

THE
GREAT
DISAPPEARANCE

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31 WAYS TO
BE RAPTURE READY

DR. DAVID
JEREMIAH



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The Great Disappearance

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To Donna Jeremiah

For sixty years you have been my greatest love . . . my closest friend . . . my fiercest encourager. We have done life together. We have done books together. This one is dedicated to you!

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INTRODUCTION

You and I are privileged to stand on the cresting waves of prophecy—to live in a time closer to the return of Jesus Christ than any other generation in the history of the world. We sense the nearness of His return. We see the signs of the times. We know the world is reaching a climactic point of unparalleled crisis.

Nuclear weapons are now sophisticated enough and small enough to be carried by hand; such weapons even have a nickname: “tactical nukes.” The global economy is hanging by a spider’s thread. Political fragmentation seems to be occurring simultaneously on every continent. And the -isms—secularism, radical Islamism, communism, totalitarianism, and terrorism—are spreading over the nations like a runaway case of poison ivy.

These realities frighten us and are heartrending, but to me they’re also exhilarating, for they portend the return of Christ. I’ve been exhilarated by the thought of seeing Christ for many years, and, like you, I’ve been privileged to live at a time when we can trace the prophecies of God’s Word being fulfilled before our very eyes.

I also feel honored to have been connected in a small way with two of the most important prophecy books or series of books that have ever been written.

I began my pastoral career in 1969 when my wife, Donna, and I, along with seven families, started Blackhawk Baptist Church in Fort

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Wayne, Indiana. In 1970, the second year of my pastoral ministry there, Hal Lindsey published a book entitled *The Late Great Planet Earth*. The book came out a few years after the Six-Day War in the Middle East when people were focused on the remarkable events unfolding in Israel.

This book brought the message of biblical prophecy into everyday conversation, and it became the bestselling nonfiction book of the seventies. It sold more than twenty-eight million copies by 1990 and was eventually translated into more than fifty languages. Some pundits have calculated that, all together, Lindsey's book sold more than thirty-five million copies.¹

Hal Lindsey graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary, the same seminary from which I graduated in 1967. Both of us were privileged to sit under some of the greatest teachers of Bible prophecy in the modern era—professors including Dwight Pentecost, John Walvoord, and Charles Ryrie. In his book, Lindsey took the theological truths he had learned in seminary regarding the prophetic portions of Scripture, as well as insights from his own subsequent studies, and connected them to events in the present and future.

The coauthor of Lindsey's book was a gifted and godly woman named Carole Carlson. In the early eighties, I met Carole and her husband, Ward, at the Forest Home Bible Conference in California, where I was a speaker. Sometime during that week, Donna and I had coffee with Carole, and she suggested she might be able to assist me in putting some of my prophetic sermons into print.

Two books came out of that conversation. The first one, *The Handwriting on the Wall*, was released in 1992. It captured the message of the Old Testament book of Daniel. *Escape the Coming Night*, a contemporary commentary on the New Testament book of Revelation, was released on the first day of the Gulf War and became my all-time bestselling book.

I recall with fondness the hours Carole and I spent together talking about prophecy and discussing how to make it come alive for our

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readers. Since then, both Carole and Ward have graduated into the presence of the Lord. Yet they're still alive today, not only in heaven but also in the books they helped two authors create.

In the late seventies and early eighties I developed a relationship with a California pastor by the name of Tim LaHaye. By the providence of God, I was called to be his successor at what was then called Scott Memorial Baptist Church in San Diego, California. Today that church is Shadow Mountain Community Church. After forty-two years, I am still the pastor of that church. It fills me with gratitude to think Tim LaHaye and I have pastored the same church for over sixty years.

In the early 1990s, God placed a burden upon Dr. LaHaye's heart as he was flying home from a speaking engagement. After a vigorous study of the Scriptures, he had firmly come to the conclusion that all believing Christians would be removed from the world prior to the Tribulation by means of an event called the Rapture.

On the airplane that day, he couldn't help noticing one of the pilots flirting with a flight attendant. The pilot was wearing a wedding ring. Dr. LaHaye thought to himself, *What if this were the moment God chose to remove His faithful believers from earth, leaving behind billions of bewildered unbelievers? What if the Rapture occurred while I was riding on an airplane?*

It was then he decided to write a fictional account of what could happen on earth in the moments after the Lord returns in the skies to suddenly take all Christians to heaven.

Dr. LaHaye joined forces with an experienced author named Jerry Jenkins to write the series. The first book, *Left Behind*, was published in 1995. If you've read it, you likely remember the opening scene, which features an airline pilot interrupted by a frantic stewardess telling him that dozens of passengers have disappeared. Only the bodies were missing; everything else—clothes, shoes, and even gold fillings—were left behind.

What an opening scene for a novel—especially one based on biblical truths about unfolding prophecy!

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That book and the fifteen that followed sold close to eighty million copies. The last six volumes in the series each debuted as number one on all the major bestseller lists, including those of the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Publishers Weekly*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Two of the books were made into movies, and the entire series inspired a children's collection of *Left Behind* books.

Even as I'm writing these words today, a new *Left Behind* movie has been released, more than two decades after the first book was published.

I had the honor of walking through some of those exciting days with my friend Tim LaHaye. On a number of occasions he'd invite me to lunch and present me with a signed copy of the latest release in the series.

I owe a lot to Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye. They helped me understand how important it was to teach the prophetic Scriptures—which, by the way, comprise 27 percent of the Bible. I believe one of the reasons God blessed these remarkable books by Lindsey and Dr. LaHaye was this: the Rapture is the central event in each series.

The Rapture is also the central event in biblical prophecy.

Mark Hitchcock wrote, "More than any other single thing, studying the end times has helped me to understand the whole Bible. And while there are many truths about the end times that have deeply affected my life, one truth stands out above all the others: the Rapture."²

Who among the followers of Jesus wouldn't be thrilled to hear the blast of the trumpet, catch the shout of the angel, and feel the upward pull of the magnetic, rapturous grace of God calling us out of this world and letting us see our Lord Jesus face-to-face? In this book, I'll present my deeply held views about the timing of the Rapture in the overall program of God for the Last Days. But the greatest truth about the Rapture is not its timing but its reality—for blessed are all those who long for His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).

How we need this anticipation! It's our glorious hope in a world

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filled with hopelessness. Peter spoke of how wonderful it is to be “looking forward to these things” (2 Pet. 3:14).

Yes, but you have questions, don’t you? Questions about the Rapture. Questions about timing and sequence. Questions that begin with “Who?” and “What?” and “When?”

That’s why I’ve poured myself into this book. It’s the culmination of decades of studying this subject. In the pages to come, I’ll explain the meaning of the word *rapture*, the difference between the Rapture and the Second Coming, and the joy of expecting our Savior to come at any moment—a doctrine we call the imminence of Christ’s return.

What about the chaos that will ensue on earth? We’ll look at that too.

The truth of the Rapture is taught throughout Scripture, but three passages rise above the rest like peaks in the Pyrenees: John 14, 1 Corinthians 15, and 1 Thessalonians 4. We’ll study each one in depth.

You might be surprised to learn that some people have already been raptured! *What?* It’s true, and I’ll introduce them to you.

We’ll also deal with very practical questions, such as these: Will children be raptured? What will happen to our bodies at the moment of resurrection? What will our glorified bodies be like? Will we know each other after the resurrection? And what will happen in the days and years immediately after we’re raptured? What will happen to us? Will those left behind still have an opportunity to receive Christ as their Savior?

We’ll deal with all that and more.

There is one thing you’ll *not* find in this book—the day and hour of Christ’s return. None of us knows that, and the Bible warns about trying to predict it. We know it’s not yesterday, but we don’t know if the Rapture could come ten years from now, tomorrow—or today.

But when it *does* come, everyone will know. It will be the Great Disappearance—the moment when billions of people suddenly vanish from the face of the earth, along with billions of dead bodies

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returning to life and ascending to meet the Lord in the air. Imagine the thrill for those who go and the terror for those who stay!

In this book, we're dealing with scriptural truth—truth to steady you, encourage you, motivate you, purify you, and give you cheerful hope on dreary days. This is something to think about upon rising in the morning and retiring at night. This isn't just the light at the end of the tunnel; it's the light that heralds eternity, heaven, and the fulfillment of all God has promised His children.

This is the truth spoken by the Savior who said, "I will come again and receive you to Myself" (John 14:3).

It's the truth Paul proclaimed when he said the Rapture would happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (1 Cor. 15:52).

This is the truth expressed in these infallible, unforgettable words: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16–17).

My prayer for you as you read this book is that you'll become so thrilled with this topic you'll keep it at the forefront of your mind. We must teach these things to our children and grandchildren, share them with others, proclaim them in our pulpits, and preach them from the housetops.

Join me in the following thirty-one chapters to become rapture ready, eager, excited, and filled with a joy that will make others ask you about it when they see the hope that's within you.

May the Lord bless you as you eagerly await His impending appearance in the skies. And as we wait, may we comfort one another with these words.

CHAPTER 1

CHAOS ON EARTH

Imagine a Moment coming soon to our planet that will change everything and everyone forever. Imagine ambivalent, unaware people conducting their business, scurrying around, trying to make sense of their lives. Depending on where you look on our globe, the scene may be very different, yet in many ways it's the same.

In the United States, in China, in Argentina, in Indonesia, in Kazakhstan.

People loving, laboring, longing.

All over the world that day, billions will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, celebrating birthdays, battling sickness, digging graves. People will be getting up or going to bed, working or playing, enjoying their pleasures or indulging their vices.

I try to imagine these things happening all over the world, from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets. What will people think when the Moment comes?

I wonder what the headlines will be on the morning of that day. Wars and rumors of war. Earthquakes. Famines. Loud voices deceiving many. New laws. Old lies. New dilemmas. Nation rising against

nation, kingdom against kingdom. Parts of the world may report an earthquake, a famine, or a plague.

Will the news be written by artificial intelligence? Will people be able to tell truth from fiction?

I wonder what the weather will be that day. Sunny in one place, cloudy in another? Something is about to happen in the skies—if only people would look up in expectation! In the unseen realms, the glory of the Lord is gathering, the angels are assembling, and the skies are preparing to part. But most people will be looking down at their phones, addicted to the newest messages or oldest sins.

I wonder what Christians will be doing that day. Will they be as surprised as everyone else when the Rapture occurs? Will they be eager, ready, and waiting?

Can't you see the masses moving about as usual? Millions of people walking around all day on the streets of New York, Tokyo, Mumbai, worried about their money, wondering about their relationships, anxious about their images, following the world stock markets, the latest music, the latest sports scores.

It will be an ordinary day on this globe—until, suddenly, it isn't.

One day soon, the world will face the Great Disappearance!

Billions of people. Gone in a flash more powerful than an atomic burst, yet silent. Invisible! Sudden! Inexplicable!

Try to imagine this extraordinary Moment on planet Earth. Every single follower of Jesus Christ, as well as all those under the age of accountability—all the babies, young children, and mentally disabled—gone in a flash, along with all those who have died in Christ.

Bodies will disappear from their coffins at funeral homes all over the world. Patients will vanish from hospital beds. Babies from their cribs. Children from their classrooms.

Imagine cars flying down the freeway with missing drivers, planes with missing pilots, nuclear submarines with missing commanders, nations with missing leaders, parents with missing children.

In various parts of the world, Christian congregations will be

meeting for worship. Suddenly the buildings will be empty—or nearly so—as the churches resume their services in the sky! Soldiers will be missing in action. Emergency responders will find their numbers depleted. Prisons will be partially depopulated, especially those filled with Christians under persecution.

News reports will spread like wildfire, but the Christian press will be strangely silent. There'll be no believers to report the news.

People will frantically search for their loved ones, but phone calls will go to voicemail and texts will be unanswered.

In today's world, just one missing-person case can grip the nation. What about a billion? What will people think? What panic will they feel? What theories will they embrace?

The FBI has been tracking missing-person cases for years. The bureau has a website devoted to it with picture after picture of those whose whereabouts are unknown. These people seemingly just vanished. Many times foul play is involved. In virtually every case families are torn apart with grief, community life is disrupted, and law enforcement is focused on solving the mystery.

The oldest active missing-person case in America involves Marvin Clark, who vanished October 30, 1926, while on his way to visit his daughter in Portland, Oregon. He traveled by bus. He boarded the bus in Tigard, Oregon, but failed to get off at his destination. He simply disappeared. He was in his early seventies at the time, and his case is still open. Authorities are still looking for his remains—if there are any.¹

One of the strangest missing-person cases in Canada involved thirty-two-year-old Granger Taylor of British Columbia. On November 29, 1980, he left a note to his parents saying: "Dear Mother and Father, I have gone away to walk aboard an alien spaceship, as reoccurring dreams assured a 42 month interstellar voyage to explore the vast universe, then return. I am leaving behind all my possessions to you as I will no longer . . . require the use of any."²

No one has seen Granger since.

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For the record, I don't believe he was abducted by aliens, but I can see how the world will be gripped by a thousand conspiracy theories in the aftermath of the coming Rapture. Global panic will help prepare the way for a one-world government, the emergence of an ironfisted ruler, and the onset of the Tribulation.

It will be utter chaos on an unimaginable scale for those left behind.

For most of my life I've been thinking about this very day: the predicted Moment when Jesus will reenter earth's atmosphere for His church. The reason I'm asking you to imagine it is because I've been doing the same for decades. It's hard to get your head around the pandemonium that will engulf our planet when Jesus fulfills His promise to come for His people.

I think it helps us to visualize that day as best we can.

After I graduated from seminary, I became the youth director of a large New Jersey church. It takes special skill to work with teenagers, and I don't mind telling you I was nervous about relating to them and them to me.

It didn't help when the senior pastor told me that my first contact with the group would be at a summer conference where I was to teach them a weeklong study on Bible prophecy. I've never had a more challenging assignment!

Thankfully, someone had given me a copy of a fictitious newspaper designed to show the events and headlines on the day of the Rapture. The headlines said:

**MILLIONS OF PEOPLE DISAPPEAR! AIRPLANES CRASH!
CHILDREN VANISH! PANIC IN THE STREETS!**

On the first night of the conference, I asked a few kids to play the historic role of newsboys and go throughout the group, hollering "Extra! Extra! Read all about it!" Soon, the teenagers were devouring the paper.

CHAOS ON EARTH

The lead article began: “At 12:05 this morning a telephone operator reported three frantic calls regarding missing relatives. Within fifteen minutes all communications were jammed with similar inquiries. A spot check from around the nation found the same situation in every city. Sobbing husbands sought information about the mysterious disappearance of their wives. One husband reported, ‘I turned the light on to ask my wife if she remembered to set the clock, but she was gone. Her bedclothes were there. Her watch was on the floor, but she vanished.’”

Another headline read:

THRONGS IN THE NATION DIE OF HEART ATTACKS

I can tell you those teenagers didn’t just sit idly through my talks about prophecy. They wanted to know the details!

This wasn’t hypothetical, I told them, but prophetic. The same Bible that describes our Lord Jesus ascending into the sky and disappearing into the clouds also tells us of His imminent, impending return for His people. For reasons I’ll explain in this book, we call it the Rapture. It’s the resurrection of those who are dead in Christ, immediately followed by the “snatching up” of the final generation of Christians on earth.

Dr. Tim LaHaye pondered this approaching day at length. He said that at the Moment of the Rapture “a million conversations will end midsentence. A million phones will suddenly go dead. A woman will reach for her husband’s hand in the dark, and no one will be there. A man will turn with a laugh to slap a colleague on the back and his hand will move through empty air. A basketball player will make a length-of-floor pass to a teammate streaking downcourt and find there is no one there to receive it.”³

This isn’t science fiction, conspiracy theory, or mindless speculation. When Christ comes for His people, it will be in the twinkling of an eye. The trumpet will sound, the Lord will shout with the voice of

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authority, the dead will rise, and we who are alive will be caught up in the air to meet the Lord in the sky.

Between the resurrected and the raptured, billions of people will exit this planet in an instant. But billions more will be left behind. It will be chaos on our globe but incredible, glorious joy in the skies.

This is the Rapture—the Great Disappearance. I've been studying this in Scripture all my adult life, and now I want to write about it as fully as I can. It's vital to know what the Bible says about this coming day, the next event on God's prophetic agenda for the earth.

I think you'll be fascinated, motivated, and highly encouraged as you study the pages to come. Most of all I hope you'll be well prepared for that day.

It's one thing to try to imagine that day and another to see what the Bible truly says about its who, why, when, where, and how. I believe the Scriptures are clear on this subject, and I want to show you the pertinent passages in God's Word that discuss it. That's because we're not just to imagine it but to anticipate it with all our hearts and look forward to it with all our souls.

Don't put this book down yet. Just turn the page, and let's get started. After all, time is short. I can't wait for you to see what's just ahead. The Moment can come at any moment.

Even now!

CHAPTER 2

A GREAT DAY

In all of his mansions, there's not a room big enough for all his awards. Sir Paul McCartney may go down in history as the greatest musician of all time—a founding member of the Beatles and a man who became, as the *Guinness Book of World Records* puts it, the planet's "most successful musician and composer in popular music history."¹

His fans know it's been a rough ride. Some of McCartney's hardest days were after the Beatles broke up. McCartney tumbled into a dark place. He stayed in his Scottish home smoking pot and getting drunk. He lost hope. After all, how do you follow the Beatles? Is there life after that kind of ride?

McCartney's turnaround started when the chords of a song came to him, one he'd worked on from time to time. The music made him feel optimistic, and he crafted it into a song for his children. He didn't record it until years later, but for him it was a personal song of hope.

He called the song "Great Day". The lyrics talked about a future day that was coming. And it was going to be a "Great Day"! And it wouldn't be long in coming, so it was something to look forward to . . . something to celebrate.

McCartney explained, “I liked the idea of a song saying that help is coming and there’s a bright light on the horizon. I’ve got absolutely no evidence for this, but I like to believe it. It helps to lift my spirits.”²

Paul McCartney doesn’t realize how close he is to the truth. There is a Great Day coming—and it won’t be long. There’s a bright light on the horizon, and we have plenty of evidence for it. We have biblical evidence, and, boy, does it lift our spirits!

Jesus Christ is coming back for us—and soon!

If only McCartney realized that. If only the whole world—this world filled with hopelessness and despair—realized this truth of Scripture: “The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly” (Zeph. 1:14).

The apostle Paul talked excitedly about the heavenly crown awaiting him, “which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that great day of his return. And not just to me but to all those whose lives show that they are eagerly looking forward to his coming back again” (2 Tim. 4:8 TLB).

This is a book about a Great Day that’s coming—the day of the Rapture. The exact date is already circled on God’s calendar. We aren’t privy to those records, but the year, month, day, hour, minute, and second are locked into God’s program for our planet.

The Rapture is an event in the impending future when all of us, living or deceased, who have put our trust in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life will be suddenly caught up from this earth into the heavens. We’ll be reunited with loved ones who have preceded us in death. We’ll be met by the Lord Himself, who will usher us into heaven to live forever in perfect fellowship with God.

John Walvoord considered the Rapture a central event in biblical prophecy, writing, “The Rapture of the church is one of the most important practical prophecies in Scripture for believers today. It is an essential part of the many other prophecies in Scriptures. Though the Rapture is only a small fraction of the large body of prophetic Scripture, it stands out as one of the most important.”³

A GREAT DAY

Why is this day so great?

I'll deal with that question throughout this book, but let me give you some previews.

IT'S A GREAT DAY OF HOPE

The Bible uses the word *hope* repeatedly to describe the feelings we should currently have because of this imminent event. Peter called it a “living hope” (1 Pet. 1:3), and he said we could rest fully on that hope as we await the coming of Jesus (v. 13). The writer of the book of Hebrews called it “the hope set before us” (6:18) and “an anchor of the soul” (v. 19). The apostle Paul called it “the blessed hope” (Titus 2:13); he said this hope will never disappoint us (Rom. 5:5).

When the Bible uses the word *hope* in this sense, it doesn't simply mean a desire that may or may not occur. It means the “eager expectation” for something that will certainly happen, that is impending and swiftly coming.

Biblical hope is the excitement we feel today about what Jesus will do tomorrow.

In other words, when we grasp the reality of the approaching Rapture, it brings today's events into a happy perspective. There is an end to evil. There is an expiration date on suffering. There's coming a Great Day when we'll realize the sufferings of this present world aren't worth comparing to the glory that's about to be revealed (Rom. 8:18).

The energy that surges through us as we ponder this reality—well, that's what the Bible calls *hope*.

IT'S A GREAT DAY OF HOMECOMING

The Rapture will also be a day of homecoming when we'll be reunited with the entire family of Jesus Christ and we'll meet those

who have gone before. In his primary passage about the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul made a point to emphasize this aspect of the Great Day so that bereaved Christians will not “sorrow as others who have no hope” (v. 13).

Mark Hitchcock wrote, “The truth of the Rapture is a source of supernatural comfort and hope to all of God’s people when a believing loved one or friend goes home to be with the Lord. These words [in 1 Thessalonians 4] have certainly been read at thousands of funerals throughout the centuries.”²⁴

Seeing that statement gave me a jolt! I’ve often read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 at funerals and graveside services, but I’d never thought another pastor was doing the same 100 years ago, and 1,000 years ago, and 1,500 years ago, and 1,900 years ago. All of us standing by open graves, reading the same passage, literally from the days of Paul till now. And undoubtedly on this very day around the world, godly pastors are reading this text at the homegoing of faithful Christians!

Perhaps no words have ever given more hope to more people in more places during moments of raw grief.

IT’S A GREAT DAY OF HEALING

As we’ll see, the moment of the Rapture is going to be the greatest healing event in human history. Talk about a healing service! During His ministry on earth, Jesus healed quite a few people; but on this day He is going to heal all His believers instantly and totally and eternally, whether they are still alive or have passed away, of any and all ailments of body, mind, or soul.

Imagine a dreaded case like cancer. (Many of us don’t have to imagine; we’ve experienced it.) We’re at the hospital receiving doses of medication that seem, at the moment, to make us ever sicker. Suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, we’re totally healed. Old age will be reversed, and physical deformities will be

corrected—all in an instant. The total healing of every follower of Christ, immediately.

The dead will be raised imperishable, and all of us who remain will be caught up to heaven with new, glorified bodies. I can't wait to get to the chapter that deals with that promise in detail.

IT'S A GREAT DAY OF HAPPINESS

The very word *rapture* has become a term describing unbridled happiness. People talk about a rapturous event, and this will be the ultimate one. In fact, thinking about the Rapture brings me happiness right now, which is why I'm writing this book—to share the same wonderful information with you.

But our happiness now can't compare to the rapture of the actual Rapture!

And think of this: it's not just a happiness for you and me. Imagine how elated the resurrected saints will feel, how delighted the angels will be, and think of the joy that will flood over the face of our Lord Jesus as He gathers His children home.

Psychologists often talk about “mental triggers.” Sometimes these are negative. A certain sound, smell, or memory can trigger a negative emotion, such as for those suffering post-traumatic issues. But there are positive triggers also. A favorite Scripture framed on the wall. A midmorning pause to breathe deeply. A slogan to get the day started. An uplifting hymn.

During the course of this book, I'm going to quote many, many verses of the Bible. Some will be from three major passages in John 14, 1 Corinthians 15, and 1 Thessalonians 4. But there will be many others—too many for me to count right now. I encourage you to select one or more of those verses. Be looking for them. When we get to a verse that especially speaks to you and brings you a ray of cheer, underline or highlight it. Then pick two or three of your favorite ones,

memorize them, turn them into little songs, post them where you can see them daily, share them, and let them serve as positive mental triggers for the rest of your life.

The Rapture brings us happiness as we ponder it now, followed by unspeakable joy when it occurs.

IT'S A GREAT DAY OF HOLINESS

The Great Rapture Day will also be characterized by total and all-encompassing holiness. When we're caught up into the sky, we'll leave behind all our faults and failures, our shame and embarrassment, our weaknesses and woes. We'll be transformed not just physically but spiritually. Made holy in every way!

When we receive Christ as Savior, we're declared holy in God's sight. But our condition doesn't always match our position. Every day we're striving to live up to the supreme example of Christ. But on that future day we'll become holy in every thought, word, deed, and attitude.

The apostle Paul said, "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6 NIV).

Galatians 5:5 says, "But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us" (NLT). I don't know about you, but I'm ready to get beyond the reach of the devil and his temptations.

So there's a bright light on the horizon, and we have plenty of evidence. It's going to be the greatest of all great days—the best day of your life. A Great Day of hope, homecoming, healing, happiness, and holiness. It's going to be a Great Day with Him who is preparing at this very moment to return in the skies *above* us and *for* us.

For the first time ever, the whole family of Christ will be together. No one will be left behind. If you don't think that's important, ask Van Ho.

A GREAT DAY

One day during the Vietnam War, this little Vietnamese girl woke up as usual when the rooster crowed at five. But something was wrong. Her mother, sisters, and brother were gone. She went around the house, but her family had vanished. During the night, they had escaped from the invading Communists. Van Ho was too young for the rigorous trip, and her grandmother was too old, so they were left behind together to care for each other temporarily. When the rest of the family made it to America, they began desperately trying to find a way for the two who were left behind to join them.

In time, Van Ho was reunited with her family in Canada, and her first day there was unbelievable. For the first time, she saw modern conveniences like a bathroom with running water, a television with moving pictures, and cold milk from the refrigerator.

She later wrote, "I was still scared about leaving everything behind that was familiar. I was not sure about Canadian food or the snow. It bothered me that I couldn't understand everything my family talked about. . . . But I didn't care. For the first time since I was three years old, my whole family was together again. Nobody was left behind."⁵

That's what Jesus and Paul want us to know. For those of us who are followers of Christ, the Lord has gone ahead of us, but we're not forgotten. The whole family of God will be together again on that great and coming day.

None of His children will be left behind.

Certainly not you!