

The Rapture of the Wicked

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1. FUTURISM VS. HISTORICISM

There are two great divisions of thought regarding people's view of prophecy: The Futurist and the Historicist. Both teach that Messiah will return to earth, but the division arises over the *manner* of His coming and its timing in relation to "the Tribulation."

Now some may say, what difference does it make HOW Messiah returns, so long as we all believe that Messiah will indeed come? Is it really an important issue? How will our viewpoint of prophecy affect our thoughts and actions in preparation for the return of Messiah?

First of all, it should be established that our eternal destiny and salvation does not stand or fall upon our belief in either viewpoint. However, our doctrines will determine our courses of action and our basic attitudes and outlook on the world in general. Thus, the issue is important to that degree.

The Historical view holds that the tribulation in the book of Revelation is almost completely fulfilled, except for the final downfall of 'Mystery Babylon.' The Futurist view teaches that almost all of Revelations events have a future fulfillment

The Historicist teaches that the "Revived Roman Empire" prophesied by Daniel was fulfilled in Papal Rome, and that the "great whore" now primarily rides the "scarlet coloured beast" (Revelation 17:3) of Red Communism. The Futurist teaches that the Revived Roman Empire is yet future, and it is often identified with the present-day Common Market of Western Europe.

The Historicist notes that all through the centuries the Assembly has undergone tribulation and persecution at the hands of Mystery Babylon, as it rides on various beast empires and systems throughout the course of history. The average American Futurist is confident that he will be removed from the earth before such tribulation arrives at his own door step.

The Historicist, in his study of the world situation in this century, learns that communism, the Red Beast, has murdered untold millions of Believers and other innocent victims since 1917, probably more than have been slaughtered in all of past history. Many of these were tortured and were forced to live a life worse than death. From his historical perspective he reasons that such tribulation does not have to fall upon the American assembly before it can be properly labeled "tribulation." Furthermore, if such terrible tribulation has already fallen upon untold millions of Believers, how can we claim that Yahweh will remove us from the earth before it comes to America.

On the other hand, the Futurist views the rise of Red Bolshevism with a strange curiosity. Since he believes that a future "anti-messiah" will arise as head of the revived Roman Empire (i.e., the Common Market of Western Europe), he cannot identify this Bolshevism with Bible prophecy, at least not directly. Instead, it has become common teaching that the Anti-messiah's empire in the West will elect the Anti-messiah to rule over them as a *defense* against Red Bolshevism.

Thus, the Historicist generally will do what he can to oppose Bolshevism and its child, the Socialistic World Government. He is more aware of the nature of the conflict between East and West, between Socialistic Communism and Christian Republicanism. The Futurist, when confronted with the millions who have died agonizing deaths and languish in slave camps, can only say, "Well, just wait until the Anti-messiah comes; that will make Communism look like child's play!"

So whereas our view of Bible prophecy does not affect our salvation, it does affect our thinking, our outlook on the world scene, and it will have a great effect upon our preparation for the return of Messiah.

2. SAINTS IN TRIBULATION

The Futurist are fond of claiming that the various "beasts" spoken of in the book of Revelation are representative of the "Anti-messiah" or his allies who will rule the world during a future tribulation. However, the visions of Daniel clearly identify the beasts as representing the various nations and systems of government that were to rise to power from Daniel's day to the end of this age. In the seventh chapter of Daniel those four Beasts are described as (1) a lion with eagle's wings, (2) a bear, (3) a leopard with four heads and four wings, (4) an unidentified beast with iron teeth and great strength, and (5) a "little horn" arising out of the previous beast.

Daniel beheld this "little horn" warring against the saints, and it "prevailed against them" (Daniel 7:21) until the time came for the saints to take the Kingdom from him. There is no hint that anyone will be able to escape to heaven before this "little horn" appears. This is especially made plain in Daniel 7:25-27.

25. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

26. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

27. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

This passage is usually explained to mean that the saints are the Jews, who will supposedly be left on the earth during the great tribulation. However, Yahshua taught that the Jews were not to inherit the Kingdom of Yahweh in Matthew 21:43-45.

43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of Yahweh shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

Note especially that in speaking of the Kingdom of Yahweh, Yahshua called it "this stone" in verse 44. He was referring to the great Stone Kingdom of Daniel 2:34, 35, which is said to smash the image of the beast and break in pieces all of the empires it represented. Yahshua said that this stone would grind to powder all on whomsoever it shall fall. And it was to fall on the Jewish Pharisees, and by implication, all who followed their anti-messiah religion.

Thus, it is not possible that the saints against whom the "little horn" wars should be the Jews. They must be a Covenant keeping people.

The notion that Believers will not have to face the tribulation of this world is foreign to the Scriptures. If a modern rapture-teaching preacher had lived in Rome 1800 years ago, proclaiming that those persecuted

Believers would escape tribulation, he would have been dis-fellowshipped from the church as a deceiver, or he would have been laughed out of the church for being a fool. In those days Believers were being slaughtered just for sport.

The Red Beast of New World Order and Catholic Church is the modern vehicle that carries the "great whore" of Mystery Babylon. The Believers behind the Iron Curtain do not believe in a pre-tribulation rapture. They-like the Christian martyrs of ancient Rome-see tribulation all around them. How odd it is that Believers living in the West would be so near-sighted and so insensitive as to suppose that the tribulation could NOT have arrived on the earth until it lands on American soil! Thank Yahweh the full force of evil has not yet come upon this late great Christian Republic, but let us not forget our persecuted brethren or think that Yahweh measures tribulation by its exclusive effect upon American Believers.

3. WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF YAHWEH?

A strange phenomena has appeared in the doctrinal position of thousands of today's professing Christians. At one moment they speak of going to heaven in the rapture (or when they die), where they say they will live FOREVER; but then in the next breath they speak of Messiah coming to earth with His saints to rile all nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:26,27).

This doctrinal schizophrenia is readily apparent to those who teach only one of the above positions. However, there are literally millions who believe both to be true, in spite of their inherent contradiction.

So we must examine the Scriptures to see where the Bible locates Yahweh's Kingdom and where Messiah shall reign with His saints. Where is the inheritance of the believer? Does the Bible promise heaven or earth as the eternal abode of the Believer?

If believers are to receive their inheritance in heaven, then the rapture would be a logical method of ferrying them to their reward. If, however, our inheritance is on the earth, then there would be no need for a rapture, except (as is supposed) to prevent us from undergoing tribulation.

We have already seen that the Beast-systems were to make war against the saints here on the earth. We also touched upon the great Stone Kingdom that was to smash the other kingdoms and grind them to powder. This great Kingdom, the Kingdom of Yahweh, "became a great mountain, and filled the whole EARTH" (Daniel 2:35).

Those who rule with Messiah in His Kingdom will be on earth as well, for we read in Revelation 5:10, "and we shall reign on the earth." This is but a reflection of the Old Testament Scripture. As far back as the days of Moses, this was the great hope of the believers. Numbers 14:21 reads,

21. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the YAHWEH.

Two other prophets took up the same themes. See Isaiah 11:9 and Habakkuk 2:14

David's theme, repeated over and over in Psalm 37 was that "the meek shall inherit the earth." Yahshua verified His doctrine in His sermon on the mount, when He taught the people in Matthew 5:5,

5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Yahshua viewed the earth with a great deal more respect than many Believers do today. After all, He

was the Creator of this earth (John 1:3), and thus His was the voice which pronounced it "very good" (Genesis 1:31). It was Yahshua who inspired the Psalmist to write Psalm 115:16

16. The heaven, even the heavens, are YAHWEH'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

When we learn to view Creation with the same love as does its Creator, we will not despise Yahweh's good earth. Instead, out of love we will attempt to fulfill the first and foremost responsibility that Yahweh gave to man: to subdue and have dominion (authority under Yahweh) over the earth (Genesis 1:28), which is Yahshua's footstool (Matthew 5:35). When Yahshua Messiah finally sets up His Divine Government on the earth, and when true Believers rule with Him in the Kingdom, then the earth will indeed become a paradise once again. It will be "heaven on earth," fit for habitation for Messiah and His people.

4. MEETING YAHSHUA IN THE AIR

Perhaps the most well-known Bible passage known today in rapture-believing circles is 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17.

16. For Yahshua himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of Yahweh: and the dead in Messiah shall rise first:

17. Then we which are *alive and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet Yahshua in the air. and so shall we ever be with Yahshua.

This passage teaches that Messiah shall return to the earth some day, and that the resurrection of the dead in Messiah shall occur before the living believers are caught up to meet Messiah in the air. BUT THERE IS NO MENTION OF ANYONE GOING TO HEAVEN.

So the question is this: When the believers "meet Yahshua in the air," will they escort Him back to earth to rule in His Kingdom, or will Messiah escort them back to heaven for a time? In other words, shall we "ever be with Yahshua" in heaven or on earth?

The key to understanding this question is found in the verb, "to meet." The Greek word used by Paul here is *apantesis*, and this particular word is loaded with meaning which does not come forth in our English translation of the word. It is a word which was used in ancient times to describe the actions of an official welcoming delegation that had been sent "to meet" a visiting dignitary. Thus, it literally means, "meeting and returning with." It was customary back then (as it is today) that when a V.I.P. visits a city, the leader of that city send out a delegation to welcome him and escort him to the mayor. Thus, when the Queen of England visited President Ford during the American Bicentennial, she was not expected to get off the plane and call a cab to take her to the White House. No, she was met by a special committee that escorted her to the White House.

Therefore, when Paul uses the term *apantesis* to describe our action in meeting Messiah, he uses this particular term to show us that we are going to be sent TO ESCORT MESSIAH BACK TO EARTH WHEN HE SETS UP HIS KINGDOM.

Those who find this information to be unbelievable may do further study on this Greek word by noting how it is used in other Bible passages. The word is used in three other New Testament passages:

(1) *Matthew 25:1 and 6* speaks of the ten virgins, who "went forth TO MEET the bridegroom." It was common practice in ancient times for the wedding party to escort the bridegroom to the bride after the mar-

riage supper.

(2) *John 12:13* speaks of Messiah's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (a prophetic type of Messiah's second coming at which time He will truly have a triumphal entry). It says that the people "took branches of palm trees and went forth TO MEET Him." Yahshua certainly did not turn around and escort the people back to Bethany with Him! No, the people escorted Yahshua to Jerusalem.

(3) *Acts 28:15* speaks of Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner. When the Believers heard that Paul was outside the city, "they came

Thus, we conclude that Paul was not teaching that Believers would return to heaven with Messiah, but rather that Believers would form Messiah's escort back to earth.

A few verses later (in chapter 5) Paul writes further about "the day of Yahshua."

2. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of Yahshua so cometh as a thief in the night.

3. For when they shall say, Peace and Safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

In reading this passage, most of us immediately picture Messiah coming as a burglar and stealing something of value in secret. However, 2,000 years ago a "thief in the night" usually meant something entirely different. It was common in those days for a band of robbers to swoop down upon an unprotected and unsuspecting village in the middle of the night, when the people were sleeping peacefully. The thieves would storm into town, throw everyone out of bed, strip the village of all its valuables, and kill anyone who resisted.

This is what Paul meant when he compared the return of Messiah to "a thief in the night" While the world sleeps in "peace and safety," then will come "sudden destruction" upon the wicked, "and they shall not escape." However, the Believers, who are "men" on the walls, will not be taken by surprise. They will have prepared themselves for this "sudden destruction" (called "tribulation"), and thus they will not be harmed.

Amos 5:18 has this to say about that day:

18. Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahweh! To what end is it for you? The day of Yahweh is darkness, and not light.

The prophet Joel echoes the same theme in Joel 1:15.

15. Alas, for the day! For the day of Yahweh is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Again, he describes the day in chapter 2, verses 1-2.

1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of Yahweh cometh, for it is nigh at hand:

2. A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread

upon the mountains; a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

The descriptions of this alien enemy invading the land fits perfectly the armies of Red Communism today. Yahweh said that they would be "my great army which I sent among you" (2:25) in order that the people might repent from their sins, call upon Yahweh for divine intervention and protection, and that Yahshua would then come to save them.

For the vast majority of the people, including, sad to say, many professing Believers, this day of Yahweh will come upon them unexpectedly. They will not have prepared themselves spiritually, mentally, or physically for such times.

So let us strive to be as those to whom Paul wrote: 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.'

Thus, we see that in I Thessalonians 4 and 5 Paul does NOT teach a pre-tribulation rapture, but rather that when Yahshua comes, we will welcome I-Jim back to earth, where He shall rile all nations in righteousness.

5. FOR HIS SAINTS AND WITH HIS SAINTS

It is common among rapture teachers to hear the theory that the Bible teaches two separate comings of Messiah in the future-the first time FOR His saints, and the second time WITH His saints. In other words, the theory says that Messiah will only snatch the Believers off the earth when they go out to "meet Him in the air," and then after a period of either 3 1/2 or 7 years in heaven, Messiah will return to earth WITH those Believers.

This is not true. The Assembly will all stay here till the end of the tribulation when He comes for them to include them in His final judgment.

This theory of a double coming is only partially based upon 1 Thessalonians 4:17, 18. It is mostly based upon Jude 14 and 15, which reads:

14. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, Yahweh cometh WITH ten thousands of His saints,

15. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince (convict) all that are unrighteous among them of all their unrighteous deeds which they have committed, and of all their hand speech which unrighteous sinners have spoken against Him.

Yahshua did come with ten thousand angels at Sinai, but these are not the saints that will come with Him, to judge the world at the end time, at the last Trump, the last Feast of Trumpets at the end of the three and one half years. Nor was Sinai the time when all were judged. The coming at Sinai was to give the law, not to judge! One must realize also, that in some scriptures saints represent angelic host (Deut 33:3), where in others like Jude, (Matt 27:52; acts 9:13; Rom 1:7) represents the believers or the very elect that are in the first resurrection. This also includes the two witnesses that are called up and are raised from the dead as they lay in the streets of Jerusalem. (Rev 11:3)

Now when Yahweh (Yahshua) descended upon Mount Sinai to give the Law to Israel, did He come

with ten thousand Believers? No! He came with angelic host, but the term saints now means the ones that died in faith or were alive at His coming. These verses 14 and 15 are speaking of the judgment and Yahshua's final victory over all His enemies and to claim the earth as His throne, dwelling at Jerusalem. There is not two coming as we hear the Sunday people say, but one. One return at the end of the tribulation to take them up or meet Him in the clouds and escort Him back to finish the judgment. It can not be any other way. To start with, look at Revelations 1:7.

7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so...

This is the return that is prophesied when He shall raise the dead and come to judge at the same time. See that all will see Him. But, if He were going back to heaven, the third heaven of a fourth dimension, why will the earth all see Him and wail? They will wail because He comes to judge and destroy, just as Jude said. Look now at Matthew 24:29-31.

29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30. 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.

31. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather her his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other.

Again we see that He does come with angelic host, but also to gather His elect to Him as He returns. And notice that it says after the tribulation this occurs. Nowhere does it say that He comes twice, or even at the beginning. The Assembly is still an earth during the tribulation! Remember, all scripture has to agree. And every fact is established by two or more witnesses as we give you here. Now look at what happens to the Assembly in the end time.

Revelation 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the face of the serpent

See that John is very specific. He says that she is in the wilderness, which can not be heaven. And he says that she is there for the entire time of the tribulation, three and one half years. If this is not enough, let us go to the book of Corinthians for a third witness.

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.

We have already seen that the dead are raised and given glorified bodies at His coming Here it makes it clear that that coming is at the last trumpet of Revelation, at the end of the tribulation or three and one half years.

Now let us finally go to the first scripture that was mentioned, but was not discussed, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

14. For if we believe that Yahshua died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Yahshua will Yahweh bring with him.

15. For this we say unto you by the word of Master, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Master shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16. For Yahshua himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of Yahweh: and the dead in Messiah shall rise first:

17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet Yahshua in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Master.

What does this say? Yahshua will come at the last trumpet, and raise the elect and we will be with them and meet Him at His coming. What could be plainer than that. Notice also that it says that they that sleep in Him shall be raised. This means two things. It means that they died in faith keeping the commandments and whole covenant including Saturday Sabbath, but they are in the ground sleeping, not in heaven as the Sunday doctrines teach.

So in conclusion of this discussion of "FOR HIS SAINTS AND WITH HIS SAINTS" it is a clear teaching of error to say that Yahshua comes twice. It is error to say that He comes at the beginning or the middle of the tribulation. Even Yahweh, our father Himself said in Psalms 110:1.

1. Yahweh said unto my Master, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make throe enemies thy footstool.

This explains that Yahshua stays at the right hand of Yahweh as intercessor till He comes to finish the judgment after His enemies are made His footstool. Any other doctrine is not the doctrine of Messiah.

6. ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, THE OTHER LEFT

Matthew 24:37-42 is perhaps the second most popular Bible passage (other than 1 Thessalonians 4:17, 18) to teach the pre-tribulation rapture of the assembly. The passage is a comparison between Messiah's second coming and the days of Noah leading up to the flood. Yahshua said here:

37. But as the days of Noe (Noah) were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38. For as in the days that were before the flood, they (THE WICKED) were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39. And knew not until the flood came and took them (THE WICKED) all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40. Then shall two be in the field; the one (THE WICKED) shall be taken, and the other (THE BELIEVER) left.

41. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one (THE WICKED) shall be taken, and the other (THE BELIEVER) left.

As you noted in reading the above verses, the flood of Noah's time took the wicked people away (off the earth). In the same manner, when Messiah returns, the coming of the Son of man will see the wicked taken away, and the righteous will be left to inherit a cleansed earth, AS DID NOAH.

Those who teach the opposite view, that the one "taken" is the believer and the one "left" is the unbeliever, miss the fact that the plural pronoun "them" can only refer to all the wicked people in verse 38. "Them" could hardly refer to Noah's family, because the wording of the passage is such that Noah is referred to individually. It would have been poor grammar to use a plural pronoun in reference to the singular noun, "Noah."

There is also the obvious fact that Noah was not removed from the earth, but was rather preserved THROUGH the flood ("tribulation"). If Yahweh can protect His Covenant people here on the earth as He did with Noah and his family, then why must we think that Yahweh must remove Believers from the earth in a rapture in order to protect them?

However, be that as it may, since there is some question involved in this passage as to who was removed, let us allow Yahshua's other parables to interpret the meaning for us. Do other passages teach a "taking away" (removal) of the Believers from the earth, or do they teach the "taking away" of the wicked? In other words, do other Bible passages teach the rapture of the assembly or the "rapture" of the wicked?

7. THE CLEANSING OF THE KINGDOM

The Scriptures are full of references to the wicked ones being removed from the earth, so that the righteous may inherit a cleansed Kingdom. Solomon wrote in Proverbs:

1. The righteous shall NEVER BE REMOVED; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. (Proverbs 10:30)
2. For the upright shall dwell in the land....But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it. (Proverbs 2:21, 22)
3. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For Yahweh shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. (Proverbs 3:25, 26)

Isaiah also echoes this same theme in Isaiah 13:

9. Behold the day of Yahweh cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and HE SHALL DESTROY THE SINNERS THEREOF OUT OF IT.
13. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of Yahweh of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger.

The prophet Haggai also refers to the day of Yahweh, when Messiah shall come in judgment. Haggai 2:6 says,

6. For thus saith Yahweh of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.

The New Testament author of the book of Hebrews referred to this passage in Haggai in Hebrews twelve.

26. Whose voice then shook the earth, but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.
27. And this word, "yet once more." signifieth the REMOVING OF THOSE THINGS THAT ARE

SHAKEN, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28. Wherefore, we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve Yahweh acceptably with reverence and righteous fear.

In each case the theme is clear: Yahweh will soon shake the earth in tribulation, in order to throw down all man-made systems and in order to remove all the wicked from the earth. This shake-down will be so great in the day of Yahweh that only those things which support Yahweh's Kingdom will remain standing. Yahweh will cleanse His earth and rule all nations in righteousness.

Yahshua's parables of the Kingdom reveal the same theme as well. In Matthew 13:24-30 Yahshua pictured the Son of man planting good seed in his field, and then one night an enemy sowed tares among the wheat. In the parable, no one appeared to know about the tares until the wheat and the tares began to bear fruit (or go to seed). At that point the tares were discovered, and the servants asked what to do about it. The Son of man instructed them to await the harvest, lest the wheat plants be rooted up along with the tares.

Then the instructions were to "gather ye together FIRST THE TARES, and bind them in bundles to burn them." and then gather the wheat into the bam.

The lesson is clear for those who know what tares are. Tares are today known as zewan in Palestine. Tares look like wheat plants as they mature, but when they are full grown and begin to bear fruit, the fruit of the wheat is golden, while that of the tares is almost black. The wheat is nourishing, but the fruit of the tares is bitter and poisonous. Farmers have to remove each tare seed from the wheat before grinding the wheat to flour.

Thus, the tares were separated and removed from the wheat FIRST. The wicked are to be removed from the earth--not the righteous. Hence, we look not for the rapture of the assembly, but rather for the "rapture" of the wicked. Only then will come the "harvest," when the righteous will "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43).

Later in this same chapter Yahshua told another similar parable, in which a fisherman cast his nets into the water and drew to shore all types of fish, both good and bad. Then he sat down and separated the fish. Yahshua concluded the parable with these words:

49. So shall it be at the end of the world (age), the angles (elect of Yahweh) shall come forth, and SEVER THE WICKED from among the just.

Again, note that it is not the just who will be "removed," but rather the wicked. This is the constant and consistent theme throughout the Scriptures. We are never given any good reason to believe anything different.

8. CONCLUSION

In ancient times the prophets saw a long-term conflict between two great cities: Jerusalem and Babylon. Jerusalem was the city from which Yahweh ruled in righteousness; Babylon was the city from which the false gods ruled by their own man-made laws. These two cities represented two opposing systems of government, two different social orders, two different economic systems, and above all, two different religions. (Worship of Yahweh and followers of Baal).

Both of these cities were eventually destroyed, but their influences and systems lived on. In prophetic terms they are known as the New Jerusalem and Mystery Babylon. These are not literal cities any more. Mystery Babylon is not the old city, nor is the New Jerusalem the same as the old city of Jerusalem.

When Yahweh revealed to John the destruction of Mystery Babylon in Revelation 17-19, He told His people in chapter 18,

4...Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (Come out of the world and Beast power.)

5. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and Yahweh hath remembered her iniquities.

6. REWARD HER EVEN AS SHE REWARDED YOU, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

In other words, Yahweh has commanded Covenant people everywhere to leave the Babylonian system (political, social, economic, and religious Babylon), in order that we be not accomplices in her sins and thus receive her judgment.

Secondly, Yahweh commanded Covenant people to judge Babylon and reward her even as she rewarded you. The Law of Yahweh specifies that the witnesses against a criminal are to be first to stone those convicted of capital crimes. As Believers, we are witnesses against Mystery Babylon and will eventually be called to witness against her and stone her. The Law also demands that the offender pay double restitution to his victims in case of theft. Thus, Yahweh says to render to Babylon double what she has done to you. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:2,

2. Do ye not know that the saints will judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Thus, our righteous duties preclude us from leaving the earth before the time of judgment. Yahweh expects us to prepare ourselves to judge His enemies in Mystery Babylon. But we must be careful not to do so before the harvest, or we may uproot the wheat along with the tares.

But how shall we prepare ourselves to be used in the judgment of the Great Whore, if we are only planning to evacuate the earth before that judgment? This is not so much a question of salvation as it is a question of how much we will be used of Yahweh in His great plan for us, as part of our inheritance. (Psalm 149) When viewed from that perspective, it does make a great deal of difference which view of prophecy we take. Futurism, along with its child, the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture of the assembly, will provide little incentive for the average Believer to prepare to judge the world by the Divine Law. How many Believers today study the Law of Yahweh to learn the basic principles of Divine Justice?

Let us be about our Father's business and occupy till He comes again. Let us study to show ourselves approved unto Yahweh. Let us learn the basic principles of Bible Law and government, that we may be able to judge righteously. Let us prepare ourselves to rule with Messiah on the earth in a cleansed Kingdom.