

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11).

We know Jesus through the Bible, or we know him not at all. That is the urgent premise behind LAC's efforts to encourage personal Bible reading and systematic Bible study. We fervently hope that you will--

1. "Stand in the Rain" with us every day as we read through the Bible in three short years. Just go to **lockportalliance.org** and click on the man in the rain.
2. Attend one of these Bible-based classes this week—
"Stand in the Rain Whole-Bible Class"--Sunday at 9:45
"Becoming a Woman of Freedom"--Sunday at 9:45
(Contact Franklyn Pfeil--pfeilmail@yahoo.com--with questions or comments.)



"Rapture: a dream come true"

Suddenly, at the beginning of Revelation 4, John is transported to heaven. Moreover, the church--which is the entire subject of chapters 2 and 3--is gone, *in the twinkling of an eye* (1), from the Bible!

(The church will re-appear as the Bride of Christ in chapters 19 and 21-22.)

John, then, like Enoch and Elijah in the Old Testament, is a pre-figuration of the Rapture. When he is called out of the world, he is the church (the *ekklesia*, which means "called out") in microcosm. In the same way, the calling forth of Lazarus from the grave (John 11) is a picture of those believers who died prior to the time of the Rapture.

Just before the onset of the Great Tribulation, the Groom is going to sweep the bride off her feet and carry her over the threshold into the new home he has been preparing: *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.* (John 14:1-3)

While theologians quibble over the technical details of the Rapture, Jesus spoke of it, and thinks of it, in terms of romance.

That's why our term --"Rapture"--so wonderfully captures its essence. In fact, our terminology comes closer to the essence of the Rapture than our theology does! We technicians have managed to sweep the romance right out of the skies.

The Rapture, as presented in God's Word, is so beyond our experience that it takes on dream-like qualities: it derives from somewhere beyond the boundaries of our imaginations; almost, it seems, from the realms of magic, where--*poof!*--the rabbit disappears.

The Rapture, impossible but inevitable, has the aura of reverie, as if it were conceived in the daydreams of a carpenter while toiling over many mansions. As he does, he pictures her, his bride to be, as if in an album of photos yet to be taken:

there she is, in their new home, radiant and lovely in her new dress;
and there she is with her new name and her new life;
and there she is, singing her new song under the untarnished stars.

Beaten and bloodied, he'd saved her while suspended between heaven and earth. How perfect it would be, he muses, to segue into their new forever by meeting her in mid-air, now risen just like him!

It's all so strange that it strains our credulity--until we recall whose word and whose dream it is:

because the truth of a word isn't in the word, the truth of a word is in the speaker;
and the truth of a dream isn't in the dream; the truth of a dream is in the dreamer.

The Rapture was conceived when longing and desire met in an untarnished heart. A heart so *holy, holy, holy* that it spoke the cosmos into existence will--*verily, verily, he says unto us*--see his dream come true. (2)

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(1) see 1 Corinthians 15:50-52; (2) Revelation 4:8; see John 5:24-29/KJV and 1 Thessalonians 4:16