

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

FACING THE ANTI-CHRIST

RLJ-1264

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PART 2: THE RAPTURE

David Jeremiah is a Baptist pastor who recently preached a series on the coming financial meltdown in the United States and the world that will lead to the coming of the Antichrist. He is the pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, located in the greater San Diego area of California. The church was originally called Scott Memorial Baptist Church and pastored by Tim LaHaye.

LaHaye is a strong believer that Christians will be raptured before the tribulation period and produced a series called "Left Behind," which were released in book form and later made into movies. Both preachers are strong Christian Zionists and David Jeremiah is following in his footsteps produced with some very well made videos of what he believes will happen in the future. It is obvious they were not cheap as they have showed a segment from the series every Sunday.

Pastor Jeremiah had done his homework very well and presented a very accurate picture of the financial situation in the United States, which indicates that he must have a staff doing a lot of research for him. The message was like a massive nuclear bomb exploding as the people realized what they were hearing was real but then he told these shocked people with a great smile, "***Do not worry, when all this will happen, you will be gone in the rapture.***" Was he telling the truth about the rapture?

IS THERE A RAPTURE?

The word "rapture" cannot be found in the New Testament. Paul used the word "change" in conjunction with the second coming of Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:49-53**

When Paul talked about the second coming of Christ, he used the words "caught up." **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

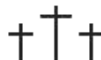
Paul was not tying this event to the period known as the "Great Tribulation" spoken by Jesus. **Matthew 24:21**

On the contrary, Paul taught that when people talk about peace and safety, then there will be a sudden destruction when Jesus comes back. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-3**

The sudden destruction does not refer to the Antichrist, rather, it is talking about the judgment that will fall on the world when Jesus comes back and that God has not appointed us to be part of that judgment. **verses 4-9**

The Day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night!

When the church in Thessalonica heard what Paul had written, they became excited and started to believe that the second coming of Jesus was imminent and



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would happen in their lifetime. When word of this reached Paul, he wrote them a second letter explaining the second coming in more detail.

It is important to note that the Book of Revelation had not been written at this time and what Paul wrote was not given to him by man but by the Holy Spirit.

1. Don't be shaken about the news that Jesus is coming back.
2 Thessalonians 2:1-2
2. Don't let any man deceive you. Jesus is not coming back until there is a general falling away of Christians and that the man of sin, the Antichrist will be revealed. **verse 3**
3. Then Paul is giving us some information about the Antichrist and the time period. The temple in Jerusalem will have been rebuilt and Antichrist is going to enter the temple, take a position in the holiest of holies and present himself as god. **verse 4**

The temple was still in existence when Paul wrote the epistle but was destroyed some 20 years later in 70 A.D. by the Romans. The temple ground has remained this way for 1,940 years.

4. Paul reminded the church in Thessalonica that he had spoken about this before and they should think about it. **verse 5**
5. He then addressed how the coming of the Antichrist was being held back but that the system of the Antichrist was at work at that time. **verses 6-7**

Paul did not identify exactly who it was that was holding Satan back from ushering in his evil world ruler but here is what the Bible tells us:

When God sent Moses and the children of Israel to the Promised Land, He had appointed an angel to be in charge of the operation. **Exodus 23:20-23**

When Satan will be bound for a thousand years, God will send one angel to execute that event. **Revelation 20:1-3**

Jesus came with two angels when He judged Sodom and Gomorrah. **Genesis 18:1-2; 16-21; 19:1**

In the Book of Revelation we are told that holy angels will carry out all the judgments on the earth.

I haven't found a place in the Bible where it states that the Holy Spirit carries out a physical act except with the conception of Jesus and in transporting Philip. **Luke 1:26-35; Acts 8:39-40**

Jesus gave us a description of the work of the Holy Spirit; His work is to do a work in the spiritual area, not the physical. **John 16:7-15**

My conclusion is that it is an angel holding Satan back and not the Holy Spirit.

*Note very carefully that Paul did not say that the Restraint is going to leave the earth but that **the Restraint will be taken out of the way so Satan can bring in his servant, the son of perdition, also known as the beast or the Antichrist.***

6. After the Restrainer is taken out of the way, then the Wicked will be revealed and set up his kingdom on the earth but at the end he will be destroyed by Jesus at His second coming. **2 Thessalonians 2:8-12**

CONCLUSION

Paul was not writing about the catching away or rapture in his second epistle to the Thessalonians but was talking about the Second Coming of Christ. All the dispensationalists have taken this passage out of context and brought great confusion to the believers in Christ.

DATES OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

The Gospel of Matthew was written around 45-50 A.D., some 12 years after the resurrection of Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark was written around 60 A.D., some 27 years after the resurrection.

The Gospel of Luke was written in the late 50s A.D., some 25 years after the resurrection.

The Gospel of John was written between 85-95 A.D., some 52 years after the resurrection.

The Book of Acts was written around 60 A.D., some 27 years after the resurrection.

First Thessalonians was written around 52 A.D., some 19 years after the resurrection. In all probability, Second Thessalonians was written about a year later.

The Book of Revelation was written between 95-96 A.D., 62 years after the resurrection and 42 years after Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians.

Paul was telling us that Antichrist will come before Jesus comes back to set up his kingdom on this earth. The Book of Revelation was written some 35 years later by the apostle John, where Jesus detailed the end times, particularly the coming of the Antichrist and what his reign is going to be like.

There is no place in the New Testament where we are told that the catching away is going to take place before the tribulation period. We are told that there will be a catching away of the believers in Christ but we are not told when it will happen. Therefore, we cannot speculate and set the time when it will happen; we only know that it is going to happen but only God knows the time.

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?