

DREAMING OF THE RAPTURE(S)

A spoof on the “Left Behind” series

So there you are, sipping coffee at 37,000 feet and suddenly the person sitting on your right vanishes, just like that, leaving all his clothes behind on the seat.

You’re rather glad he’s gone, though, to be honest, because all he did the whole journey was talk about Jesus.

But then, to your horror, you remember. It was all in that book you read in the airport bookstore, something about “the rapture” and Christians being whisked off to Heaven leaving their clothes behind, and all hell breaking loose on those “Left Behind.”

You wish now you’d taken the book more seriously. It had scriptures to back it up too, for heaven’s sake, like, “Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left (Matthew 24:39-41),” and the one about Christians being “caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).” See? There it was in black and white, Christians would be spirited away in the rapture, and here you are now, “left behind.”

And left behind to what, pray tell? To the Antichrist, the book said, and 7 years of Tribulation under his devilish rule as he ushers in his New World Order, first by deception, and then by force. So, this is it, the lid’s off, the awful end-time prophecies in the book of Revelation are about to explode.

A stewardess then announces in squeaky panic that both pilots have vanished. Oh, great! Now you’re really up the creek without a paddle.

But the shock also brings to mind a nagging question you had at the airport: How could the Left Behind book say the rapture occurs 7 years before Christ returns, when the Bible clearly states Christians rise to meet Christ on the day of his return?

Are there 2 raptures for Christians, then, one happening before the Tribulation and another one 7 years later?

That wasn’t the only question you had, either. When Christ comes back to Earth to meet his saints in the air, he descends with them to Jerusalem in full sight of those down below. In the Left Behind version of the rapture, however, the saints are secretly whisked off to Heaven and Christ doesn’t appear on the scene at all. It’s totally different. How come?

And didn’t Christ himself say about his second coming that “No one knows about the that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven (Matthew 24:36)?” But if the rapture occurs exactly 7 years before Christ’s coming, you can easily pinpoint the day of his arrival, right?

No wonder you shelved the book at the airport. It contradicted the Bible all over the place. Problem was, it spun Bible verses and imagination together so cleverly, you couldn’t tell what was fact and what was fantasy. Ah, but that’s the problem with Christians nowadays, you snorted to yourself, they’re such Bible illiterates it’s not surprising they get caught up in this tripe.

“But, hang on, chum,” you remind yourself, as the plane begins to dip, “who are you to criticize? Aren’t you the one left behind on a plane with no pilots? Didn’t the person on your right disappear? And isn’t this exactly how the Left Behind book pictured the rapture, with planes crashing and cars careening out of control without their Christian drivers?”

Maybe the Left Behind version of the rapture is right after all, you wonder, despite its flagrant misuse of scripture.

But that raises another question: Why would a loving God suddenly spirit Christians away and leave behind so many good-living, hard-working, charity-giving, family-loving people like yourself, without any warning whatsoever? You're on a goodwill trip to Africa to help people with AIDS and doing good deeds, for Pete's sake, but here you are heading for oblivion. It's not right.

Seconds before the plane hits the ocean, you wake up with a jolt and an embarrassing yelp. You shudder slightly, blink a couple of times and glance furtively to your right. The person sitting next to you is still there, fully clothed, and the steady hum of the plane says all is well.

"So, no one's been raptured, then?" you ask him.

"In your dreams," he replies.