

**~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:**

Although the idea of Jesus returning to rapture God's children to heaven prior to worldwide tribulation is popular among many modern professing Christians, there isn't a hint of that in Jesus' Olivet Discourse, half of which we read today. Quite the opposite, in fact. Jesus foretold His disciples that they would be persecuted and hated "by all nations," and that many would be killed during a tribulation that would precede His return. When they witnessed the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by the prophet Daniel---when the antichrist enters into the Jerusalem temple (see 2 Thes. 2:3-4)---they should flee to uninhabited places, as that event would mark the beginning of the worst tribulation of human history.

Jesus spoke of these things so that His disciples would not be deceived but prepared during a time when false prophets and false messiahs will abound. Sadly, many modern professing Christians aren't the least bit prepared, convinced that they will be raptured in advance of the perilous times Jesus foretold. If, however, you had asked any of the disciples who were present during Jesus' Olivet Discourse if they had such a hope, how would they have responded?

Popular preachers also attempt to pin a pre-tribulational rapture on the apostle Paul. But he concurred 100% with Jesus:

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him....Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God (2 Thes. 1-4, emphasis added).

There is going to be a generation of Christians who will be alive when everything we read today occurs. You could be among them, so it is wise to be prepared. The antichrist will be extremely popular among the world's masses. He will perform signs and wonders (2 Thes. 2:9). Surely most true Christians will have him pegged long before he enters the Jerusalem temple and declares himself to be God, what will doubtlessly be broadcast worldwide. If you haven't already fled to the wilderness by then, don't wait another minute!

And as you hide in the wilderness, don't be deceived by radio reports that Christ has returned to a certain location. His return will be unmistakable, preceded by the sun and moon going dark and stars falling, culminating with His own lightning-like appearance in the sky, an event which will be witnessed worldwide. A great trumpet will sound, and then the saints alive on earth will be raptured (24:31), just as Paul also wrote (see 1 Thes. 4:16).

Although Jesus' disciples will not know the day or the hour (24:36), He wants them to know when "He is near, right at the door"(24:33), which is why He told them exactly what would precede His return. As He stated so clearly, He will not return until many fall away (24:10), what Paul referred to as "the apostasy;" nor will He return until the antichrist is revealed. This scuttles the modern myth that Jesus could come at any time.

Jesus clearly spoke of a post-tribulation rapture in today's reading, giving several examples of people being side-by-side when He returns, with one being taken and one being left behind (24:40-41). This also indicates that not every believer will be killed during the time of great tribulation.

One other modern theological myth is exposed by what we read today. Since Jesus warned His closest disciples (see Mark 13:3) of the danger of being deceived, falling away, and not being ready for His return, that is a clear indication that such a possibility existed. Jesus' disciples were certainly saved by this point in His ministry, but notice that He warned them that hell would be the fate of those who were not ready at His return. It was possible they could forfeit their salvation. Thus the doctrine of "once-saved-always-saved" is revealed for what it is, as a very false security, a man-made doctrine. People believe it only because they want to believe it.