

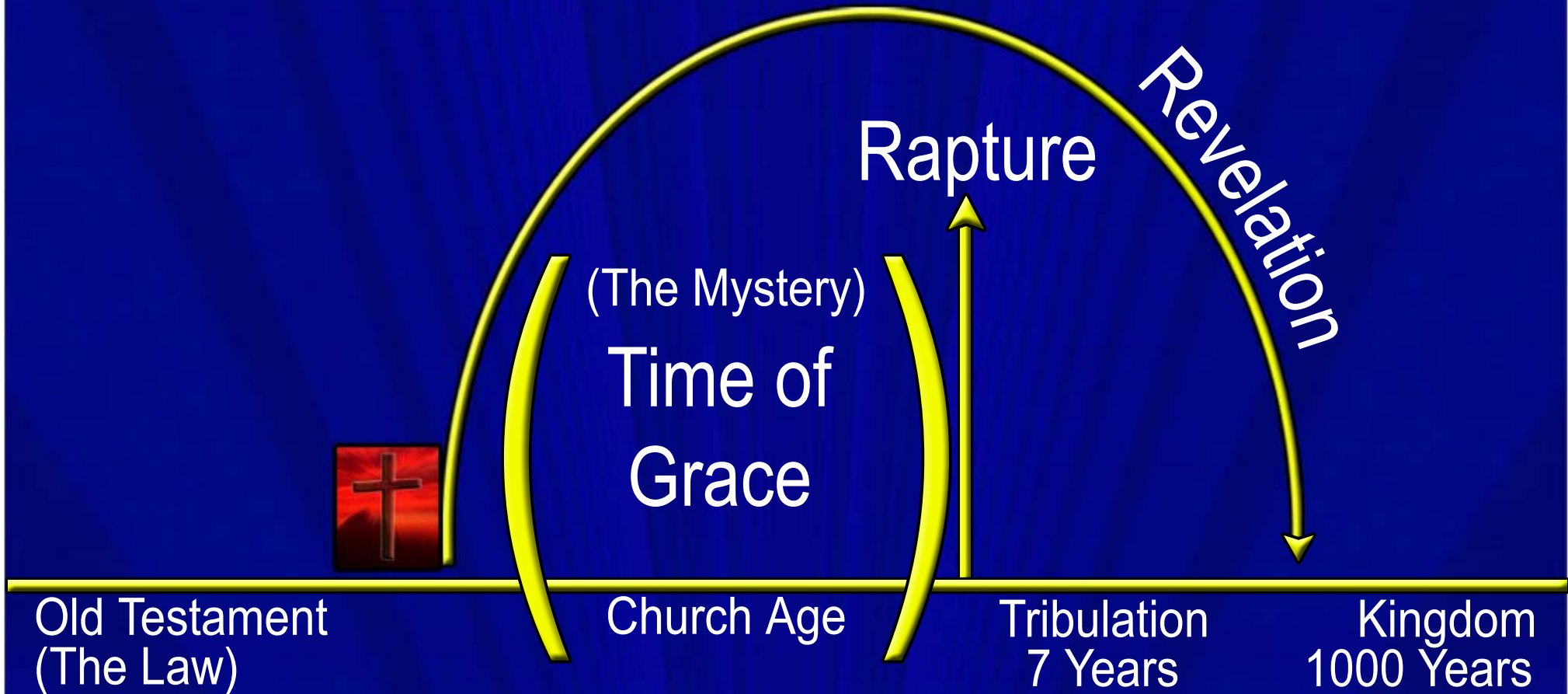
## The Rapture - A Mystery Revealed Through Paul

1. The dispensation of grace that we live in was revealed to the apostle Paul. It was a mystery time period of grace that was hidden in God and kept secret since the world began. **Colossians 1:25-26; Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:1-6**
2. Likewise, the event that will end this dispensation is also said to have been a mystery (a secret, something not revealed and made known yet). **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**
3. If the Rapture of the church is the event that Jesus taught about in **Matthew 24:36-42**, there are two serious issues to consider:
  - First, what Paul taught about the Rapture would not have been a mystery at all. It would have been a well-known truth to the twelve, made known and revealed by Christ on earth. Paul would have been mistaken and our Bible incorrect.
  - Second, this would also mean that the church will go through most all of the tribulation time period. This is the context of “the return” of Matthew 24. This “taking away” coincides with Christ's Second Coming to earth.
4. What is the answer? The answer is to look at the context. In Matthew 24 Jesus is describing a time period that he breaks into two sections:
  - The Beginning of Sorrows - **Matthew 24:4-8**
  - Great Tribulation - **Matthew 24:15-21**
5. All of this ends with Christ returning in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (vs.30). Christ then sits on a throne in Jerusalem and all nations of the earth are gathered before Him for judgment. **Matthew 25:31-33**
6. All of these events will happen quickly and the generation that begins to see these things unfold (the events of Matthew 24) will not pass until Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on earth. **Matthew 24:32-34**
7. So who are the people that are taken away in **Matthew 24:37-41**?
  - These are the “*tares*” of Matthew 13:38. They are the children of the wicked one.
  - When Christ returns to the earth, the “*tares*” are gathered **out** of Christ's kingdom, and the angels take them out and cast them into a furnace of fire. You don't want to be taken **out** at the end of the Tribulation! **Matthew 13:40-42**
  - Those who are designated as “*righteous*” will stay on earth and will shine forth in Christ's kingdom. **Matthew 13:43**
  - Redeemed Israel, who has been scattered by the anti-Christ, will be gathered **together** by the angels and placed in their land never to be removed again. The tares are gathered **out**, Israel is gathered **together**. **Matthew 24:31**; cf. **Isaiah 11:10-12**
8. To summarize, when Christ returns to the earth, there are three groups in view:
  - Those taken or gathered **out** of His kingdom and cast into a furnace of fire.
  - Those left on the earth (the righteous) who are allowed to stay and shine in His kingdom.
  - The elect (redeemed Israel) who are gathered **together** from the four corners of earth and heaven and placed in their land with Christ their Messiah reigning on the Davidic throne.

9. None of this is said to be a mystery. It is all part of God's prophetic plan for Israel and this earth and made clear during Christ's earthly ministry.
10. Many years later, Paul reveals "*a mystery*" to the church, body of Christ. It is an event in which believers (both living and dead) are instantaneously changed and given bodies that are incorruptible and immortal. **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**
11. This event involves Christ descending from heaven and those who are in Christ (both dead and living) being caught up from the earth to meet Christ in the air. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**
12. Never confuse the Second Coming of Christ to earth with the Rapture of the church, the body of Christ.
  - The Second Coming involves deliverance for Israel; the Rapture involves deliverance for the body of Christ. **Romans 11:26-27**
  - At the Second Coming, Christ comes to the earth; at the Rapture, Christ descends from heaven and the body of Christ meets Him in the air.
  - The Second Coming of Christ is a public appearance that the world will witness (**Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7**); the Rapture takes place quicker than the blink of an eye. **1 Corinthians 15:52**

*(Please scroll down to view timeline charts.)*

# BASIC TIMELINE



# THE RAPTURE

## A MYSTERY REVEALED THROUGH PAUL

