

Hollywood has figured out that religious people go to the movies, too! Has anyone noticed that? First it was “Son of God” and “God’s Not Dead” earlier in the year. Since then, “Noah” and “Heaven is for Real” have come out. Later this year, “Exodus” and “Mary, Mother of Christ” are to be released. It is the most recent one that I would like to talk about this morning. It is the movie version of the New York Times best seller “Left Behind.” The “Left Behind” movie stars Nicholas Cage and portrays the events that will unfold during the Rapture. Unfortunately, the movie has not garnered very good reviews. But, I am not too interested in what the movie critics think. I’m not concerned with the poor acting or execution of the film. My main concern comes from the source of the books and this movie, the Rapture and the doctrine of Premillennialism. So let’s take some time this morning to examine this “Left Behind”, and let us see if there will be those who are left behind...

I. Basics of Premillennialism and the Rapture

- A. First taught by John Nelson Darby in the 1830s and it is widely held by many religious peoples. It is also taught in many study bibles such as the Scofield Study Bible.
- B. Jesus will secretly return and take to heaven those who are saved whether they are alive or already dead.
 1. This basically means that Jesus will come back without any type of indication and He will snatch up those who are His.
 2. People will literally disappear in the blink of an eye regardless of what they might be doing at that time.
 3. The unbelievers will be left with the destruction (airplane/cars crashing for example) of this sudden snatching.
 4. **I Thess. 4:17** is “the” rapture verse because of its language of being caught up in the air.
- C. There will be 7 years of harsh tribulation on the earth.
 1. Those who are left after the rapture will be subject to the harsh treatment of the Antichrist.
 2. God will appear to the 144,000 and they will evangelize like never before, even under the harsh persecution of the Antichrist.
 3. There will be war, death, and sickness like never before.
- D. Jesus will later return for a 3rd time and reign over a physical kingdom from Jerusalem for 1,000 years before the final judgement.
 1. After the tribulation, Jesus will return and use a great army of Jews to defeat the army of satan and the Antichrist. Jesus will judge those who are still unbelieving at this time.
 2. After His great victory, Jesus will rule from a literal throne from Jerusalem over a physical kingdom for 1,000 years.
 3. At the end of this 1,000 year reign, there will be one more human revolt and Jesus will once again have to judge those who are rebellious and He will also judge those wicked who have been dead.
 4. At this point, Jesus will destroy this earth by ‘loosing’ the atoms of the galaxy which will result in total destruction. Then He will put the atoms back together as the new heavens and new earth in which only the glorified bodies of the saved will be without their sinful natures.
 5. After all of this, the righteous will be rewarded with heaven for eternity.

*Information taken from Jeff Archer’s “Premillennialism: Examined & Refuted”

II. 3 Biblical Facts Debunking the Rapture

- A. Jesus’ return will not be in secret.
 1. His return will not be a very quiet event that some people might miss.
 2. The day of judgement is described as a big revealing that will not be missed by anyone. (**II Thess. 1:6-8**)
 3. Paul says that Jesus will return to great noises of a shout, the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. (**I Thess. 4:16**)
 4. It would be hard to image that any person would be unaware of these events taking place.
- B. There will only be one return of Jesus and resurrection of the dead.
 1. Nowhere in Scripture do we read of there being multiple returns of Jesus and resurrections, and nowhere in Scripture can you find where He will step foot back on this earth. In fact, the Bible says that we will meet Him in the air. (**I Thess. 4:17**)
 2. Jesus only speaks of one resurrection and judgement of all people (good and evil) in **John 5:28,29**.
 3. Paul says that Jesus will return to both reward the righteous & judge the wicked at the same time. (**II Thess. 1:6-10**)
 4. Paul also says in **Acts 24:15** that there will be a (singular) resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

- C. This earth will be totally destroyed when Jesus returns.
 1. There will certainly be a great tribulation when Jesus returns.... but it will a tribulation of complete destruction that the Lord will initiate.
 2. God judged the world once by water and now He is keeping the world until the day of judgment when it will be destroyed by fire. **(II Pet. 3:3-7)**
 3. God is waiting for that point, hoping for many more people to commit to Him and obey the words of His Son. **(II Pet. 3:8,9)**
 4. When that day finally comes, the world will be completely destroyed with an intense heat. **(II Pet. 3:10-13)**

III. Why does this matter?

- A. We need to rely on God's Word and not speculation that directly contradicts God's Word.
 1. We don't need to be getting all caught up in the happenings of the things of this world and see them as a bunch of signs that Jesus is about to return to judge the world.
 2. In Jeff Archer's workbook on Premillennialism and the Rapture, he continuously references and quotes men who hold to these teachings to shows the reader their true beliefs. One writer talks about the great day (May 14, 1948) when Israel was finally restored as its own nation and how that proves that the end times are here. (Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth)
 3. This is nonsense, and it is made even worse when members of the Lord's Body fall into this type of thinking.
 4. We need to turn off our TVs and whatever news station we watch and read our Bibles!
 5. The Bible is clear that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. **(I Thess. 5:1,2)**
- B. This doctrine is built upon the fact that God failed in His mission to establish an earthly kingdom the first time Jesus was here.
 1. They believe that God never fulfilled His promises to Abraham and that the church was just a placeholder to help fill the void until God returns to truly fulfill all of His promises.
 2. God did fulfill the land promise. **(Joshua 21:43-45)**
 3. God did fulfill the nation promise. **(Exodus 19:5-8, but their continuance was conditional on their obedience Deut. 28:1,2)**
 4. God did fulfill the seed promise. **(Gal. 3:8,9,14,16)**
 5. God fulfills His promises, and I do not want to be that person that says that God has failed in anything.
- C. We will not have a second chance to choose to commit our lives to Jesus and obey His commands.
 1. This doctrine can give people a false sense of security because they think they can wait until the last moment to get their lives right with God.
 2. We do not know when Jesus will return, so we must get our souls in a right standing with God, today!
 3. That day will truly come like a thief in the night, and our deaths might come even before then.
 4. We only have on chance to live this life for the Lord and there is no better time to get your life right then this very day. Be ready!

Are you ready to meet the Lord today? These supposed signs don't mean a single thing. We will not have any warnings for the Lord's glorious return, so the question is simply if you will be ready. Will you be ready for the Lord's return? You can take some steps to get ready this very day. The only thing that could be left behind is you in hell why the Lord and the saved are worshipping God for eternity in heaven. Don't waste another day apart from the Lord, and may God help us to always be ready for His Son's return.