be helpful in countering doctrinal error in the matter of the Rapture.

1. Back to the Source. Firstly, we must begin with the document that is claimed to be all sufficient for teaching, rebuking and admonishing (2 Timothy 3:16). Its truth towers far above that of all other documents in the world. The Rapture doctrine finds its source in Scripture—nowhere else. Not only is it spoken of specifically, it is also foreshadowed and deductive based on the character of God Himself.

The doctrine of the Rapture must stand on the Bible “full stop.” The view of any later church father, pope, or entranced young girl cannot add any credence nor pedigree to what Scripture



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has said. As it is, a so-called church father can be found and quoted to support almost any theological view. We may have our favorites, but quoting them adds nothing proof-worthy to this main point: the Rapture is a scriptural doctrine.

2. Since When New? Rapture doubters often claim that a teaching cannot be true if it is “new” ... i.e. a view that is popularized in recent centuries or times. This argument is not valid for a number of reasons. For one, just because a scriptural doctrine has been rediscovered recently says nothing of its veracity or history. If it is scriptural, it is therefore correct, whether it is a recent understanding or not.

At the same time, Rapture doubters often claim arbitrary dates to their own liking for the pedigree of Christianity. They may say that the “church has his-

torically not taught the Rapture.” But, we ask, what church and during what era? Was it the founding church that was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the New Testament? Or, a later church that preached a different Bible and a different gospel? If the latter, then there is no foundation for any of their theology, including the Rapture.

3. Context: The History of the Church. Rapture naysayers like to sweep away the record of Christian history, and while doing so, ignore the warnings of the New Testament from its outset. Early on—nearly 2,000 years ago—Christians were already warned about the infiltration of false doctrines, and that deceivers would creep in unawares. Sadly, this was clearly an issue already during the time of the apostles themselves (See 2 Timothy 3:8; 4:3; 2 Peter 2:1-3).

Once the apostles had passed on, the dilution of the gospel happened quickly. Over the course of a few centuries, many false doctrines (surely, driven by many “antichrists”) became embedded in various teachings. In time, a pagan-infused empire of the Holy Roman Church took dominance. It became a full-fledged apostate religious system. As the 1,000 pound religious and state-sponsored gorilla, it oppressed any and all that would differ with its doctrines or disrespect its authority.

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Church eventually became a regal earthly power, arrogating to itself even sovereignty and the role of the vicarious presence of Christ upon earth. Fallaciously claiming that Apostle Peter was its founder, it nevertheless chose not to heed even one statement of Peter's found in the Bible. (See Mike Gendron's article "Catholics Should Believe Their First Pope" at this link: <http://www.raptureforums.com/FeaturedCommentary/catholicsshouldbelievetheirfirstpope.cfm>)

Throughout the centuries of Roman Catholic dominance (these being the Dark Ages for the greater part), no contrary opinion upon any matter was allowed other than that of the ostensibly infallible popes (no matter how despicable and ungodly some of them may have been.) Those believers and preachers who stood up for Biblical truth, contrary to the "revelations" and pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Magisterium, were suppressed, jailed, tortured and murdered. The Roman Church's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was a feared institution. To be branded a heretic was a dangerous thing, punishable by incarceration or torture, even in Protestant circles.

Is it any wonder that so little of the biblical doctrines and views of the New Testament Church survived through the Middle Ages? Instead, many were obliterated. Those who attempted to revive or restore them



were persecuted. Relatively few writings or records survive of the church outside the Holy Roman Church, anywhere from the period of the 6th to early 16th centuries.

History records that millions of Anabaptists and other groups (Protestants of various sects—Waldensians, Huguenots, claimed heretics such as the Albigenses, etc.) were slaughtered under the edict of the popes (and countless Jews were annihilated as well). These are documentable facts.

Only later, as the Middle Ages ended, did England repudiate the rule of the popes; the Reformation occurred; and Martin Luther, John Wycliffe and William Tyndale opened the Bible to the public. Then Biblical teachings again began to see the light of day.



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However, crucially, these were not “new” teachings. Rather, they were largely restored teachings that were originally based on Scripture. According to recent studies, found among these abandoned and restored doctrines is the Rapture.

4. Solid Scholarship and Proofs. Today, we have the benefit of much scholarship on the origins of Christian doctrines. Within this record are the teachings of various preachers and theologians of the 16th to 19th centuries (outside the Roman Catholic Church), which have been found and uncovered. Plain to see in these records is the dominance of pre-millennial interpretations of the Bible.

Moreover, there is much proof of the Rapture being taught once the systematic oppression of Christians (or those with merely opposing scriptural views) began to be lifted. The Rapture view was held by some clergy centuries before the alleged “trance revelations” of Margaret MacDonald. John Nelson Darby is shown to be influenced by these teachings of more than 200 years before his time (and not deliriums).

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Today, we can say with confidence that the trance allegations of the “anti-Rapture” crowd, have been thoroughly debunked and invalidated, based on scholarship and hard evidence.

We can recommend sound scholarly works proving the views expressed here.

A recent “light bearer” work is the book entitled *Dispensationalism Before Darby* by Dr. William C. Watson (published by Lampion Press). This book is full of quotes of the dispensationalist perspectives of many pastors, theologians and churchmen from the 16th to 19th centuries.

Also, a very readable and compelling response to the Rapture “expungers” was published in the January/February 2016 issue of the *Lamplighter* magazine (published by Lamb & Lion Ministries). You can access this excellent magazine at this link:

<http://christinprophecy.org/lamplighter/>

5. Logic and Apologetics. There are many excellent books available on the doctrine of the Rapture. Hence, as already mentioned, we can hardly do credit to this body of work ... especially so in such a short article. Students of the entire Bible (Old and New Testaments) can sense in their spirit God’s divine plan behind the Rapture. It is in alignment with the entirety of the Bible.

God always called out and preserved the believing remnant before He unleashed His wrath (the family of Noah, Lot). Why then, would the Church (what He calls His Bride) be allowed to be utterly slaughtered under the justice of His wrath? As pointed out in the recent article series here (“Anxiety Merchants and False Prophets”), ALL Christians will be killed in the Tribulation period.

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presumes that Christians will not be “[...] caught up together [...] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:17), then what “blessed hope” is there (Titus 2:13)?

To the contrary, says Jesus Christ to the Philadelphian church, “[...] 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” (Revelation 3:10).

Indeed, God disciplines and reproveth those whom He loves. As Peter says: “For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household” (1 Peter 4:17). But, he also says in this same passage: “[...] if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey

the gospel of God?” Clearly, the treatment of the Church and those who “do not obey” are not one and the same. Discipline is different from wrath.

But, do we not all deserve wrath? Yes. As such, the Partial Rapture Theory (that only some Christians will be raptured and not all) can appear logical. Why? To the human it just doesn’t seem just that Jesus Christ would rapture

all Christians, though hardly any of them are as worthy as perhaps Elijah and Enoch of the Old Testament, who were also raptured.

But, if the Lord saves us “while we were yet sinners” (Romans 5:8) through grace, then the Rapture is equally likely and equally undeserved for last-day Christians.

In conclusion, today, the attacks against the Rapture (excepting on the basis of scriptural evidence) can be ignored. Our short, five-point checklist shows that most arguments against the Rapture are fallacious, and sometimes nothing more than mean-spirited “hatchet jobs.”

ALL last-day Christians are both saved and raptured by grace! (MC)