

Tribulation Central

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed...2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

Tim LaHaye's Temperament

by Dave MacPherson

<http://tribulationcentral.com/pdf/guest/mc-lahaye.pdf>

A couple decades ago I learned how serious Tim LaHaye had become when it came to my pretrib history research----and it wasn't very becoming.

On January 5, 1981 he had sent a letter from the Scott Memorial Baptist Church he then pastored in the San Diego area to an evangelical publisher in another state. In the letter, which later came into my hands, LaHaye bluntly discussed yours truly and told the recipient: "Praise God you're going to answer this turkey-- --if I didn't already have 89 irons in the fire I'd take it on----some one should!"

Back in those days LaHaye was well-known for his bestselling *Spirit-Controlled Temperament* book (temperaments that fundamentalist and evangelical critics have traced to the world of the occult!). Unfortunately that book didn't reveal the type of temperament LaHaye could possess (a LaHaodicean one?) in order to call me a "turkey." Maybe his pretrib "feathers" had been ruffled by the many evangelical leaders who'd "gobbled" up my research and then praised it during the previous decade:

In his 1974 book *When Is Jesus Coming Again*, J. Barton Payne reflected it when he wrote that "the dispensational position...began only in 1830 with J. N. Darby's acceptance of Margaret Macdonald's revelation in Port Glasgow of a dispensationally divided return."

During the same year *Christianity Today* called it a "staunch defense" and *Moody Monthly* (while Jerry Jenkins was a top name there) referred to my "careful, factual sleuthing."

In Canada *The Prairie Overcomer* at Prairie Bible Institute concluded that "MacPherson's case seems to be watertight" while *The Witness* (the oldest and largest Darbyist Brethren magazine in England!) declared: "What he [MacPherson] succeeds in establishing is that the view outlined was first stated by a certain Margaret Macdonald...early in 1830." (Who knows the British, and the British ways of speaking, better than the British do?)

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Some other comments during that period came from Harold Ockenga's letter ("You have done your research well"), Ian S. Rennie's *Dreams, Visions and Oracles* ("it is likely that [Margaret's revelation] was grist for Darby's mill"), and J. Gordon Melton in the *Encyclopedia of American Religions* ("The best scholarship available [views Margaret as the pretrib originator]").

With reactions like these coming from a noticeable percentage of the evangelical literati, you can see why Tim was dispensationally distraught over the possibility that comments from *thinking* evangelicals might have a dire effect on his ability to keep on making pretrib (la)hay while the sun was shining!

But now let's fast forward until we reach the year 1992 and the arrival of LaHaye's *No Fear of the Storm*---a book that's had no fear of being exposed as one of the most shabby, slipshod, slovenly (and, yes, even *dishonest*) prophecy books ever!

While flipping LaHaye's pages in order to spot his comments on the pretrib origin (the way my book *The Rapture Plot* describes it), I quickly found one sentence on page 180 that has *four* historical errors.

In it he asserts that 19th century (Plymouth) Brethren scholar S. P. Tregelles claimed in two of his *books*, spaced 11 years apart, that fellow Brethren member J. N. Darby derived pretrib from the *Jews* and *Margaret Macdonald*. Since Margaret wasn't Jewish, LaHaye sees Tregelles naming two different sources and contradicting himself.

If you've been totally immersed in pretrib rapture origin research since 1970 (as I have), you'll soon find (as I did) these four errors:

1. The two Tregelles works were not two books but an article (1855) and a book (1864).
2. They were nine years apart.
3. The article spoke only of "Judaisers" within Christianity. (This was the first time I'd ever found anyone claiming that the *Jews* had been blamed for originating pretrib!)
4. The book referred to "an 'utterance' in Mr. Irving's Church." (Margaret never even visited Edward Irving's church!)

LaHaye obviously had been influenced by other writers, including R. A. Huebner and John Walvoord, who had previously aired the supposed Tregelles contradiction. (Elsewhere in the present book I show that Tregelles did not contradict himself.)

After being flabbergasted by this blunder-packed sentence, I decided to check the accuracy of LaHaye's reproduction of Margaret Macdonald's key 1830

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revelation. With all 117 lines of her revelation in front of me (as found in my books including *The Incredible*

Cover-up and *The Great Rapture Hoax*), I began comparing LaHaye's version with it. Everything matched perfectly during the first few lines.

But when I got to lines 10-11, LaHaye's copy spoke of Margaret's "great burst." Was this a reference to the "inbreaking of God...about to burst on this earth" (lines 42-43)? Or perhaps her vision of the final collapse of the pretrib view? Well, neither. Between the words "great" and "burst" LaHaye had omitted "darkness and error about it; but suddenly what it was." This omission can keep his readers in the dark concerning her cultic pride in thinking that only *she* could really explain "the sign of the Son of man" (Matt. 24:30)!

In addition to a variety of other copying errors, LaHaye also omitted eight words in lines 16-17, a word in line 51, another word in line 58, 11 words in lines 74-75, nine words in lines 76-77, and eight words in lines 111-112---sins of "omission" that can easily result in faulty analyses of Macdonald's prophetic words! (I wrote LaHaye in regard to his many copying errors. He never responded.)

LaHaye's version of Margaret's words is actually found in Robert Norton's *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port-Glasgow* (1840). But somehow he had prefaced it as being part of Norton's *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church* (1861). All I had to do was find someone who had carelessly combined the 1840 text with the 1861 title.

Within minutes, while going through my files, I ran across a 1989 publication that had the same combination. And it had the same copying errors---including the same 48 omitted words---in the same places! The author was Thomas Ice!

(When LaHaye decided to plagiarize Ice's reproduction of Margaret's revelation instead of doing his own research, he didn't realize that Ice's sloppiness would trip up himself as well as Ice. But of course they are still friends and partners---especially in connection with the Pre-Trib Research Center---because they are sloppy and dishonest birds of a feather! Incidentally, Ice never responded after my letter to him asked about his many copying errors.)

In addition to LaHaye's "bumped" words, I tallied 84 other errors he makes when quoting various writers on 27 other pages discussing pretrib beginnings. LaHaye omits 11 words when quoting Walvoord's *The Rapture Question: Revised*. Walvoord, echoing Huebner, was asserting that my evidence has not proven that Margaret and Irving taught the pretrib view. But readers are kept in the dark about the assertion in the book in question because LaHaye somehow deletes what Walvoord was concluding!

On page 169 LaHaye says that at the Library of Congress he obtained photocopies of Manuel Lacunza's work, the title of which is *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*. Perhaps he can explain why on two pages this title appears as *The Coming of Messiah in Power and Glory* and is listed on a

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later page as *The Coming of Christ in Power and Great Glory*. Equally serious are his book's other copying errors including erroneous sources and page numbering in footnotes as well as inaccurate historical dates in the text.

Something else. If I fail to rectify some notions that LaHaye has repeated, others in the 20th century tradition of copying (and miscopying) may very well repeat and even embellish them.

LaHaye gives the impression that my father, Norman, changed from pretrib to posttrib *during* his Southern California pastorate from which he was ousted, and that Biola's position on the rapture was the *only* one ever held by that Los Angeles school. LaHaye even has a chapter about me entitled "MacPherson's Vendetta" and assumes that personal revenge on my part is the reason for my decades-long research on pretrib beginnings.

For the record here are my responses:

1. My father changed from pretrib to posttrib before his 1944 book *Triumph Through Tribulation*. Through meetings in my parents' living room, the church in question was formed in 1947. Folks knew about his previous change, but he was always a calm and scholarly preacher, almost never brought up posttrib, and never made any rapture view a test of fellowship. Later on, some pretrib outsiders joined, evidently intent on making the church a pretrib church.

I still have the handwritten notes that my mother took at the May 16, 1951 ouster meeting. One of the voiced criticisms of my father that she recorded: "He has no right to interpret prophecy contrary to Scofield." (This critic obviously was influenced only by Scripture and not by human agency in the same way Darby was!)

2. The doctrinal statement in Biola's catalog says merely that the "Lord Jesus is coming again to this earth, personally, bodily, and visibly." The school's founders chose such a broad statement because they wanted persons to have freedom to hold and discuss what were then viewed as non-essentials: for example, differing tribulational and millennial views.

Nowadays the Biola catalog includes this explanatory note (following the doctrinal statement): "The Scriptures are to be interpreted according to dispensational distinctives with the conviction that the return of the Lord for His Church will be premillennial, before the Tribulation, and that the Millennium is to be the last of the dispensations."

When I applied in 1952 for admission to the original Bible Institute of Los Angeles campus in downtown L. A., I was given the original doctrinal statement which allows for non-conflicting non-essentials.

Since my father had been a schoolmate of Biola's president at Princeton Seminary (hardly a pretrib school), I saw no harm in occasionally sharing copies of my father's 1944 book with some student friends and some of my teachers. If

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the school had told me to stop this, I would have. If I had been a threat all year to Biola's "official" position, why did it wait until just *two weeks* before the end of the school year to kick me out?

Throughout this century pretrib has changed from being a non-essential to being an expedient essential at Biola and many similar schools, primarily because of its tremendous fund-raising potential.

3. LaHaye concludes wrongfully that my pretrib origin research of a quarter of a century is nothing more than my vengeful reaction to what happened to my family in the 1950's.

If so, it must be one of the slowest reactions ever. I didn't even wonder about the origin until *two decades after* the California incidents. Long before my research began, numerous tragedies including untimely death had overtaken the ringleaders in the church trouble. During the years between the early 1950's and the early 1970's (when my research began), I was never bitter towards anyone at either the church or Biola----and haven't been down to the present day.

In the same *No Fear* book of his, LaHaye has an entire chapter discussing my books. The fair and honest thing, when citing books, is to list the books in footnotes or at least in a bibliography----unless a writer has something to hide. The reason LaHaye doesn't list any of my works in this manner is that he is neither fair nor honest!

As if all of the above isn't enough, there's even *plagiarism* in some of LaHaye's books! I'll give an example by comparing Hal Lindsey's *There's A New World Coming* (1973) with LaHaye's *Understanding the Last Days* (1998).

On p. 281 Lindsey wrote: "The New Testament refers to the 'Book of Life' eight times, and although the Old Testament doesn't call it by that name, it refers three times to a book in which names are written. This book contains the name of every person born into the world. If by the time he dies, a person has not received God's provision of sacrifice to remove sin, then his name is blotted out of this 'Book of Life.'"

On pp. 192, 194 LaHaye wrote: "The New Testament refers to the book of life eight different times, and although the Old Testament does not call it by that name, it does allude three times to a book in which names are written...The book of life is that book in which the names of all people ever born into the world are written. If, at the time of a person's death, he has not called upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, his name is blotted out of the book of life."

After I told LaHaye in a letter that I had found plagiarism in his books, he sent me the one and only letter I've ever gotten from him, dated March 3, 1999. His first two sentences said: "You are the first person who (to my knowledge) has ever accused me of plagiarizing anything from anyone. And with forty books in print I would think someone would have *if it were true.*" I immediately sent him evidence

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that he had plagiarized various books by Walvoord and Lindsey. To this day he has never responded in connection with the proof that I sent to him!

My book *The Rapture Plot* has an appendix exhibiting plagiarism, by means of comparison quotes, in popular pretrib prophecy books. Not only is Tim LaHaye's plagiarism portrayed, but there's proof also of the same literary thievery in writings by Jerry Falwell, Ed Hindson, Ed Dobson, Charles Ryrie, Paul Tan, and Jack Van Impe, for starters!

If students at Christian Heritage College (LaHaye's former stomping ground) or Falwell's Liberty University were to plagiarize their neighbors' answers during an exam, they'd be in danger of getting an "F" for the exam and maybe for the entire course.

But when pretrib leaders cut corners and cheat in print, which of course allows them to turn out rapture rush jobs much more quickly, they are awarded honorary (if not honorable) degrees----like the Doctor of Literature degree that Falwell's school gave to LaHaye!

LaHaye gives the impression these days that his huge book sales are proof that he's being blessed by the Lord. Well, if financial success is the most important standard (and it seems to be in the eyes of many pretrib authors and publishers), then the Lord must also be blessing the Mafia and Columbian drug lords and even Osama Bin Ladin!

But when does success become greed? LaHaye is currently suing *fellow Christians* over the *Left Behind* film rights! His lawsuit even states that he has suffered "emotional and mental stress, including anxiety, worry, mental anguish and sleeplessness"----characteristics, as you can tell, of Spirit-controlled temperament!

Jeremiah 17:11 is a verse that LaHaye has somehow left behind. It says that "he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

Finally, here's the big question:

In light of recently uncovered evidence revealing the long-covered-up, sordid history of the pretrib rapture view, and in light of the fact that God's judgment of careless and apostate Christendom is rapidly increasing these days, will Tim LaHaye temper his outlook and change his temperament or will he lose his temper, let his temperature rise, and become temperamental?