

The Case of the Missing Saints

(A Biblical Investigation into the Mystery of the Rapture)

Rockey Jackson - November 24, 1999

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Part Three: My Personal Journey

If you're like me, you like to know a little about the background and motivation of the authors you read. Others are probably just wondering who this egotistical nut is who thinks he can do what scholars have failed to do for two-millennium. Then there are those who just like to get to know other people. If you don't fall into one of these categories, you can quit reading now and save some time.

Actually, I'm sure that many others have figured out when the Rapture will occur. Most of the people I know who have studied the Rapture on their own have come to the conclusion that it will occur at the end of the Tribulation. I just haven't met anyone else who has been able to explain it in this detail.

So, how did I come to this understanding? I was raised in a conservative evangelical church, which taught that the Rapture would occur prior to the Tribulation. While in my teens, I attended special services at my local church to learn about the end times. In these services, a time line was hung like a curtain across the front of the sanctuary to help us grasp the sequence of the major events included in the Apocalypse. However, it wasn't until I read Dr. Hal Lindsey's Late Great Planet Earth that I really understood that I might actually be living in the end times. I found the teaching of Dr. Lindsey concerning the Rapture to be in line with what I'd already been taught and his arguments were very persuasive. I had no reason to doubt, therefore, the validity of his teaching. However, because of the lack of clear scriptural references to a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, I remained persuaded, but unconvinced and on this point I thought it would be very nice to be absolutely convinced. I wondered: "If I found all of the scriptures that talked about the Rapture, would they tell me when the Rapture would occur? Could I be convinced from the clear word of scripture?"

Over the next few years, I made it a habit to note any scriptures that talked about the Rapture. It was very frustrating though, because I didn't seem to get any help from the Scriptures to indicate that the Rapture would occur before the Tribulation. If anything, they seemed to indicate that the Rapture would occur at the end of the Tribulation. I wasn't ready yet to accept the idea that the teaching of the church of my youth and the popular scholars of my day could be wrong on this point. I thought that there must be more in the Scriptures on this subject and I was just missing it. However, as time passed, I had to admit that the Bible seemed to indicate that the Rapture would occur at the end of the Tribulation and that it wouldn't hurt us to be prepared to go through the Tribulation.

Finally, I made the commitment to read completely through the New Testament and note every scripture I could find which talked about the Rapture. To my surprise, not only did some scriptures indicate that the Rapture would occur at the end of the Tribulation, but every scripture that included a reference to the timing of the Rapture agreed that it would occur at the end. I could not find a single scripture that referred to the Rapture that even hinted at the possibility of a pre-tribulation or mid-tribulation fulfillment. I did however miss the one key verse (Rev. 16:15) that states specifically where the Rapture occurs in the chronology of Revelation. Though I was quite certain that the Rapture would occur near the end of the Tribulation, I wasn't ready to

openly advocate this position without specifically knowing when it would occur in the Revelation chronology. So, I continued to ponder it for a few more years.

Then, nearly ten years after I started my search (I didn't say I was a quick study), I stumbled on the final piece of the puzzle. While listening to a teaching on the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, the pastor referenced Rev. 16:15 and noted how wonderful it was for the Lord to remind us that we'd already been raptured at the time the armies were gathering for Armageddon. While he had rightly identified that Rev. 16:15 was a reference to the Rapture, he totally missed its significance because of his pre-tribulation doctrinal position. However, for me it was the key piece I'd been looking for to complete the puzzle. Now I knew the actual place in the chronology of the book of Revelation where the scriptures specifically say the Rapture will occur. I went through the New Testament one more time to make sure I hadn't missed anything else. Then I set down the outline for the teaching that makes up the body of this article.

It has been nearly twenty years since I wrote that outline. Many times I've desired to write an article based on it, but the Lord wouldn't allow it. For the first ten years, I shared this teaching with anyone who would listen. However, I don't think that I changed very many minds. My own brother rejected it until Rick Joyner endorsed the idea that we should prepare to go through the Tribulation. During the last ten years, I've shared this teaching with almost no one. First, because it seemed that almost everyone felt that they knew all there was to know about the Rapture and they were tired of hearing about it. Second, because the Lord had sent me to the desert and placed me in a cave (figuratively, of course) with Psalm 46:10 as my orders: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

After being sought out in my teens, twenties, and thirties, I found myself being literally ignored in my forties. Now as we approach the millennium, there seems to be a growing light at the end of the tunnel. Believers are once again beginning to reconsider their understanding of the end times and the Lord has given permission and provided the initiative for me to write this article. I hope that you've found it to be both enlightening and enjoyable.

Biography

I'm still in love with the beautiful wife of my youth Karen, who I married in 1971. We live in Palmer Lake, Colorado with our two grown children, Lynnette and Jeremy. We are part of Golden Harvest Outreach Ministries in Colorado Springs, Colorado where we specialize in intercession and discipleship training. Both religion and engineering are areas in which I've studied, but I hold no formal degrees. I enjoy kayaking and skiing.

To their credit and my thanks, my parents brought me up in the knowledge of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I professed my faith and was baptized at the age of ten. The Lord and His people have been my passion since I came into a full knowledge of the Holy Spirit at the age of nineteen. I've served as a youth group leader, boy's group leader, men's group leader, Sunday school teacher, and home fellowship leader. I've been a retreat speaker and provided pulpit supply. I've been an Elder and served on church councils. Also, I've been a part time interim pastor.

I took my first paying job at the age of ten working as a ranch hand. While in college I worked as a telephone switchboard operator and an Emergency Medical Technician. Then I served two enlistments in the USAF as an Intelligence Operations Analyst. Between the Air Force and my present job, I worked as a professional woodcutter and a building materials store

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clerk. For the past fifteen years the Lord has graciously provided for us through Lockheed Martin Aerospace where I'm employed as a Systems Engineer.

I've yet to enter into the time of fulfillment of the Lord's plan for my life. And the length of time that the Lord is taking to train me makes me wonder if I'll have any time left to serve Him in the fullness of His purpose. In 1981, while I was stationed in Korea, I had the opportunity to attend a weeklong YWAM training course in Seoul. One thing I remember John Dawson saying as he taught was, "The longer the Lord takes to train you, the greater the assignment He has for you." It has been twenty-eight years of training so far. Oh boy, my assignment must really be a doozy! I know many others who live here in the Colorado Springs area who can relate to the way I feel. My current employment at Lockheed Martin is a gilded cage to be sure, but it is still Pharaoh's prison to me. I identify greatly with Psalm 105:19 where it is written: "Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him."

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