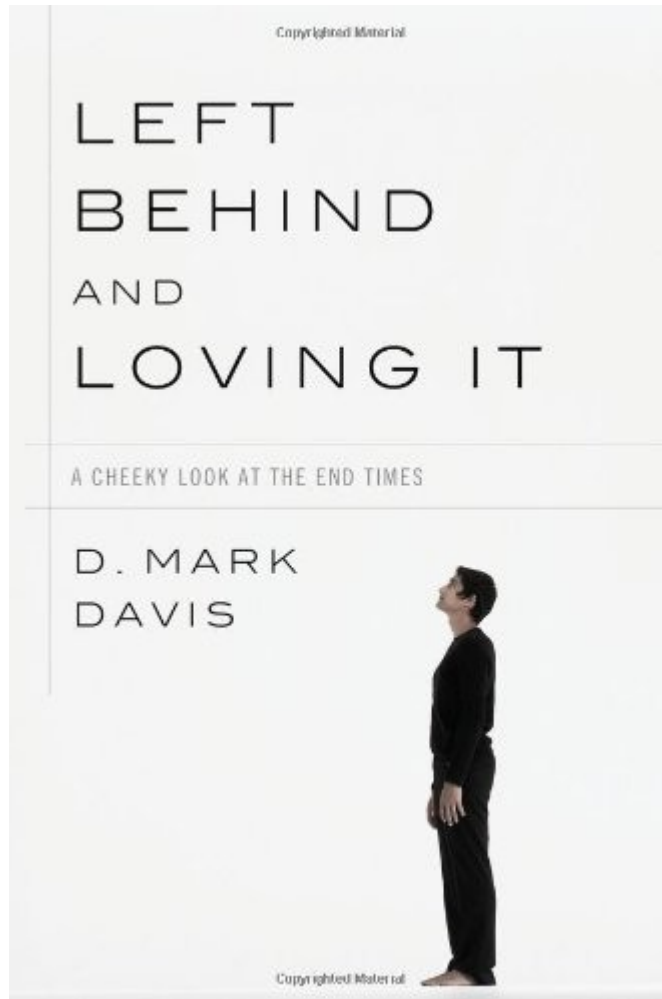


Rapture humor

By [Amy Frykholm](#)

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In Review



Left Behind and Loving It

by D. Mark Davis

Cascade

Several years ago, I was interviewed by Linda Wertheimer of National Public Radio about the then extraordinarily popular Left Behind series. At one point, she asked me if I thought the Left Behind books were funny. I paused, trying to absorb all the layers of her question, and then came up with a brilliant answer: "No. Why? Do you?"

I've always wondered if I just lack the right sense of humor. Was I supposed to find the books funny? Was I just not getting the joke? It was a relief, then, this week to pick up Presbyterian pastor Mark Davis's book *Left Behind and Loving It*. It is funny.

I cannot say that I see an urgent need for this book at this particular moment. Surely Harold Camping, Timothy LaHaye and company have been so thoroughly discredited in the minds of *Century* readers that they will not need this book for theological purposes. I myself have read way too many debunkings of rapture theology, both earnest and sarcastic, to find another one interesting.

But I sat with Davis's book in my office and laughed out loud. Repeatedly. For people interested in the weird intersection of the Bible and American culture, this book does the trick of making you see better because you laugh more.

Davis begins with a description of a rapture tract that appears on his desk. It goes through the usual gyrations about terrorism, Israel, the Beast and even "Asian Tigers." Then at the end, in the fine print, a little note says, "The views expressed here...are not intended to represent, favorably or unfavorably, any persons, person, national or ethnic group." Davis rightfully sees a strange sort of identity crisis afoot, a "passive-aggressive prophesying."

He goes on to offer very deft and humorous biblical and theological readings of "Left Behind Theology" that speak to the anxiety at work in prophecy culture. Considering that I've had three messages in my inbox this week related to the ongoing drama of prophesy--two from people claiming to be the Antichrist and one from someone claiming to know who the Antichrist

is--I think Davis's timing, comedic and otherwise, might be right on. Maybe it can be preventative medicine for the next all-too-predictable rapture crisis.