

## Three Reasons to Abandon the Expectation of a Secret Rapture

### Part 3: It's Not Taught Outside the Western World

Apart from not being taught in the Bible and not being taught throughout the majority of church history, the fact that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture theory is not taught outside of the western world (by and large) is one of the more convincing reasons why it should be examined with skeptical eyes.

Between 1830 and 1833 the Irish John Darby began going public with his newly discovered doctrine. Prior to this, no one anywhere on the globe had heard a teaching on a secret rapture. After fierce opposition from many within the UK (from great men such as George Mueller and Tregelles) Darby's ministry shifted to the US where his teaching would gain the most renown. His influence on American born C.I. Scofield resulted in the Scofield Study Bible (published in 1909) being one of the primary ways the doctrine was promoted in the last century. Darby and Scofield gained prominence and notoriety in those decades – almost entirely in the western world. But outside of the west, the church was living under the assumption that the second coming and the rapture were synonymous in the mind of the apostles; as it remains today.

Between 1909 and now, the Pre-Tribulation theory has become a pillar in American Christianity. And with the publishing of the now famous "Left Behind" novels, that pillar was strengthened. Interestingly though, the doctrine remained (by and large) an American doctrine. Even in the UK – where it was first formulated – it was seen (again, by and large) as a deviation from Biblical orthodoxy. Try as they may, proponents of this new theory can't avoid the fact that outside of America, there is a staunch opposition to their views.

What follows, are two stories (one from history, and one that's personal) that show how this teaching is loathed outside of America.

#### CORRIE TEN BOOM

In 1974 Corrie Ten Boom (the famous woman whose family hid Jews during the Holocaust and who spent time herself in a Nazi concentration camp as a consequence) wrote these words in a letter:

"There are some among us teaching there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this. These are the false teachers that Jesus was warning us to expect in the latter days. Most of them have little knowledge of what is already going on across the world. I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution.

In China, the Christians were told [by American Bible teachers], "Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated – raptured." Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, sadly,

"We have failed.

We should have made the people strong for persecution,

rather than telling them Jesus would come first.  
 Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution,  
 how to stand when the tribulation comes,  
 – to stand and not faint.”

I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation, but more than sixty percent of the Body of Christ across the world has already entered into the tribulation. There is no way to escape it.

We are next.

Since I have already gone through prison for Jesus’ sake, and since I met the Bishop in China, now every time I read a good Bible text I think, “Hey, I can use that in the time of tribulation.” Then I write it down and learn it by heart.”

This letter is an indictment against American Bible teachers who brought the doctrine of a secret rapture into China. Her words point to the painful reality that where ever this doctrine is taught, it undermines the saints ability so suffer well according to the teaching of the apostles.

#### MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA

In 2005 I was in Indonesia engaging in evangelistic ministry. One Sunday I spoke at a local church service. Before it was time for me to preach the pastor approached me and said words that deeply impacted me:

“Sir, I don’t want to offend you by what I’m about to say. But it must be said. You are an American. And we welcome you in our community. However, when preaching, please do not mention the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Your Bible teachers in America teach this. But this community is experiencing much affliction and suffering. And that doctrine will do great damage to these people.”

I won’t add to these words except to say this: All who hold the belief that we will be secretly raptured any moment must understand and recognize that this conviction is largely an American conviction. Moreover, I have met people outside of the western world who hold the doctrine – but it’s only because they have been influenced by the ministries of American ministries who teach it through their books and TV shows.

A secret, imminent rapture isn’t found in the Bible, in church history or outside the western world. These are strong reasons to abandon it and to fill our minds and hearts with what the Bible says about the generation of the Lord’s return.