

7. The Divine Refuge from the worldly storm

August 24, 2014

Have you ever heard the words “Doomsday Preppers”? You might have seen in a reality show from National Geographic Channel. A prepper is a person who believes a catastrophic disaster or emergency is likely to occur in the future and makes active preparations for it, typically by building a shelter and stockpiling food, water, weapons, ammunition, and other supplies.

I don't have a problem with being prepared, but lately, the idea of preparing for a catastrophic disaster became very popular as well as ideas of zombie. Though it started with a Haitian rural legend, it became very popular amongst young people between teens to thirty some year old in last 10 years, thanks to Hollywood movies.

What do these two concepts, doomsday preppers and zombies have in common? I wouldn't be surprised if the people on earth during the Great Tribulation period will be in these situations. Those who prepared for catastrophic disasters will face many disfigured people who look like zombies because they will be affected by the radiation from nuclear attacks during that 7 year Tribulation.

During that time, a nuclear war will probably be started by a trigger happy dictator like Kim Jung Un, the fat boy in North Korea. This juvenile is not a sharpest knife in the drawer, but he is full of arrogance and has a very itchy trigger finger .

Then, someone in this room or those who later watch this teaching video through YouTube would wonder, “But what about the born-again believers in Christ during the Great Tribulation?” I will go into a little more detail in some other time, but here are my quick answers for that question:

1) If you are a born-again Christian, before the Great Tribulation happens, you will be taken out of this world to heaven without experiencing death which we call the Rapture. You will fly away without help of a plane. It will be like “Beam me up, Scotty.” You don't need your frequent mileage number for this. Jesus is our Divine Refuge from the worldly storm.

2) If you are not a born-again Christian now, but you become a believer in Christ during the Great Tribulation period, then the Lord will take care of you, even if you get killed. You will be taken to heaven. If you survive through the Tribulation, you will enjoy the reign of Jesus Christ on earth forever without death.

After prophesying the judgment against 11 different kingdoms in chapters 13 through 23, Isaiah extended his prophecy of judgment against the whole world all the way into future that passes the present time in chapters 24-27.

A. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE EARTH

Isaiah 24:17-21 Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. 18 And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit, And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare; For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken. 19 The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. 20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again. 21 It shall come to pass in that day

That the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth. 22 They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished. 23 Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the Lord of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

As you watch the nightly news or read newspapers, don't you ever wonder when the Lord is going to judge those wicked people who do their horrible things to victims? Rest your hearts. The pathetic American justice systems might turn its blind eyes and deaf ears on those who need to be punished, but the Lord will not.

At the Great White Throne Judgment, those people will wish that they spoke one less lie and did one less wicked thing against the Lord and other human beings. The judgment of God will be inescapable, complete, precise, and righteous, because our God is no respecter of persons.

What we just read described in chapter 24 is what will happen during the 7 year Tribulation. Especially in v19 and 20, it describes major earthquakes that rattle everything around the world.

Some Bible scholars believe that it is the polar axis shift. As you all know the earth spins from west to east at the speed of about 1000 miles per hour at the equator. The earth axis is 23.5 degrees tilted so we can have four seasons. In Sahuarita and Green Valley, we have four distinctive seasons – "Kinda cool!" for winter; "Hot!" for spring; "Are-You-Kidding-Me? It's-Burning-Hot!" for summer; "It's-Still-Hot" for fall.

According to NASA web site, if the earth axis shifts, the people on earth will face catastrophic disasters – It would produce winds with speeds of thousands of miles per hour EVERYWHERE. This will initiate tidal waves and massive Tsunamis around the world as well. Anything not anchored to bedrock would be torn out of the soil and mixed with a world-enveloping hurricane of activity. The earth would remain engulfed in thick clouds of dirt, dust, and debris. Then, earthquakes of Richter scale magnitude 7 and MUCH HIGHER will shake everything out of its place.

Some of you are thinking, "I didn't come to church to hear this kind of dark and gloomy remarks." Newsflash, buckaroo! If you are not a born-again Christian, you will face it for 7 years if you can survive that long .

B. THE RAPTURE

Matt 24:36-39 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

When Jesus said, "No-one-knows," means exactly "No-one-knows." I don't know which part of this "No-one-knows" people don't understand. Whenever some lala land theologians come up with fancy formulas or some personal revelation they supposedly have received from Jesus for the date and time of the Rapture, a large number of people go for it hook, line, and sinker all the way down. They 'd rather believe what silly men say more than what Jesus did in the Bible. Please don't go for it.

Generally, there are four different concepts for the time of the Rapture. Those who believe that the Rapture will happen before the Tribulation are known as "Pre-Tribulation." Those who believe that the Rapture will happen sometime in the middle of the Tribulation are known as "Mid-Tribulation." The third camp is for those who believe that the Rapture will happen almost at the end of the Tribulation. They are known as "Post-Tribulation." Lastly there are a group of people who believe it will pan out somehow. We call them Pan-Tribulation. Usually they don't have any biblical reference to show their theory.

Why does the debate continue concerning the timing of this event? I believe it is due to misunderstanding to whom Jesus was speaking to:

Matthew 24:21-22 For then shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

On the basis of this verse, people say, "Aha! Here we see the elect in the Tribulation." However, they are failing to realize that the term "elect" can be referred to three groups of people: Christians (Colossians 3:12), Israel in general (Isaiah 45:4), and those who will be saved in the Tribulation.

So, to which of the elect does Jesus refer in Matthew 24:21? I believe the answer lies in the verse preceding it.

Matthew 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Even to this day, transportation in Israel is shut down on the Sabbath. Since the Sabbath means nothing to Gentile nations, the application is clearly to Israel people.

I had an occasion to talk with someone who was a staunch believer for the Mid-Tribulation. He made a good argument for how we can draw parallel lines between Matthew 24 and Revelation 6. So he firmly argued with me that the church would go through the Tribulation. The one very important thing he didn't include in his equation was that the 'elect' was not the church by the context from Matthew 24:20. It is the people of Israel.

Besides, you don't find anywhere from chapter 6 to 19 in the Book of Revelation referring to the church. Some people also argue that those who get saved during the Tribulation are the church. No, apostle John, the author of this Book, stopped using the word 'church' after chapters 1 through 3 of this Book, never again during the Tribulation period.

If you really like to stay around during the Great Tribulation, go for it. I am outta here with the first load. I am gone.

In case you want to study about the Pre-Tribulation theology, you can visit our church web site to download my sermon notes of "The 12 reasons for Pre-Tribulation Rapture". Here is the web address:
www.ccos.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/66-Revelation-03-03-jk.pdf

C. PRAISING THE LORD

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken.

This chapter 25 is a song of praise to the Lord from the believing remnant that He preserved during "the Day of the Lord" which is the Great Tribulation period on earth.

Due to Adam's sin at the Garden of Eden, death was introduced to mankind. But it was conquered by Jesus on the cross. And one day it will be completely eliminated by God.

Revelation 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Apostle Paul who was led by the Holy Spirit taught us about this as well in 1 Corinthians 15:

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone would say, "Ha, the Bible is using what Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet. No, trust me on this, Shakespeare got it from the Bible.

Ever since Jesus' resurrection, every born-again believer's dead body will experience resurrection on the day of the Rapture, not resuscitation:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Since death ran through the veins of Jesus Christ on the cross, who is life essential, it was swallowed up and will be destroyed at the end of the Great Tribulation. In addition to that, our Lord will wipe away tears from our faces for sadness of losing someone we love, because we will get to see them if they were born-again believers in the Lord.

C. IN HIS PERFECT PEACE

Isaiah 26:3-4 You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. 4 Trust in the Lord forever, For in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.

What a promise! Perfect peace! God promises that we can have perfect peace. In Hebrew, the term 'perfect peace' is actually "Shalom shalom." This shows how in Hebrew, repetition communicates intensity.

Many people around the world want peace. What they are looking for is the aspect of no threat, but with tranquility and serenity. It comes from the external. In other words, even if a person stays in a no threat serene environment, if that person does not have peace within one's heart, he or she does not have peace. At the same token, a person who has the peace with God and the peace of God can be in the middle of a life threatening war zone still has peace.

The problem is that you cannot have peace of God unless you first have the peace with God through Jesus Christ. As long as you refuse to surrender your life to Christ and receive Him as your Savior and Lord, you remain as an enemy of God. Once you become a born-again Christian, you will learn to have the peace of God through His Word by learning to trust Him more and more.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) No one is more secure than those who are in God's hands.

The flood waters that brought condemnation to the world lifted Noah and his family up above the judgment. They were secure in the ark of safety because they followed the Lord.

2) True peace does not come from what we can buy, rather it only comes from the One who paid for our sins with His sacrifice on the cross.