

Missing Persons: A Rapture Explanation that Makes Sense

By David W. Lowe

Recent broadcasts of the *Search the Scriptures Daily* radio show, featuring prophecy scholars Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon of The Berean Call, have featured discussions of the rapture, specifically, how the world will both react to, and unite after, this shocking event. Various possible explanations discussed during these broadcasts included:

- Abduction by aliens or “space brothers” to take away those who caused problems for evolutionary reprogramming.



- The New Age has come, and those who did not practice yoga to proceed to Homo Noeticus, the next stage of human evolution, were taken away to learn new age principles.
- The world will be so advanced that transmuation, or a “Beam me up, Scotty” scenario, will be a possible explanation for the disappearance.

To their credit, neither Dave nor T.A. believe any of these far out explanations will be necessary. During the 10/27/2006 broadcast entitled, “How In the World Will the World Unite?,” Dave Hunt explained what he believes will be the response to the rapture:

If a hundred million people vanish from this planet, the terror that would result is unimaginable. We can’t even begin to think about it. ‘Where did they go? Who took them? Why didn’t they take me?’ I mean, that’s a logical question: ‘Why was I left behind?’ And no one will believe it was the rapture because the Bible says God will give them a strong delusion to believe the lie.

Thus, Mr. Hunt believes that those who are left behind after the rapture event will be so deceived by a strong delusion sent by God through the Antichrist that they won’t believe the “rapture” of the Bible has just taken place, despite the fact that this event is very well-known even outside of the church. Does this sound like a plausible theory to you?

We've all thought about it, haven't we? What will the world be like just after the resurrection and rapture? Will CNN, FoxNews, and MSNBC be teeming with news stories and reports of people suddenly missing all over the globe? Will it be explained by claims of alien abductions or other bizarre ideas? Questions like these have spawned books and movies, hoping to provide an answer, or at least tenable possibilities.



There is one explanation, though, that no one is talking about. And, surprisingly enough, this explanation has the strongest historical and scriptural support.

The Earthquake Resurrection and the Last Trumpet of God: Global Shaking

There is a pattern found in scripture of the power of a resurrection to an immortal body causing a shaking of the surrounding earth. The pattern is evident with the two recorded historic instances of a resurrection into immortal bodies, Jesus Christ and the “many saints who had died” in Matthew chapter 27, as well as with the resurrection of the two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11 which will take place in the future. This pattern can be applied to the future resurrection of the dead in Christ, resulting in a worldwide surge of supernatural power, causing a massive seismic, tsunamic, and volcanic activity.

In addition, this future resurrection of the dead in Christ will be preceded, according to Paul in I Corinthians chapter 15 and I Thessalonians chapter 4, by the “last trumpet,” also known



as the “trumpet of God.” The trumpet of God is his voice, which is clear when a study is conducted of the events of Mount Sinai in Exodus chapter 19 and Paul’s recounting of the events in Hebrews chapter 12. God’s trumpet voice sounded at Mount Sinai, and Paul stated in Hebrews 12:26 that it was his voice that shook the earth at that time. Furthermore, he stated in the same verse that “once more” his voice will

shake not only the earth but also the heavens. This “once more” shaking by God’s trumpet voice is equivalent to the “last trumpet,” or the last time the trumpet voice of the Lord will shake the earth.

Combining the pattern of the power of the resurrection to immortality shaking the earth, and the shaking of the earth when the last trumpet voice of God shakes the earth and the heavens,

it can be concluded that the future resurrection of the dead in Christ, followed soon after by the rapture of these resurrected and transformed believers along with those believers who had not yet died, will coincide with a global catastrophic shaking event. An event that will surprise the world and bring sudden destruction for those left behind.

Escaping the Trap?

Many may be resistant to the idea that the resurrection and catching-up event will be ushered in by a worldwide catastrophe that would likely cause the deaths of many people. Yet, that is exactly what both Jesus and Paul stated would be the case. First, according to Paul, the day of the Lord will be introduced with “sudden destruction:”

I Th 5:2 For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come in the same way as a thief in the night. 5:3 Now when they are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden [*aiphnídios*] destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape [*ekphúgōsin*].

In the natural, a thief in the night comes when the people are sleeping, unaware of the sudden destruction coming on them. In the spiritual, those who are not prepared for the coming of the Lord will be caught in an unprepared state, unable to escape what comes upon them. The Greek words used by Paul in explaining the quick destructive power that introduces the day of the Lord are the same used by Jesus when he was explaining the day of the Lord to his disciples:

Luk 21:34 “But be on your guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day close down upon you suddenly like a trap [*aiphnídios*]. 21:35 For it will overtake [*pagís*] all who live on the face of the whole earth. 21:36 But stay alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape [*ekphígein*] all these things that must happen, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Notice that the same Greek word is used to describe the escape, *ekpheúgō*, which was used by Paul in describing the fate of those who will be caught by surprise by the sudden destruction. In addition, both of the passages use *aiphnídios* to describe the swift and severe manner in which the destruction will come. The Greek *pagís* is a noun which means a trap set for

animals resulting in their destruction and capture. This noun was used to describe the fate of all those who are not ready at his coming.

Sudden Destruction: The Days of Noah and Lot

Most popular books and movies about the future catching-up event feature a globe in basically the same physical condition after the event as before it. But one need only examine Luke chapter 17, where Jesus himself warned that the time of his revealing would feature destructive



events patterned after those in the days of Noah and Lot, to understand that Jesus also warned of a destructive event at the time of the rapture. Jesus began a discourse to his disciples about the future with a reference to his lightning-flash appearance:

Luk 17:23 Then people will say to you, ‘Look, there he is!’ or ‘Look, here he is!’
Do not go out or chase after them. 17:24 For just like the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.

In contrast to those who will be looking for the Lord to first appear on the earth, Jesus stated there will be an appearance in which he comes just as quickly as the lightning flashes through the sky. This description is in agreement with Paul’s description of the resurrection and transformation event taking place in a moment, in



the blinking of an eye, in which Jesus will return in the sky to catch up all believers who are resurrected and transformed. Jesus continued the discussion by providing two dramatic, historic examples of what to expect on the earth at the time of this lightning-flash appearance:

Luk 17:26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the Son of Man. 17:27 People were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage—right up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

First, he compared the time of his coming to the days of Noah. Up until the day Noah entered the ark, the world went on as usual, and there was no reason for panic. However, on the day the flood began, the inhabitants of the earth quickly realized their predicament. The violent changes that took place on the earth destroyed all of them. The day overtook them as a thief, and the planet underwent legendary changes which no living creature outside the ark survived. Jesus stated it would be the same when he returns in the sky. He next reminded the disciples of the days of Lot:

Luk 17:28 Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building; 17:29 but on the day Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 17:30 It will be the same on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

The sudden destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as chronicled in Genesis chapter 19, resulted from the cities being pelted with supernatural fire and sulfur from the sky. Jesus then stated it will be “the same” when he returns; some type of destruction will take place on the earth at his lightning-quick revelation.

Masking a Global Disappearance

The global destruction caused by the power of the resurrection of the dead in Christ to immortality, in concert with the trumpet voice of God shaking the earth, will provide a masking effect such that it is possible that millions of missing persons will not even be noticed. How so? Recall the devastating December 2004 earthquake and tsunami in Southeast Asia. In addition to the deaths of over 200,000 and the injuries of many more, there were an estimated 164,000 people that could not be accounted for, who were counted as “missing persons” among the disaster and chaos. After a certain amount of time, these missing persons were added to the number of dead.



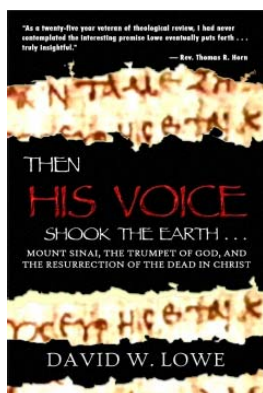
Imagine the chaos that will occur at the resurrection of the dead in Christ if the effects of the Southeast Asia catastrophe are multiplied many times over on a worldwide basis. Many millions could be missing in the rapture, and as such, those believers who were living and remaining prior to the event, but could not be found afterward, would simply be declared part of a massive group of missing persons, and eventually would be declared dead in the catastrophe.

If this scenario proves to be correct, flash newscast reports of millions of people disappearing around the earth, suggested in popular movies, songs, and books, will be impossible due to damage to technological infrastructure. This was clearly seen in the last few months when an earthquake in the Taiwan disrupted Internet access of millions of people for several weeks. Multiply this many times over at the resurrection of the dead in Christ worldwide, and imagine the destruction and chaos to the world's communication systems. While news may be slowly spread by word of mouth, confusion and chaos will ultimately rule the day.

Conclusion: A Rapture Explanation that Agrees with Scripture

The speculation about how the left behind world will attempt to explain the disappearance of millions of people in the rapture – alien abductions, Star Trek-like transmutation, and New Age reprogramming – are no longer necessary. Those left behind will have much greater worries than the whereabouts of missing persons in a global disaster. Indeed, they will have survived perhaps the greatest natural disaster since the Flood, but will be ushered into the day of the Lord's wrath in the midst of a globe in chaos and ruin.

Not only does this rapture explanation agree with Jesus, Paul, and the Old Testament prophets who saw destruction ushering in the day of the Lord, but it is supported by what took place in the aftermath of a recent natural disaster. The rapture truly will be a sudden snatch from out of harm's way, as the meaning of the Greek verb *harpazo* conveys. Let us warn unbelievers, and exhort fellow believers, with the strongest of Spirit-led convictions until Jesus Christ's glorious return.



Portions excerpted from *Then His Voice Shook the Earth: Mount Sinai, the Trumpet of God, and the Resurrection of the Dead in Christ*, © 2006 by David W. Lowe. For more information about this book and the author, please visit www.earthquakeresurrection.com.