

# First Baptist Pulpit

*Breaking The Omega Code  
and demythologizing the fable  
Left Behind!*

*A Juvenalian Satire upon  
the Duping of the Popular Evangelical Mind  
Written with the Ferocity of Voltaire and the Veracity of Paul  
Succeeded by a Serious Discussion of Biblical Truth*

*He that hath an ear, . . . may this pierce it!*

Do you remember that rhapsody of the rapture from back in the 1970's, I Wish We'd All Been Ready? One captivating line went like this:

*There's no time to change your mind,  
The Son has come and you've been **left behind!***

Left behind! My! My! My! What disturbing Wagnerian images this must have conjured in the rapture-ready minds of those who heard the foreboding dirge left behind! What worrisome wrinkles must have furrowed the dark and lowering brows of those who mused upon this musical and mythical premonition left behind! Although the song was, like most contemporary Christian music, typically unimaginative, emotionally nostalgic, and always one or two steps behind the superior music of the popular and secular culture it perpetually tries but perennially fails to imitate, the song I Wish We'd All Been Ready nevertheless accomplished its ultimate purpose-- to make Christians pause for a brief moment and consider the awful possibility that they might be left behind at the rapture. Hot on the heels of this faddish ditty of dispensationalism was an equally pedestrian film, A Thief in the Night, which attempted, also rather pathetically, to portray the post-rapture world (I think most of the film's suddenly unmanned automobiles came from Joe's Wreckin' Yard just outside Little Rock, with a couple of holy-roller mechanics thrown in as stunt men who looked like comical cosmonauts when the catapults jerked their harnesses upwards, pulling the backs of their shirts into pointed imitations of hunch-backed Peter Pans). We recollect that this film, A Thief in the Night, was quite successful in frightening many new converts into the kingdom of God, if not as wheat then certainly as tares, especially emotionally imbalanced adolescents and impressionable little children who had been bused in for pizza before the show. Now, two decades later, not a song but an entire cacophony of books have re-enchanted the contemporary Christian imagination with even more absurd dramatizations of how the Christian-less world will look after (Beethoven, please)  
. . . da - da - da - dum . . .

## THE RAPTURE!

Of course I refer to the best-selling fictional (and I do mean fictional) series Left Behind. And for those unthinking fundamentalists (which is practically the whole lot of them) whose tepid imaginations depend primarily upon video technology to arouse their apocalyptic fantasies, A Thief in the Night has now been dethroned, beheaded, and embalmed in the holy shrine of sacred celluloid as the dead king of the rapture classics, its former glory usurped and eclipsed by that newer and even more lurid rendition of Revelation's horrors Beethoven again, please The Omega Code, an absolutely anemic motion picture which plasters ambiguous messages about the anti-Christ's regime across the silver screen, complete with glowing eyes and pink portents of the impending Armageddon. Like the very filmstrip upon which it is recorded, The Omega Code is little more than a telling commentary upon the pitiful state of tasteless aesthetics in contemporary Christian culture thin, flimsy, and transparent. But while the Christian community gags at these sensational literary and dramatic representations of the last days according to C. I. Scofield, Hal Lindsey, and other careless purveyors of this cruel fable, fundamentalism's complacent herd lazily grazes in languid delusion, tranquilly oblivious to the origin of these fraudulent myths called The Omega Code and Left Behind! Fraudulent myths? Yes, fraudulent myths, fraudulent as in that which is both dishonest and deceptive, and mythological as that which is a collective belief that is built up in response to the wishes of a group rather than an analysis of the basis of their wishes. Now I do not propose for a moment that the authors, directors, and producers of these second-rate and farcical melodramas are consciously dishonest or deliberately deceptive, much less wilfully ignorant. No, they too are victims of this fraud; no, no, victims of something worse than fraud, victims of a veritable

hoax, victims of a sullied brainwashing of the evangelical mind, victims of a ubiquitous subterfuge which has draped a dark veil of delusion across the collective psyche of contemporary Christianity as if it were a charmed cult, beguiled by the twice fictitious phrase left behind.

Nowhere, we repeat, nowhere does the Bible teach the concept of unsaved sinners being left behind after a secret rapture of the saints at the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. Now we know that our more perspicacious reader will dimly recall a passage somewhere in one of the Gospels which s/he thinks will immediately unravel our thesis that nowhere does the Bible teach the concept of the unsaved being 'left behind,' but before you reach for that concordance, indexed Ryrie Study Bible or, even worse, the Hagee Prophecy Bible of genuinely-red imitation leather, may we provide the verses for you. The one and only passage to which the proponents of the left behind mythology can point is Matthew 24:36-41, and then they must do so with a crooked and shaky finger, for although at a superficial glance these verses may appear to vindicate the idea that some poor lost souls will be left behind at the rapture, a careful examination of their context will clarify this passage to mean exactly the opposite of what the high priests of the 'left behind' (think about that phrase the high priests of the left behind it creates a funny mental image) would have us to believe about what it means to be left behind. Indeed, if anyone is to be left after the Second Coming of Christ, it will not be the lost, but rather the saved! Yes after you draw that gasp, please remember to exhale yes, if anyone is to be left after the Second Coming of Christ, it will not be the lost, but rather the saved who will be left (though not left behind) at the Second Coming of Christ, at least according to that Divine Oracle who Himself spoke the singular prophecy which the overlords of left behind claim as the indisputable and unassailable source of their fraudulent mythology. You remember the scene, don't you? In one of His last addresses to the Zionists, Jesus warns the sign-seekers that God's wrath will surely come upon them. He had already castigated them because of their insatiable appetite for the sensational (they too would have relished The Omega Code and Left Behind!), telling them that an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign (by the way, what do Jesus' words imply about contemporary Christians' fascination with signs as evidenced by our carnivorous craving for The Omega Code and Left Behind?). Interestingly, the same passage reveals that the Son of God knew nothing about two physical resurrections separated by 1,000 or 1,007 years, for he told the sign-seekers that the righteous dead would rise up simultaneously with that wicked and adulterous generation of sign-seekers whom He so disdained. But let us not stray too far from the point at hand Jesus' words in Matthew 24:36-41, which have been so perversely twisted and abused by the soothsayers and sign-seekers of our generation, indicate nothing whatsoever about an unsaved world being left behind at His Second Coming. Dear reader, are you incredulous at our claim? Well, then, let us search the scriptures and see if these things be so. Look carefully at Jesus' very words to which The Omega Code and Left Behind! point as infallible proof of their fantastic fables:

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.

Now according to the authors of Left Behind! and The Omega Code, the proper interpretation of Jesus' words goes something like this: The two workers in the field, and the two women grinding at the mill-- these four individuals illustrate what will happen to all saints and sinners who live upon the late-great planet Earth at the time of Jesus' return. Like the one field worker and the one woman grinding at the mill who were to be taken at the coming of the Son of man, living Christians, they say, will be taken up or raptured by Jesus Christ at His second coming; but like the other field worker and the second woman grinding at the mill who were to be left at the coming of the son of man, non-Christians will be left behind after the Rapture. This interpretation that saints will be taken and sinners left behind at the Rapture provides the singular dynamic behind both The Omega Code and Left Behind! Moreover, this interpretation predominates the opinions of all the preachers, pastors, professors, and parishioners who entertain themselves with these fables. But there is only one thing wrong with this interpretation of Jesus' prophecy, it is a misinterpretation, a misinterpretation which so grossly contorts Jesus' words as to diametrically contradict them and, instead of accurately representing what Jesus said, this misinterpretation actually communicates exactly the opposite of what our Lord intended us to understand! But you say, Do you mean to tell me that these monumental fictions, The Omega Code and Left Behind!, are twice fictitious, fictitious not only in their style but also fictitious in the biblical premise upon which they supposedly rest? Yes, dear reader, that is precisely the case. These fables are twice fictitious. Their evil lies not in the fact that they are, by their own admission, Christian fiction, for Christians can

surely write fiction, though usually not as well, as their secular counterparts; but well written Christian fiction, such as John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, represents truth, not error; however, The Omega Code and Left Behind! do not accurately represent biblical truth but rather inaccurately portray a false scenario of the end times which is misleading millions of unsuspecting Christians into an absurd fantasy about the events surrounding the second coming of Jesus Christ. Prove it! you say. We shall try. To prove our point, let's look again at Matthew 24:36-41, but this time let's ask ourselves a few simple questions before we reexamine Jesus' words, questions such as these:

1. Who were taken in the days of Noah?
2. By what were they taken in the days of Noah?
3. Where were they taken in the days of Noah?
4. Who was left after others were taken in the days of Noah?
5. What is the relationship between the days of Noah and the coming of the Son of Man?
6. What is the relationship between those who were taken in the days of Noah and those who are to be taken at the coming of the Son of Man?
7. What is the relationship between those who were left in the days of Noah and those who are to be left after the coming of the Son of Man?

Now, with these seven questions in mind, let's reread Jesus' words, this time very carefully with special emphasis upon the words took, taken and left.:

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.

Now, let us systematically answer the questions which we have posed.

1. Who were taken in the days of Noah?

Answer: The wicked were taken in the days of Noah, those who were eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage.

2. By what were the wicked taken in the days of Noah?

Answer: The wicked were taken by the flood, a vengeful visitation of God in sovereign judgement against the wicked when the flood came and took them all away.

3. Where were the wicked taken in the days of Noah?

Answer: The wicked were taken to their physical and eternal deaths.

4. Who were left after the wicked were taken in the days of Noah?

Answer: Righteous Noah and his family alone were left after the flood came and took away the wicked.

Before we answer our last three questions, we ask our reader: Are you getting the point? Do you see the pattern and implication of Jesus' words in this prophecy which compare the days of Noah to the coming of the Son of Man? What is the pattern? this pattern is this: the taking away of the wicked in Noah's flood parallels and predicts the taking away of the wicked at the coming of the Son of Man; and Noah and his family, safe within the Ark, parallel and predict those who will be left at the coming of the Son of Man! What is the implication? the implication is this: The Omega Code and Left Behind! have not only, as the cliché goes, missed the boat with their misinterpretation of this passage, they have veritably turned the ark upside down! Their scenario of the rapture would reinterpret Noah's flood and have Noah and his family taken by the flood and the wicked sinners of his day left behind, a direct contradiction of Jesus' prophecy! Let us ask ourselves, when God destroyed the wicked world with the flood, who was left behind? Were the promiscuous daughters of debauchery left behind? Were the entrepreneurs of evil left behind? Were the gargantuan giants of ungodliness left behind? Were the inebriated gluttons of delicacies, drugs,

drink, and divorce left behind? No, those who were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage were not left behind when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; to the contrary, when Noah's flood came upon the wicked world of sinners, as Jesus said and Matthew wrote, the flood came and took them the wicked all away.

Now let's return to our last three questions. First, what is the relationship between the days of Noah and the coming of the Son of Man? Obviously, Jesus intended to establish a parallel between the days of Noah and the coming of the son of Man. But the authors and producers of *The Omega Code* and *Left Behind!* fail to see this parallel. They would have us believe that Jesus and Matthew both made an error, a single error in two different ways: Jesus erring rhetorically, and Matthew erring grammatically—the error that English teachers refer to as a lack of parallelism, meaning that Jesus and Matthew used the verb *took* in one way to describe what happened in the days of Noah, and then mistakenly used a form of the same verb in an opposite way to describe what would happen in the days of the coming of the Son of man. But we know that neither Jesus nor Matthew made an error in what they said or wrote. Jesus said that as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the son of man be; He also said, as it was . . . so shall it be! As Noah's flood took away the wicked of his day, Jesus will take away the wicked when He returns, represented by the field worker and woman grinding at the mill who were to be taken at the coming of the Son of man. And as Noah's flood left Noah and his family secure within the ark above the waters of judgement, Jesus will leave His people securely protected when the rainbow disappears and the fiery wrath of His judgement comes upon the world at His second coming, represented by the second field worker and mill-woman who were left after the coming of the Son of Man!

Perhaps we should consider another fine point of grammar here: Jesus' use of the little word *so*. In fact Matthew records that Jesus used this little word *so* two times in this prophecy of His second coming; at the beginning of His prophecy, Jesus says, *But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*. And then again towards the end of His remarks Jesus uses the same term again, *For as in the days that were before the flood . . . so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*. Now if we look behind our English texts into Matthew's Greek, we see that our English word *so* derives from Matthew's Greek term *houtos*, which Dr. Thayer defines to mean *in the manner spoken of, in the way described, in the way it was done, and in this manner*. So if we apply Dr. Thayer's learned scholarship to Matthew's Greek and then transpose it onto our English versions, then the argument against *The Omega Code* and *Left Behind!* becomes even stronger, for now we hear the Greek which says, *But as the days of Noah were . . . in the manner spoken of, in the way described, in the way it was done, even in this manner . . . shall also the coming of the Son of man be, and again, For as in the days that were before the flood . . . in the manner spoken of, in the way described, in the way it was done, even in this manner . . . shall also the coming of the Son of man be*.

Now let's ask ourselves another question, *What was 'the manner' in which the wicked were 'taken' in 'the days of Noah'?* Did Noah stand at the door of the Ark and lead the global community in a praise and worship rendition of *Something good is going to happen to you, this very day, this very day?* Were Noah's generation taken in a kind manner, were they taken in a gracious manner, were they taken in a merciful manner, were they taken out of the world into an ecstatic state of rapture? Certainly not! Those who were taken in the days of Noah were the wicked, and they were taken away by the wrath of God when the flood came and took them to their physical and eternal deaths! If then those who are to be taken in the days of the coming of the Son of man are to be taken in the manner spoken of, in the way described, in the way it was done, even in this manner as those who were taken in the days of Noah, then we must admit that they too will be taken unmercifully and ungraciously to eternal judgement by a another flood, a flaming flood of conflagration which will wash them away to the lake of fire and brimstone; therefore, we must believe that Jesus Christ will take away the wicked to eternal damnation at His coming unless, that is, we are willing to take the absurd and indefensible position that *The Omega Code* and *Left Behind!* are right and, conversely, that Matthew and Jesus are wrong! How preposterous would that be! Yet that very scenario, implausible and implacable as it seems, describes exactly the current mindset of perhaps the majority of professing evangelicals and fundamentalists who have been duped, hoaxed, brainwashed, and beguiled by the popular mythology of *The Omega Code* and *Left Behind!* God help us! Now for our sixth and seventh questions, *What is the relationship between those who were taken 'in the days of Noah' and those who are to be taken at 'the coming of the son of man'?* And, finally, *What is the relationship between those who were left in 'the days of Noah' and those who are to be 'left' at 'the coming of the Son of Man'?* If we properly interpret Jesus' prophecy, we must believe not only that the one worker in the field and the one woman grinding at the mill who were taken constitute a parallel to the wicked who were taken by Noah's flood and therefore represent the wicked who will be taken at the coming of the Son of man, but we must also admit that the field worker and mill-woman who were left correspond not only to Noah's family who were graciously left after the flood but also to the righteous who will be mercifully left after the

coming of the son of Man. But of course we cannot accept both this scenario and the propaganda of The Omega Code and Left Behind!, for they stand antithetically and irreconcilably opposed one against another.

In conclusion, or, perhaps from our readers' point of view, in confusion, we remind our audience that, as we have previously stated, Matthew 24:36-41 is the only passage in the entire Bible which speaks specifically about anyone being left at the coming of the Son of man. Therefore, in the spurious vernacular of contemporary evangelism, we must make our decision and choice about the truth of Matthew 24:36-41. So whose truth shall we believe, the truth about being taken and left behind according to The Omega Code and Left Behind!, or the truth according to the Apostle Matthew and the Messiah Jesus Christ, both of whom affirm that the wicked will be taken and the righteous left at the coming of the Son of Man? And one more thing, do you remember that other film of about the rapture myth, A Thief in the Night? It too was built upon a corrupt interpretation of a biblical passage. Its authors and producers, like those of The Omega Code and Left Behind!, would have us to believe that Jesus will return as thief in the night to steal away His bride in the rapture of the church, after which there will be seven years of great tribulation followed by a 1,000 year millennium. Yet Peter preached no such thing; contrariwise, Peter anticipated that the second coming of Christ would result in the immediate conflagration of the entire universe and all the wicked therein, just as Jesus prophesied that the coming of the son of Man would immediately take away the wicked in the same manner as the flood suddenly and straightway took the wicked of Noah's day. A simple glance at Peter's prophecy of the thief in the night will confirm this truth. Peter says,

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up.

In no way do Peter's words corroborate the Thief in the Night scenario that the world and sinners in it will be left behind after the second coming of Christ; to the contrary, Peter declares that when Jesus does come as a thief in the night, He will immediately destroy His entire creation including the heavens which shall pass away with a great noise, the atomic superstructure of the universe which shall melt with fervent heat, and, Peter says, even the earth and everything in it including the wicked shall be burned up! But our reader still protests, does not the apostle Paul teach that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord? Yes, dear reader, Paul teaches that very truth. But to the very same church to whom he wrote these words, Paul also predicted that God's wrath against the wicked will be simultaneous with His rescue of the righteous, a point that The Omega Code and Left Behind! conveniently overlook; as the Great Apostle said,

And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

When shall the Lord Jesus Christ take away the wicked to eternal judgement? As Paul says, at His second coming, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, then Jesus shall in flaming fire take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! When shall the Lord Jesus punish the wicked with everlasting destruction? At His second coming, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe!

Dear reader, despite the silly song to the contrary, there is time to change your mind, not by an act of your own will, but rather by the gracious will of a sovereign God who does not offer salvation to those who will not repent but rather who proffers salvation to those who do repent. Rather than mistakenly worrying about whether or not you will be left behind at the rapture, you should instead be concerned that you will be taken at the coming of the Son of Man, washed away and drowned in the torrential flood of flaming fire and punished with everlasting destruction which will occur simultaneously with the return of Jesus Christ. Peter's admonition is apropos to our benediction:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with

fervent heat. . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.