

The Rapture??

You may have heard the term, “*The Rapture*” from a Protestant friend or relative. Although the word itself doesn’t appear in Scripture, the idea that Christ will come back to rescue the “*elect*” from the coming period of persecutions against the Church is only about 175 years old. It is taken largely from a faulty interpretation of **1 Thess. 4:17**: “*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*”

Rapture theology finds its origin in the 1830’s, when a Protestant minister named John Nelson Darby began teaching this new idea to his followers, even though there was no Scriptural basis for it. Neither was there a basis for it in tradition since it had never been a teaching of the historic Christian Church. Since then, Darby’s novel *invention* has been picked up by many newer Protestant groups, that is, groups which have sprouted up over the last 100 years or so. It has also become the topic of many books and films, such as the “*Left Behind*” series.

The Bible is clear that the Second Coming of Jesus will be preceded by a period of persecution (**Matt. 24:20-31; Mark 13:19-27; 2 Thess. 2:1-4**) commonly referred to as the *Tribulation*. However, there is no mention of Jesus coming a second time to rescue his believers only to return a *third* time. When we read **1 Thess. 4:17** in *context* with the other Scripture verses that mention the Tribulation and the Second Coming, it is clear that is speaking about what is going to happen when the Lord returns at the *end* of time – *not* before.

Before the 1800’s, every Protestant denomination agreed with the Catholic Church that this event of being “*caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*” would occur *simultaneously* with the Second Coming of Christ. Like many other aberrant pseudo-Christian teachings, belief in the Rapture has become widespread among Evangelical and Fundamentalist groups.

Because this has never been a teaching of the Catholic Church, many anti-Catholics use this as fodder to lure Catholics away from their faith. Sadly, they have succeeded in doing just *that* with this false doctrine of men (**Mark 7:7-8, Col. 2:22**). Jesus warned of false prophets whom he called, “*wolves in sheep’s clothing*”, that would lead people astray with aberrant teachings and about whom we would recognize by their fruits (**Matt. 7:15-16**).

As Catholics, we must be on our guard - not only as it pertains to our Lord’s glorious return, but also to be wary of false teachings that would lead us away from His mystical Body – the Church.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.catholic.com/library/false_profit.asp

<http://www.catholic.com/library/Rapture.asp>

<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/2000/0011fea2.asp>