

—POSITIVE PROOF—
of the PRE-TRIBULATIONAL
RAPTURE of the CHURCH

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(All Scripture quotes from the NKJV)
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It is common today for people to be in frustration over the subject of the Rapture of the Church. The most basic question in their minds is—“when will it happen in relationship to the prophesied time of great tribulation coming upon the world?”

I remember many years ago a Christian friend of mine had come to a place of turmoil in his thinking over the question of the time of the Rapture. He was beginning to entertain what is called the Post-tribulational view of the Rapture. This would mean that the Church would go through the future “Great Tribulation” time period spoken of by Christ in passages like Matthew 24:21, and be “caught up” at Christ’s second coming to reign on earth. This brother knew that at one time (in the 1950s) I had held to that very position. Later, however, some faithful brethren helped me and I was firmly persuaded that I had been wrong on the subject. I came to hold the view which is called the Pre-tribulational Rapture of the Church. This meant that the Church would be “caught up” to meet Christ at an earlier coming which was exclusively for taking the Church out of this world. So this brother came to me to find out more carefully why I had changed my position. I was pointedly asked by this Christian brother “Can you really prove from the Bible the Pre-tribulational Rapture of the Church?” “Yes,” I said, “I believe I can simplify this and make it easily understandable for anyone to see!” We went into my study, and there I shared with him some of the following basic Scriptural facts—

What is the “Rapture”?

First, one needs to clearly establish from the Scriptures exactly what the “Rapture” of the Church is. This is necessary because a lot of people don’t even know what it is, or else have misconceptions about it. Some have even gone so far as to argue that the “Rapture” is a word and doctrine that men have invented and is actually not to be found in the Bible. This, of course, is not at all true.

Now it is true that the English word “rapture” is not found in our modern English translations of the Bible. However, it is a fact that the word is in the Bible, if one was using the Latin translation. The English word “rapture” is simply the anglicized form of the Latin word *raptus* or *rapere*. It just so happens that the oldest and most widespread translation of the Bible up until about 1700 A.D. is the Latin Vulgate, which is still the official translation for the Roman Catholic Church worldwide. So this word has been in the Latin translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 from the third century of the present era. This means the word has actually been around for a very long time.

In addition, it is not true that the Rapture doctrine is an invention of men. In fact, most scholars today recognize that one of the very first books written in the cannon of the Greek Scriptures is the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. We find therein the first mention of the Rapture of the Church. Without quoting all the context, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 17 says—

(16) 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. (17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up together** (*raptiermur*, Latin) with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we ever be with the Lord.

Now the words “*caught up*” are from the Greek word *harpazo*, which means “to snatch or catch away” (Strong, # 726). Of this word W. E. Vine says, “This verb conveys the idea of force suddenly exerted.” The Latin word *raptus* or *rapere* means the very same thing. (It is also common today for the word to be used as “caught away in ecstasy.”) It is further helpful to note how this Greek word is used elsewhere in the New Testament. This will demonstrate beyond any question its meaning. In *Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* the following passages are listed which I will quote from the NKJV—

Matt. 11:12 “...the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”
John 6:15 “...and take Him by force to make Him king.”
Acts 23:10 “...to take him (Paul) by force from among them.”
Matt. 13:19 “...the wicked one comes, and snatches away what was sown in his heart.”
John 10:12 “...and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them...”
John 10:28 “...neither shall snatch them out of My hand.”
John 10:29 “...and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.”
Jude 23 “...pulling (snatching) them out of the fire.”
Acts 8:39 “The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip...”
2 Cor. 12:2 “(The apostle Paul) was caught up to the third heaven.”
2 Cor. 12:4 “...he (Paul) was caught up into paradise.”
1 Thess. 4:17 “...shall be caught up together with them...to meet the Lord in the air.”
Rev. 12:5 “...her Child was caught up to God.”

So the meaning and use of the Greek word *harpazo* is very clearly demonstrated. And actually it makes the subject all the more unique in anticipation: just think of the moment when the whole collective “body of Christ” will be suddenly transported, snatched, or caught away to meet Christ in the air, and taken to our residence in heaven. This is going to be a colossal event—the sudden disappearance of all these people! All the rest of the world will be left behind. What will those left behind think when they realize all these people are suddenly missing?

Of course there are many other passages that expand on this theme of the Rapture of the Church, especially in Paul’s epistles. This event involves all the members of the Church, from the day of Pentecost until the “fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Rom. 11:25). It involves both resurrected dead saints for the last 2000 years and the present living saints (1 Thess. 4:14–17). Everyone will receive glorified bodies and be caught

away suddenly, as it were, “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:51). This event was a “mystery” (1 Cor. 15:51 and Col. 1:27), meaning it was not known in past ages (Eph. 3:5). It is also referred to as the believer’s “upward calling” (Philip. 3:14) and our “heavenly calling” (Col. 1:5 and 3:4). This was and still is the ever abiding “hope” of the Church of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:27). Obviously, this great event will bring to a close the present “Dispensation of Grace” (Eph. 3:2).

Beware of Hasty Comparisons!

Please believe that it is easy to make superficial comparisons of certain words used in this passage from 1 Thessalonians concerning the Rapture with those descriptions of Christ’s later coming in judgment. I know because in my young Christian life I was deceived into doing it. The passage states that the Rapture will take place when Christ will “descend from heaven with a *shout*, with the voice of an *archangel*, and with the *trumpet* of God.” One very subtle false teacher planted in my mind the fact that at Christ’s second coming to judge the earth, He is said to “*shout*” (Jer. 25:30, 31; Isa. 30:30; 42:13; Joel 2:11; Amos 1:2 and 2 Sam. 22:14). It is also said that there will be the “*archangel*” present at that time (see Dan. 12:1, 2 and Rev. 19:17). In addition, at Christ’s second coming, the “*trumpet* of God” will sound (Isa. 27:13; Zech. 9:14; Isa. 18:3 and Matt. 24:13). So I was led to quickly assume that Christ’s coming for the Church must be the same coming described in all these verses.

However, this type of hasty comparison is very superficial and does not take into consideration the radical differences in the context of all these passages with that of 1 Thessalonians. Nowhere in all the passages above does it talk about the Rapture of the Church! There is not a single solitary word in any of those passages to the effect of “catching away” the saints of this Church age. In addition, in Paul’s revelation in 1 Thessalonians, Christ’s mission is not the judgment and violent destruction on earth as is characterized by these other passages. Christ’s mission is strictly to receive His body, the Church, like a bridegroom coming for his bride (Eph. 5:27). Consequently, it would be very hasty and superficial to assume the two events are the same.

In fact, if there ever was a proof of the Pre-tribulational Rapture of the Church it would be found in the obvious ***contrasts*** between these two events. The “shout” of the Messiah for battle is certainly not the “shout” of Messiah for His bride. The contrast between the “trumpet” sound for war with the “trumpet” sound for the assembling of the saints is also obvious. In addition, the contrast between the archangel’s assistance for the nation of Israel must be different than the “voice of the archangel” assisting in the collective gathering of the Church, wherein there is “neither Jew nor Gentile but one new man,” to meet Christ in the air. You have two entirely different companies of people.

Actually, there are many trumpets spoken of in the Bible. God directed the movement of the nation of Israel by various and sundry trumpet sounds—see Numbers 10:1–10. One trumpet sound was for *assembling* the nation before God. A different trumpet sound was for *going to war*. In the case before us of the Rapture of the Church, there is the trumpet associated with the gathering of the saints to Christ. In contrast, at the second coming of Christ to judge the earth there is the sound of the trumpet for war. Obviously, the two should never be confused. In a similar manner there is the “shout”

and the “roar” of Messiah for battle at His second coming to earth as the references above speak. This should never be mixed with the “shout” of Christ for raising the dead (see John 5:28 and 11:43) and transforming the living at the Rapture. The shout of the Bridegroom for the bride is most certainly not a shout for battle! And of course, there are different works the archangels will engage in. One is for the protection of Israel (Dan. 12:1) and the other is due to the angelic interest in God’s grace manifested in the Church (Eph. 3:10; Heb. 1:13, 14 and I Pet. 1:12).

Let us always remember that the Devil uses the Bible, but he uses it wrongfully and only to bring confusion.

A Most Important Lesson

At the time of Christ’s first appearance, the people of Israel saw only *ONE* coming of the Messiah. They failed to distinguish between “the *sufferings* of Christ and the *glory* that was *to follow*” (1 Pet. 1:11). In fact, sometimes these two distinct comings of Messiah were found in the very same verses—see as examples Isa. 61:1–4 with Luke 4:16–21; Isa. 9:6 and 7; 11:1–6; Zech. 9:9, 10, etc. It was a cardinal failure on the part of hardhearted, unbelieving Israel to accept this reality. Only the Holy Spirit could enlighten the Jewish believer to distinguish the two aspects of Messiah’s work.

Now however, the purpose of this Bible study is to demonstrate that precisely the same principle is true about the return of Christ. A careful study of the Scriptures will prove that Christ’s second coming will actually be in *TWO* distinct phases. Because of the clear differences in the work which Christ is going to do, we must understand that the second coming of Jesus Christ is, as some have stated, in two distinct stages or phases—the first, a mystery aspect for catching away the Church and terminating the present age, and then the second for the final judgment in wrath and reigning in power on earth in and through the restored nation of Israel.

Only the same Holy Spirit can open our eyes in this generation to see this important truth. To understand this principle will harmonize what appears to be many conflicting Scriptures as to what happens at what is generally called “the second coming of Christ.” There is Christ’s coming to rapture the Church up to heaven to terminate the Age of Grace, and there is also Christ’s coming to destroy all earthly kingdoms and inaugurate His Kingdom reign on earth. These are two distinctly different events.

Carefully Examining the Passages that speak of The Second Coming of Christ—to Reign on Earth

Now let us just take the book of Matthew, which more surely focuses upon the future Kingdom of Christ, and look at the passages that speak of the second coming of Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation to rule and reign on earth over God’s people and compare them with this theme of the Rapture as seen above. If the Rapture theme of Paul fits these passages, then we can all agree that the Rapture will be after the Great Tribulation. If, however, the Rapture is not to be found in these passages, then the Rapture obviously must have occurred at an earlier date.

First will be Matthew 3:10–12.

In this passage John the Baptist, who is preparing the way of the Lord, speaks of the Lord's judgment on earth when He comes, and of His gathering those who bear good fruit into the prophesied Kingdom on earth—

(10) And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

(11) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He Who is coming after me is mightier than I, Whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (12) His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Two metaphors are used by John the Baptist in this passage. In the first (v. 10), *trees* represent the people who will be on earth when the Messiah comes. The bad trees which do not bear good fruit are to be cut down and destroyed. These obviously represent the evil unbelievers. In contrast, the good trees which have born good fruit are preserved for the kingdom and would represent the saints who go alive into the Kingdom Age. In a similar way, in the second metaphor (v. 12), the *grain field* represents mankind. In this case, the wheat represents the saints who are collected to enter the Kingdom, whereas the chaff represents the lost who will be destroyed and do not enter the Kingdom.

In both cases, the individuals represented by the *fruitless trees* and the *chaff* are to be taken out of this world and destroyed by fire. In both cases those saints represented by the *fruitful trees* and the *wheat* remain and are gathered into the kingdom. In other words, the saints who are alive and living for Christ immediately before He comes are simply preserved alive to enter into the Kingdom at Christ's coming, whereas the lost are to be destroyed and burned in the fire. There is no stated Rapture of the saints up into heaven.

Between these two metaphors is a promised twofold baptism (verse 11) that the Messiah will perform upon mankind at that future time. A part of mankind is said to be baptized by the Holy Spirit, whereas another part of them is understood to be baptized by fire. In this context, the baptism of fire is their destruction and death as represented in verses 10 and 12. So the "fire" which is mentioned three times in this context is to be understood as the same in each case—a judgment from God upon the lost, unbelieving sinners. In addition, as most students of prophecy know and understand, there shall be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures, which takes place specifically at the beginning of Messiah's Kingdom reign on earth—see Psalm 104:30 with Isaiah 11:6–8; 32:15–18; 44:1–5; Ezekiel 11:17–20; 36:24–30; 39:25–29 and Joel 2:28, 29. This is the baptism John is talking about. This baptism represents God's special blessings upon the righteous who will live and enter into the Millennial Kingdom reign of Messiah on earth. Please remember that John knew nothing of the Church of Jesus Christ which has now existed for the last two thousand years. Though there are some similarities in terminology with the baptism of the Holy Spirit that began on Pentecost for this present age, they are most certainly not identities.

If we can position ourselves in John's place at this time we can better appreciate what he is saying. John has been sent as the forerunner to the Messiah. He is expecting the Messiah to set up His Kingdom very soon. He is proclaiming to all the crowds of people before him that the promised Messiah is about to come and judge the earth. John is warning them that Messiah will segregate all the people into two camps. First, those nonbelievers who remain nonrepentant will be cut down or cast out and destroyed in a fiery judgment. In contrast, those believers in the Messiah, prepared by repentance and righteous living, will be blessed and gathered into the Kingdom. Of course, John was not aware of the soon reality of Israel's national rejection of her King and of the consequent postponement of that Kingdom. Nor was he aware of the intervening 2000 years of the present "mystery" Age of Grace (Eph. 3:2–5 and 9). Therefore, these events predicted by John will be fulfilled after this Age of Grace has been concluded.

Consequently, we can summarize from this passage the three times it describes the righteous on earth who will enter into the Messiah's Kingdom. First, are the *good fruit trees* that are not cut down and burned in the fire. Second, are those blessed by the *baptism of the Holy Spirit*, and not by the fire. And third, those who constitute the *wheat* gathered into the barns instead of being burned up in the fire. Now these represent the saints on earth who are not destroyed, but remain alive and are privileged to enter the Kingdom Age of Messiah. We can naturally ask the question—Is the Rapture of the saints up into heaven as described by the apostle Paul found in any of these cases? *Obviously, and in all honesty, it is not!* In the case of the Rapture of the Church, the saints are suddenly taken up and out of this earth at Christ's coming for them, whereas the lost are left alive on earth. In contrast, in each of these cases in Mathew the wicked are taken to be destroyed, whereas the saints are left alive on earth. The Rapture of the saints is, admittedly by any honest person, not in view in this passage. Let us look at the next references and we shall see obvious similarities.

Second, **Matthew 13:24–30 and 36–43**.

This is the famous parable of the wheat and the tares which Christ gave to indicate who it is that will enter the Kingdom age. I will paraphrase the parable and then quote in detail the interpretation as Christ gave it. A man planted good seed in his field, but an enemy came and planted tares in the field while the workers slept. When both grew up it was determined that reapers should wait until the harvest to separate the tares from the wheat. Now let us read Christ's detailed explanation of the parable—"He answered and said to them:

(37) He who sows the good seed is *the Son of Man*.

(38) The field is *the world*,

The good seeds are *the sons of the kingdom*,

But the tares are *the sons of the wicked one*.

(39) The enemy who sowed them is *the devil*,

The harvest is *the end of the age*,

And the reapers are *the angels*.

(40) Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in *the fire*,
so shall it be *at the end of this age*.

(41) The Son of man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, (42) and will cast them into the *furnace*

of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.
(43) *Then the righteous* will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.
He who has ears to hear let him hear.

Admittedly, many applications have been made of this passage to the present Church Age. However, taking the passage literally we must understand that the first application is not to the Church, but rather to the future evangelism of the Great Tribulation time period, just prior to the literal Kingdom Age of Messiah.

You can immediately see that this is similar to the account of Matthew three. The Messiah is scheduled to one day reign on earth. Prior to His reign there is going to be a planting and harvesting time in preparation for that Kingdom here on this earth. It will be much like the time of Christ's own ministry for some 3 ½ years, the difference being that in the future this evangelism will cover the whole world. The "end of the Age" in view is the conclusion of this evangelism and time of judgment just prior to the Kingdom. The "tares" represent the unrighteous who will not be allowed to enter into that Kingdom, but will first be gathered out to be destroyed by the fire of God's judgment. In contrast, the "good seed" represents the righteous who mature in that growing season and will simply be gathered alive, here on earth, to enter into the future Kingdom of Messiah.

Again, I ask the question, *is the Rapture in view*, as described by the apostle Paul, in this parable? *Obviously, and in all honesty, the Rapture is not to be found here!* At the Rapture of the Church the saints will be suddenly caught up out of this world into heaven and the unrighteous will be left alive and intact on earth. No one is to be immediately destroyed. Actually the ones left behind are those to be tested in the Great Tribulation as represented in this parable. Here in this parable we see the opposite sequence. The field is the *world* over which the Messiah will reign. In this case the wicked are gathered to be destroyed in fire and the righteous are simply preserved and gathered into that kingdom here *on earth*.

By now you can also begin to reason that the Rapture of the Church would of necessity have to take place at an earlier date—a date prior to this testing time. Obviously, the Rapture could not take place at some later date because the saints of the later time are all accounted for; they come out of the Great tribulation and enter alive into the Kingdom Age right here on earth.

The Third is **Matthew 24:29–31, 36–41 and 45–51.**

This is the great chapter in Mathew wherein Christ explains the nature and events of the future "Great Tribulation" (24:21) time frame. As a special feature of this passage Christ is, in effect, telling the saints who live at that future time period what to look for and how to conduct themselves in preparation for the Messiah's coming. At least three times in this passage Christ tells of saints who will be prepared to meet Him when He comes to reign on earth. Let us look at each one—

In verses 29–31 Christ speaks of the miraculous regathering of the “elect.” *“And he will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and **they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other** (verse 31).”* Some have mistakenly claimed that this has reference to the Rapture of the Church. However, it is instead a reference to the prophesied final regathering of the Jewish people. A close look at Deuteronomy 30:1–6 shows the original prophecy. It uses the same language and context. There Moses tells of the same last days wherein Israel, having been scattered throughout all the nations on the face of the earth, will be miraculously regathered—*“If any of you are driven out **to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it...**”*

So in this case, those gathered are God’s “elect” people—the Jewish people. They are collected from “the farthest parts under heaven (that is, from all over the earth)” where they have been scattered. And they are now collected back to “the land” of their original inheritance. *There is no Rapture here!*

In verses 36–41 Christ speaks of those “taken” at that time of judgment. Notice that Christ compares it to the time of Noah’s day—*“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came **and took them all away**, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be **taken** and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be **taken** and the other left.”* Again, some have confused this with the Rapture of the Church. However, the context is very clear and cannot be misunderstood—those taken are “taken” at this time in judgment just as those of Noah’s day. The ones left alive are the ones who will go into the blessed Kingdom age. *There is no Rapture here!*

In verses 45–51 Christ speaks of the “servants” who will enter the millennial Kingdom—*“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.”* Christ then stated concerning the wicked servants—*“...and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* The servants here are not raptured into heaven as described by the apostle Paul. Rather, they simply are allowed to go on doing service for the King in the Kingdom Age. In contrast, the evil servants will have been destroyed and will not have the blessing of entering into that Kingdom age. One will search in vain to find the Rapture of the Church in this section of Scripture. *In this whole section there is no Rapture!*

Actually, the parables of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1–13) and of the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30) are similar in nature and understanding to the parable of the Faithful Servant above. Now we can certainly make secondary spiritual applications from these parables to ourselves today. However, we must remember that in this context, these parables are strictly not directly talking about the Church, nor do they mention the Rapture of the Church. They fit perfectly the saints of the future Tribulation period who will go alive into the Kingdom Age.

The fourth passage is Matthew 25:31-46.

Without quoting all this passage, everyone agrees that it speaks of the judgment of the “nations” which takes place at the second coming of the Messiah. The “sheep” and the “goats” are representative of the two classes of people who have been alive on earth prior to the Messiah’s coming. The “sheep” represent the saved and the “goats” represent the unsaved. The “sheep” are those who served Christ during the Great Tribulation time period. They are rewarded with the words—“*Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (verse 34).” The “goats” represent those who did not serve Christ during the same time period. To them it is stated —“*And these will go away into everlasting punishment . . .* (verse 46).”

Once again, and in finality, *there is no Rapture in this passage!* The “sheep” representing Messiah’s people, who serve Him during the Tribulation testing time, simply go alive into the blessed Kingdom Age. They stay right here on earth. They are going to repopulate the earth in the Kingdom Age. They are not bodily glorified. They are not suddenly caught up into heaven. They are not taken out of this world. Their inheritance is the Kingdom, prophesied throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, and specially prepared for them.

CONCLUSION !

All these accounts above bare a striking similarity. Each of the accounts is complete in and of itself. In each account there are the saved and the unsaved living during a time of testing. In each account, at the coming of the Messiah, the unsaved are gathered to be judged and destroyed by fire. In each account the saints remain alive and are allowed to inhabit the Kingdom reign. None of the saints in any of these episodes are said to receive “glorified” bodies, and most importantly none are said to be suddenly “caught up” to meet Christ in the air. Not only is the Rapture not found in any of these passages, but the Church itself is not found there, either.

Very plainly therefore, the Rapture of the Church saints of this present Age of Grace does not take place at the end of the Great Tribulation time period at the second coming of Christ to reign on earth..

There is a striking contrast by all these passages with the truth about the Rapture of the Church. With the Rapture of the Church it is the saints who are caught up out of this world to be with Christ in glory. That means the unsaved are left behind here on earth to an uncertain future. In contrast, in most of these passages from Matthew it is the lost, unsaved and unrighteous who are ***taken out*** of this world in judgment, and the righteous are left behind to inhabit the Kingdom of Messiah here on earth. Notice again who is *taken* at the time of Messiah’s coming to reign:

“(Unfruitful trees—i.e., the lost) ***cut down and thrown into the fire***” (Matt. 3:10).

“...***burn up the chaff*** (the lost)...” (Matt. 3:12).

“***Tares*** (the lost) ***are gathered and burned...***” (Matt. 13:40).

“***Tares*** (the lost) ***gathered out of His Kingdom***” (Matt. 13:41).

“...the angels shall come forth and **take out the wicked** from among the righteous, and will **cast them into a furnace of fire**” (Matt. 13:49, 50).

“...the flood came and **took them all away**... (so) *one will be taken* and another left...*one will be taken* and one will be left” (Matt. 24:39–41).

Obviously, if the Rapture of the Church happens at the same time the lost are taken to be destroyed, then there will be no one left alive on earth to inhabit the Kingdom here on earth! Consequently, God wants us to understand that these two events, the Rapture and the return of Christ to judge the earth, are separate events. The time period separating them is the Great Tribulation wherein God once again renews His dealing with the nation of Israel in preparation for the Kingdom reign of Messiah.

Since each of these passages tells us exactly who goes in, alive on earth, to occupy the Kingdom Age it automatically means that the Rapture of the Church could not take place simultaneously with these events. It is impossible to split up these saints into two groups, one group caught up into heaven, while the other group goes into the Kingdom on earth. And this fact automatically means that the Rapture of the Church, as revealed through the apostle Paul, must have taken place at an earlier date just before the Great Tribulation time period. This is the only possible explanation and synchronization of these two distinct events. Therefore, one must distinguish between the “mystery” Rapture of the saints, which brings to a conclusion this Age of Grace, from that gathering of the saints out of the Great Tribulation in order to begin the Kingdom Age.

The contrast between these two events becomes very obvious. At the Rapture of the Church the saints are suddenly “*caught up*” to be taken out of this world, whereas the *lost* are left alive on earth. At the coming of Christ to Reign, the lost are “*taken out*” of this world to be destroyed, whereas the *saints* are left alive on earth to enter that glorious Kingdom age of Messiah.

In simplicity, and in a very abbreviated form, this is why I know the Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ is a separate and distinct event which terminates the end of the Age of Grace, and must be distinguished from that great and powerful event of the judgment on earth at the end of the Great Tribulation time period when Messiah comes to earth and chooses those to populate the Kingdom Age here on the earth.

My Christian friend, to whom I first gave this simple explanation and comparison, never challenged a single Scripture, or a single conclusion—what about you?

THE END