

SAMARIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Water of Life

"...the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." - John 4:14

Volume: II

January 2009

Number: 1

Letting Your Light Shine In 2009

Read Bible Daily

Every One Teach One

Show Love For Others



*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your
good works and glorify your father in Heaven."*

Matthew 5:16

THE RAPTURE

DAVID ELDRIDGE

Many people in the religious world today believe in the rapture. Being premillennialists, they see the rapture as being a silent coming of the Lord when all those who are righteous (dead and alive) are going to mysteriously disappear from the earth leaving behind the unholy. These ideas, as of late, have been spread by the *Left Behind* series of books and videos. Does the Bible say anything about this kind of rapture? Let's ask some questions concerning this widespread doctrine of a rapture.

HOW MANY RESURRECTIONS WILL THERE BE? The premillennialist believes that when Jesus returns, there will be a resurrection of the righteous dead (the rapture) followed by a second resurrection to take place at a later time. However, Jesus Himself said, *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation”* (John 5:28-29). Jesus says there will be a general (one time) resurrection of both the righteous and unrighteous. Also, in Acts 24:15 Paul stated, *“...there will be a (note the singularity—DCE) resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.”* If there is going to be one resurrection of the dead followed by another resurrection at a later time, the Son of God and His apostle Paul knew nothing of it.

WILL THE COMING OF THE LORD BE A QUIET, SECRETIVE EVENT? The rapture doctrine says the coming of the Lord will be silent and secretive. So much so, they say, that those left behind will not know what has transpired. However, 1 Corinthians 15:52 states, *“...For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”* Again, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.”* Is there anything that sounds even remotely quiet about a shout with the voice of an archangel or the trumpet of the Lord? When the Lord returns, every living person will be aware of the events taking place.

WHERE WILL THOSE WHO ARE “LEFT BEHIND” STAY? The premillennialist believes that after the rapture, a period of tribulation will begin here on the earth for those who have been left behind. How can this possibly be? In 2 Peter 3:10 we are told that, at the day of the Lord, *“the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”* When Jesus returns, the earth and everything in it will be destroyed, leaving no place for human life on earth. Friends, when the premillennialist idea of the rapture is examined by the Scriptures, it is found to be lacking, and is therefore false!

USING RELIGIOUS TITLES

DAVID ELDRIDGE

In Matthew 23:8-10 Jesus taught, *“But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.”* In almost every denomination, this simple command of the Lord is disregarded as they place titles upon their preachers to denote a higher place for them. Preachers should be respected for the work that they do (1 Cor. 16:18; Phil. 2:29). However, we are all brethren and no preacher should have a title of distinction attached to his name. Let's notice a few of the more common titles abused by the religious world in this regard.

FATHER – Those in the Catholic denomination refer to their preachers as father. However, Jesus commanded that we *“do not call anyone on earth your father”* (Matt. 23:9). Using this term to address a man in a religious sense is an outright violation of the commandment of our Lord, and as such, it is sin. There is nothing wrong with referring to our earthly parent as father as Paul did in Ephesians 6:2. However, to call a man father, as a religious title, is in error.

REVEREND – Some will refer to their preacher as “Reverend so-and-so”. David, speaking of God, said in Psalm 111:9, *“Holy and reverend is His name.”* Whose name is

reverend? David says it is the name of the awesome God and His alone. Woe unto the man who seeks by a title to set himself as an equal to God in Heaven! To refer to a man on earth as reverend is verging on, if not outright, blasphemy.

PASTOR – Many, in referring to their preacher, will call him their pastor. In Ephesians 4:11 Paul said, *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”* This word pastor is indicative of an overseer or shepherd. The pastor is an elder of the local church. Unless a man meets the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and was appointed by the church to such a role with a plurality of men, he is not a pastor and should not be referred to as such. Even if a man holds such a role in the Lord's church, it is a description, not a title.

It should also be noted that a Christian should not support false ideas or sin in calling any man by these titles. Job said, *“Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man”* (Job 32:21). A preacher can be called a preacher, evangelist, or minister, as those are descriptions of what he does (2 Tim. 1:11; Ac. 21:8; Rom. 15:16). Yet, we are brethren of one another and though we may do different works, we are not to have titles to elevate one above another.