

THE HARVEST and the THREE RAPTURES

By Blair T. Kenny

Soul winning in the Bible is likened unto planting crops and reaping a big harvest.

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” (2 Corinthians 9:6)

In Exodus 23:10-12, God lays out his timetable for the “harvest”.

“And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest:...”

Likewise, God’s plan for man's entire 7000 year history is to work for six days or six thousand years (sowing the word of God) and then to rest on the seventh day or seventh thousand year period called the Millennium.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Peter 3:8)

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells his disciples several parables that have to do with spreading the gospel. Many of these parables compare sowing crops to sowing the Word of God.

In Matthew 13:3-9, Jesus tells “The Parable of the Sower”

“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

In Matthew 13:18-23, Jesus explains “The Parable of the Sower”

“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Matthew 13:18-23)

Hopefully, we are those “that received seed into the good ground” (Matt 13:23). We hear the Word of God, understand it and bear fruit. We are to share the gospel and help get others saved. Notice that the Devil is always close by continuously attempting to thwart God’s plan. In verse 27, “persecution ariseth” and in verse 22, “the deceitfulness of riches” causes the Christian to be unproductive. In “The Parable of the Mustard Seed” (Matthew 13:31-32), the mustard seed grows into a tree. “The birds of the air” lodge in the branches. The “birds of the air” are demons.

In Matthew 13: 24-30, Jesus tells his disciples the “Parable of the Good Seed and the Tares”

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

In Matthew 13:36-42, Jesus explains “Parable of the Good Seed and the Tares”

“Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:36-42)

This is what happens in Matthew 24:40-41.

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”

These verses are not references to the rapture of the Church. This takes place after the rapture of the Church near the end of the tribulation period. The ones that are taken, are taken to be burned in “the lake of fire.” the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.” The ones that are left are “saved” and will enter into the Millennium in their earthly bodies.

“So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:49-50)

Please notice that this is the exact opposite of what happens at the rapture of the Church. At the rapture of the Church, the ones that are taken are the ones that are saved and they go to meet the Lord in the air.

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

Jesus says **“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;” (Matthew 9:37)** What a sad condemnation of the time period we live in, the Laodicean Church Age. The rapture is imminent, yet the workers (Christians spreading the gospel) are few.

Son of man -	He that soweth the good seed
The field	is the world
the good seed -	are the children of the kingdom
the tares	are the children of the wicked one
the devil	is The enemy that sowed them (tares)
the harvest	is the end of the world
the reapers	are the angels.

“and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” (Matthew 13:30)

The harvesting of the wheat is the way God chose to convey the idea of gathering together the good seeds (God’s children) at the “end of the world.” Most people have probably heard of the expression “at least I planted the seed.” This is usually a reference to giving someone the “gospel.” Just as the sowing of the seed is Jesus Christ’s Word going forth, throughout the land and throughout the ages, drawing men to himself, the rapture is the end result or the harvest.

Similar to any harvest, the rapture has three distinct parts to account for the fruit that ripens early and the fruit that ripens late as well as the main harvest. So you have the first fruits, the harvest and the gleanings.

Firstfruits - the part that ripens early that you pick first

Harvest - the part that ripens later on

Gleanings - the part that ripens at the end

1) Old Testament Saints first fruits

2) New testament Saintsharvest

3) Tribulation Saints.....gleanings

The expression “come up hither” occurs three times in the Bible

- 1) Old Testament Saints.....Proverbs 25:7
- 2) New Testament Saints.....Revelation 4:2
- 3) Tribulation Saints.....Revelation 11:12-15

1) Rapture of Old Testament Saints at the resurrection of Christ (Proverbs 25:7)

Matthew 27:50-53

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

2) Rapture of New Testament Saints of the Church Age (Rev 4:2)

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

3) Rapture of Tribulation Saints at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:12-15)

Matthew 24:30-31

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The three raptures take place in three different dispensations. They are the three parts of the same harvest. If you turn your Bible to 1 Corinthians 15:22-24, I will show you all three raptures in the same verse, where all three time periods are represented.

1 Corinthians 15:22-24

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order: (1)Christ the firstfruits; afterward (2)they that are Christ's at his coming.

Then cometh (3)the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.”