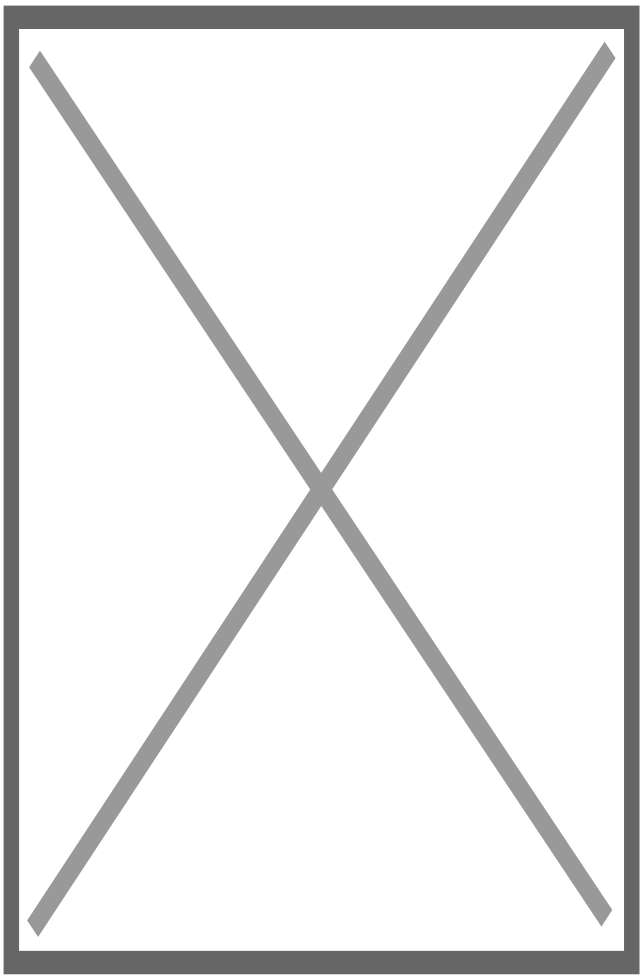
Alternative realities

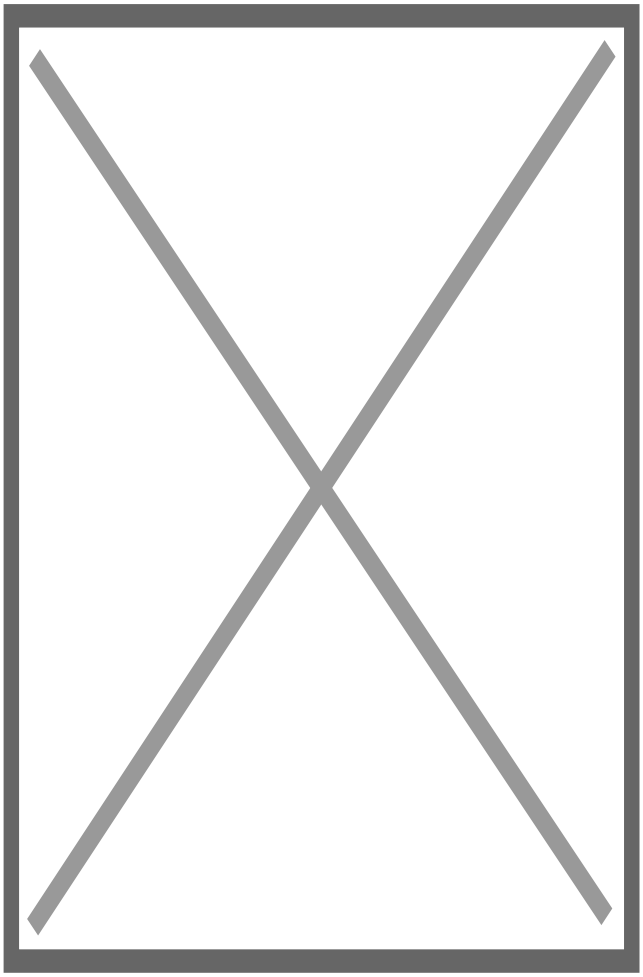
by Kat Banakis in the May 11, 2016 issue

In Review



The Rapture Exposed

Barbara Rossing
Basic Books



Between the World and Me

By Ta-Nehisi Coates
Spiegel & Grau

The Century *invited people to comment on their favorite book of the Bible and a book that has helped them appreciate or understand the biblical text. All of the responses are linked here.*

John of Patmos presents readers of Revelation with fantastical visions of what life could be, just as Dickens does to Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. Barbara Rossing's *The Rapture Exposed* reminds me to read Revelation as an apocalypse story—a tale in which readers are taken into an alternative reality and come away with a new understanding of their world and their opportunity to change it.

Revelation echoed in my mind as I read Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*, a memoir of a black man in America. In his reality, an alternative America to mine, his body is constantly in danger: "I came to see the streets and the schools as arms of the same beast . . . fear and violence were the weaponry of both. Fail in the streets and the crews would catch you slipping and take your body. Fail in the schools and you would be suspended and sent back to those same streets, where they would take your body."

I emerged from his testimony breathless and convicted of the race work that I must do, for "the home of God is among the mortals" (Rev. 21:3). Coates's words call me to act for racial justice in this time and place as a Christian and reader of Revelation.