

You'll Never See That On My Car!

J. Scott Sheridan

There is a very popular bumper sticker that has been around for a long time. I see it almost every time I get into my car to go somewhere. If I don't follow another car that has it on its bumper, I'll usually see it on a car in the parking lot.

I read the Scriptures every day and I like to think I have a certain grasp of what it teaches, so it makes me wonder a great deal why people are putting this particular bumper sticker on their cars. I would never put it on mine, because I believe I'm going to heaven. The Bible tells me so.

Oh, by the way, the bumper sticker you'll never see on my car is the one that says, "Warning: In case of the rapture, this car will be unoccupied."

There are people who believe and teach that Christ is going to come and secretly take the Church out of the world and let the unrighteous live here alone for a while. They call it "the rapture." "Rapture" is not a Scriptural word but it means "caught up." They actually think the Christians are leaving this earth first before the unrighteous are taken away. But what do the Scriptures teach?

Matthew 13:24-30: He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."' (NASB)

According to this parable Jesus told, the tares, that is the unrighteous, are taken first. If that's true, you'll never see on my car a bumper sticker telling others that I expect to be taken first. I plan on going to heaven!

I have heard others talk about the rapture idea and you probably have as well. Are there any other Scriptures that teach the unrighteous are going to leave first? Yes, there are. In Matthew 24 the apostles asked Jesus two questions (although they thought they were asking only one). (1) When will these things be (the destruction of the Temple) and (2) what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age? In verses 4-35 Jesus tells of the destruction of Jerusalem that would occur in 70 A.D. at the hands of the Romans under the general Titus. Beginning in verse 36 Jesus begins telling of His return in which He lets us know there will be no signs. Notice what He says beginning in verse 37:

Matthew 24:37-46 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. (NASB)

Jesus does mention people being taken, but He says it will be just like the days of Noah. Who were taken in the days of Noah? It wasn't Noah and his family. It was the unrighteous who were taken. Those who were unrepentant and had to face the judgement of God are the ones who left.

There will be no special signs, no dramatic overtures or circumstances before Christ returns. He will just arrive and separate the tares from the wheat and then take those who are left to our eternal destination: Eternity in Heaven. We should not waste our time seeking after signs (Mt. 12:39). Instead we ought to be faithfully carrying out the work of our Master expecting Him at any time. "Blessed is that slave whom His Master finds so doing when he comes."

. . . Nope, you'll never see it on my car!