

But alas, October 22, 1844 came and went, and with it went all the hopes of the Millerites! One of the convinced believers, writing in the aftermath of this event, expressed the general disillusionment of both leaders and followers eloquently in the following words:

Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawn. I mused in my own heart, saying, My advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my Christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my Christian experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God, no heaven, no golden home city, no paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hope and expectation of these things? And thus we had something to grieve and weep over, if all our fond hopes were lost.

The failure of Christ to come on October 22, 1844 brought about the collapse of Millerism. Miller's followers gave up their beliefs, and the movement quickly disintegrated in dissension, controversy, and discord. By the late spring of 1845 it had virtually disappeared.

The second illustration comes from a tract by Keith Green entitled "Will You Be Bored In Heaven?" Green writes:

I think that one of the saddest stories I've ever heard, was how the believers in China fared when the communists took over their country in 1949. The evangelical churches had been teaching that the Church would definitely be raptured before any "great tribulation" or suffering would befall the faithful. It had become such a central doctrine that all worry (and preparation) were abandoned, and praise for their absolute safety from harm and persecution was offered at every meeting. Then the communist government took over and a vicious attack was made upon the church, including confiscation of property, beatings, imprisonment, and even the taking of children from parents. The unprepared church was caught so off-guard, that millions fell away and denied Christ thinking they had been abandoned by a God who did not keep His promise. Ah, but that's Just it! God has promised tribulation! God has promised persecution! "In the world ye shall have tribulation . . . he who desires to save his life shall lose it . . . all who desire to live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution." (John 16:33, Matt. 16:25, II Tim. 3:12). But these promises from God (no less precious than His others), were neglected in the teachings of the Chinese church . . . just as they are being neglected today in the West. How sad to think that so many have become mesmerized into believing that no physical harm or suffering can befall them because they believe in Jesus. But Jesus said, Do not fear those who kill the body!" (Matt. 10:28).

I'm not saying there won't be a rapture. I'm just not too sure about the timing. Yes, I believe that God could deliver all true believers from the great tribulation, but since He hasn't always gotten even the faithful Christians off the hook from suffering (in