

"RAPTURE" or PROTECTION?

by
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- DOES THE WORD "RAPTURE" APPEAR IN THE BIBLE?
- WHAT DOES THIS TERM MEAN?
- WHAT SCRIPTURES HAVE BEEN USED TO SUPPORT THE RAPTURE THEORY?
- WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT YAHSHUA'S RETURN TO THIS EARTH?
- WHAT ABOUT THE GREEK WORD "PAROUSIA"?
- DOESN'T MATTHEW 24 PROVE THE RAPTURE?

Read this informative and enlightening article for answers to these and other questions you may have asked about this increasingly popular doctrine.

You are driving home from work one afternoon, relaxing after a hard day of toil. You may be daydreaming about relaxing in a nice warm bath before your supper. Suddenly, out of nowhere an automobile careens toward you. You are barely able to avoid a head-on crash by braking sharply and turning hard to the right. Badly shaken, you allow the car to roll to a complete stop and you get out to calm your nerves. Suddenly you realize that something very strange is happening to you. Your eyes reveal that a number of automobile accidents have just happened. A strange sound reaches your ears—something like the buzz of an angry bee, only much louder. Your eyes search the sky aloft and you are horrified to see an airplane dive full throttle into the side of a hill near you. The ensuing crash hurls debris over a wide area of landscape. Aloud you say to yourself, “Something must be terribly wrong. What is happening? Automobile accidents all around and now a plane crash for no reason. What could be happening?” You climb weakly back into your car and drive a short distance ahead to where traffic is stopped at an accident. In the one car two people are found dead, while in the other car - nobody! A driverless car has taken the lives of two innocent people in a head-on crash. Then you remember something strange about the oncoming car that had almost taken your life. There had been no one at the steering wheel as the vehicle flashed by!

You might think that such a situation that was described above could not happen. However, if you believe the theory of the “secret rapture” that is generally believed in fundamental ch-rchianity, the possibility is very real that it would happen, and you might not be able to avoid the head-on accident. If the “secret rapture” were to happen as many fundamental Christians believe, cars would crash into each other, planes would fall out of the

sky, trains would continue down tracks unattended and a whole host of other such incidents would occur. The reason for this development would be that the saved ones would suddenly be taken to heaven regardless what they would be doing at the moment.

Periodically we receive questions on the subject of the secret rapture. Since the teaching of the secret rapture is so popular and prominent in nominal ch-rchianity, many of our readers have had intimate contact with the teaching since their childhood. There are many people in ch-rchianity who quickly condemn all those who do not hold this doctrine. Unquestioningly they accept the doctrine, often without studying the subject for themselves. Many times these people feel that they hold the correct doctrine which is taught by the Bible and they refuse to look at the Scriptures which disprove the concept they have learned. Proving the veracity of the secret rapture doctrine conclusively from the Inspired Scriptures alone or disproving it should not be difficult if we read the Bible and then accept and believe what it says.

Defining the Term

The term “secret rapture” is not to be found in any literature earlier than 1830. This may astound some of the fundamentalists who believe it. It has come to mean a “catching away” of believers secretly before the tribulation begins. It was thought that the True Worshipers would be thus protected from the destruction and death that would result to the people of this earth if they were left here during the tribulation. The proponents of the doctrine believe that the Messiah will return in two phases. First, they say He will catch away His people before the tribulation begins so that they will be protected in heaven. Then either about the middle of the tribulation or at the end of the great time of trouble He will come back with His

saints to establish the Kingdom on earth, or else totally destroy the earth and take any remaining believers to heaven. Usually the illustration of Noah and the ark will be brought forth as an example of what will happen to the people of the Most High; apparently this is derived from Luke 17:26-27. ***“And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.”*** However, there is no record anywhere of Noah being taken to heaven, but he was protected while on earth. It is therefore simple to see that the Body of Messiah will also be protected right here on earth during the tribulation.

The word “rapture” is never found in the Bible and so another very important element of persuasion is lost to the proponents of that doctrine. In reality, there are a number of doctrines in ch-rchianity that are proclaimed very dogmatically but which are not found mentioned in the Bible at all, among them “trinity”, “rapture”, and “Christmas”, etc. The word “rapture” was apparently coined for a Bible doctrine in the mid-1800’s to denote the taking of the True Worshipers to heaven as a place of protection from the wrath of the Almighty during the tribulation. Rapture defined in the **Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary** is as follows: “to seize and carry away; a state of delight or ecstasy.” It is therefore readily discernible that the word “rapture” was employed to fit the doctrine rather than a doctrine being derived from a word found in the Bible.

Rapture then meant a catching away of the believers secretly just before the anti-Messiah was to take power and the tribulation would begin. According to the doctrine as it has been proclaimed by some of the fundamental Christian groups, this secret rapture was to take place

with the stealth of a thief in the night. Apparently some of the passages of Scripture that influenced the doctrine were Matthew 24:40-42. ***“Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill: one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore: for you know not on what day your Master comes.”*** Luke 17:34-36 is a parallel passage of Scripture that deals with this subject. ***“I say to you, In that night there shall be two men on one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. There shall be two women grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. There shall be two men in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.”***

Let us analyze the above passages. First of all, it will be observed that the word men (in Luke) and women (in both passages are in italics. Perusal of the Greek text will reveal that these nouns are **NOT found in the text**, but they are merely understood and the translators therefore inserted them into the translation. Consequently, they have been noted in italics in the **KJV**. It is then entirely permissible to omit them when reading and the sense of the passage will turn toward no specification of gender. Thus: two in one bed, one taken, the other left; two grinding, one taken, the other left; two in the field, one taken, the other left.

We may see the passage most explicitly explained when we take the Scriptural symbols to interpret each of the verses. Two in a bed means that both of them are being warned of things to come, the one who heeds will be taken by the Messiah. Please note here Job 33:14-18. ***“For El speaks once, Yes twice, though man regards it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, In slumberings upon the BED; THEN HE OPENS THE EARS OF MEN, AND SEALS THEIR***

INSTRUCTION, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, And hide pride from man; He keeps back his soul from the pit, And his life from perishing by the sword.” Consequently, reference by the Messiah to a bed is speaking about a warning that people receive from Yahweh when they are sleeping, in some supernatural way; one will heed and be accepted of Yahweh, the other will reject the warning and thereby be rejected from the Messiah’s Body.

Two grinding at the mill is also interpreted prophetically (and we must conclude that Yahshua’s references are prophetic) in Isaiah 47:2-5. ***“Take the MILLSTONES, AND GRIND MEAL; remove your veil, strip off the train, uncover the leg, pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and will spare no man. Our Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. Sit silent, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no more be called The mistress of kingdoms.”*** What Yahshua wished us to understand was that His coming would be in a time of war and slavery (grinding was the slave’s occupation) as well as the other characteristics (the uncovered head, scanty clothes, etc.) of the daughter of Babylon in Isaiah 47.

Finally we find the two in the field. This means that two would be in the world. Yahshua Himself has interpreted this symbol for us in Matthew 13:38, where He said, ***“The field is the world....”*** Two shall be in the world, meaning two separate religious groups, one shall be taken and the other left. This can be interpreted further as the Messianic True Worshipers standing steadfastly in a position of opposing all the other religions of the world which would be called Babylon. The ones who will be taken are those who have heeded Rev. 18:4 and have come out of religious confusion.

From the study of the above passages it is obvious then that one day Yahshua will return and select a group of people from among the other people. One group will be selected and taken, while another would be left. The group to be selected will be taken because they have prepared themselves to meet Him. The ten virgins of Matthew 25:1-12 is a good example of what Yahshua was trying to impress upon His disciples by these symbolic illustrations. Five wise virgins obtained enough oil and had filled their vessels with it in preparation for the coming of the bridegroom. The five foolish virgins had allowed their lamps to burn out and had not planned ahead so that their vessels would be filled with oil. When the bridegroom returned, the five wise virgins were ready and answered His call. They went with the wedding party into the marriage supper of the Lamb. Conversely, when the midnight cry went out, the five foolish virgins found that their lamps were extinguished and they had to hurry to the place of business of the oil merchant to purchase oil. When they returned from their shopping trip, they found that the bridegroom had already returned and when they went to the place of the marriage supper the door was shut! How final is that thought—shut! No admittance or access was available to them. Upon knocking at the door the foolish virgins were informed, ***“Truly I say to you, I know you not.”*** Those foolish virgins were rejected because they had not heeded the warning given to prepare themselves. Remember, the oil is symbolic of the Name of the bridegroom. Song of Solomon 1:3 reads, ***“Your oils have a good fragrance [Hebrew is shemen—oil]; Your name is as oil poured forth; Therefore do the virgins love you.”***

What Happens When Yahshua Returns?

Possibly the most frequently

made mistake by those who are unfamiliar with correct Bible study methods is to take a passage out of context. The doctrine of the secret rapture is one of those obvious mistakes that are made when one takes a few verses out of context and does not consider the big picture. There are many prophecies that apply to the True Worshiper today and Matthew 24 is one of those chapters. Nevertheless, in order to interpret the passage correctly, we must remember the vital term **"context."** The word means "continuous text," from the Latin com - together; texere - to weave."

What happens when Messiah returns? There are several passages of Scripture that will show -quite clearly what takes place at the time of the end of the age when Messiah returns. The first one we will consider is 1 Corinthians 15:50-52. ***"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Yahweh; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*** Paul shows that when the trumpet of Yahweh is sounded, the dead in the Messiah shall rise **FIRST** and **THEN** those who are still alive will be changed. There is no hint of a secret rapture here because the resurrection of believers occurs **first**.

Let us look at another even more crystal clear passage, also written by the Apostle Paul. "We wish you not to remain in ignorance, brothers, about those who sleep in death; you should not grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Yahshua died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Believers; Yahweh will bring them to life with Yahshua. For this we tell you as the Master's Word: we who are left alive until

the Master comes shall not forestall those who have died; because at the word of command, at the sound of the archangel's voice and Yahweh's trumpet-call, the Master Himself will descend from heaven; first the Believers who are dead will rise, then we who are left alive shall join them, caught up in clouds to meet the Master in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Master. Console one another, then, with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, **N.E.B.**

It is simple to determine from these passages of Scripture that when the righteous believers are caught up in the clouds to meet the Messiah in the air it will be **AFTER** the dead in the Messiah are raised. Both of these passages just quoted leave no doubt that the trumpet of Yahweh shall sound, the loud voice of the archangel shall give forth the command for the dead to be resurrected and the righteous Messianic worshipers will be caught up to meet the Messiah in the air. Notice that the righteous people will **MEET** the Messiah in the air—they will **NOT** return to heaven with Him. As He returns they will **meet** Him and then accompany Him back down to this earth as He restores this earth to order from the chaotic tribulation period. Please read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 carefully and this will help you to understand what takes place when the Messiah returns. ***"And to you that are afflicted [in tribulation, from Greek "thlibo," the root of the word "thlipsis"—tribulation] rest with us, at the revelation of the Sovereign Yahshua from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that do not know Yahweh, and to them that do not obey the good tidings of our Sovereign Yahshua: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of Yahshua and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed (because our testimony***

to you was believed) in that day."

When Yahshua the Messiah returns it will be during the time of great tribulation. He will be glorified in His saints at that time and He will take vengeance upon the wicked people of this earth who are deliberately disobeying the commandments of Yahweh after this Truth has been preached to all the world for a witness to all nations just before the end of the age. Consequently, it is already obvious that there will be **no secret rapture** because the True Worshipers will not meet Yahshua the Messiah in the air until He returns to judge the wicked people and to be glorified in His saints (at their resurrection).

A Harmony of Other Passages Confirming This Truth

Let us take this thought one step further and call forth some additional passages of Scripture to confirm that Paul was indeed correct in his presentation of eschatological time sequence. Let us turn to Philippians 3:10-11. ***"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death; if by any means I may attain to the resurrection out of the dead."*** A very interesting fact that emerges from consultation of the Greek text in this passage is the translation "the out from the dead resurrection" where the KJV renders "the resurrection of the dead." The first resurrection will indeed be the "out from the dead resurrection." Yahshua the Messiah said, ***"Leave the dead [those spiritually dead] to bury their own dead,"*** Luke 9:60. The human race is dead for all practical purposes, unless they have been begotten again by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh and regenerated by His supernatural life after they have repented of their sins. Therefore, we may observe that when the return of

Yahshua occurs it will be to **TAKE** the **spiritually alive people** who have been begotten by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh from the midst of the unbegotten wicked and we must remember that this “out from the dead resurrection” will be of those who have already died. Those who have a part in this better resurrection will rise into the air **FIRST** to meet the Messiah **before those who are alive and remain.**

Let us also notice Philippians 3:14. ***“I press on toward the goal to the prize of the high calling of Yahweh in the Messiah Yahshua.”*** This is usually explained to mean that the calling to be a True Worshiper is a high calling to live above the culture of the world. However, a literal translation from the Greek text reads, “According to a mark I pursue towards the prize of the above calling of Yahweh in Anointed Yahshua.” Paul declares the prize to be **the above calling or the calling above** of Yahweh in (by, with) Yahshua the Messiah. If we search throughout the pages of the Bible we can discover such a “**high calling**” in Revelation 11:11-12. ***“And after the three and a half days the breath of life from Yahweh entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell on them that saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying to them, Come up here. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies saw them.”***

Now that we have compared a number of Scriptures you should be able to see how they all harmonize. The two witnesses will be those who will be the **first** to be resurrected. They gave their witness of Yahweh’s Truth for three and a half years. **Then they give their lives in martyrdom.** For three and a half days their dead bodies will lie on the streets of the Holy City, Jerusalem. Then the spirit of life from Yahweh enters into them. They stand on their feet and at the great voice (of the archangel) the men ascend into

heaven (to meet the Messiah in the air). This is the **prize!** It is the **first resurrection!** As those two men rise into the air to meet the Messiah, the **following moment** is when those who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Messiah in the air.

Now let us notice Revelation 11:13. ***“And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were terrified, and gave glory to the Elohim of heaven.”*** Let us continue on to some other end-time prophecies to see how they fit in the picture puzzle of prophetic fulfillment, harmonizing exactly with this prophecy. Revelation 16:19, “And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came into remembrance before Yahweh to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.” Here we can see the effects of the earthquake when ten percent of the city of Jerusalem falls and seven thousand people die. Apparently, the city will be separated into three parts resulting from this terrible earthquake by the opening of fissures in the ground. Comparing Zechariah 14:4-5, we find: ***“And his feet shall stand IN THAT DAY upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall DIVIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT TOWARD THE EAST AND TOWARD THE WEST, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And you shall flee by the valley of my mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azel; yes, you shall flee, like as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.”*** The time element is now complete.

When the Messiah returns and once again stands upon the Mount

of Olives as we find predicted in Acts 1, there will be a fantastically powerful earthquake that will split the Mount of Olives into halves and form a great valley. Fissures from this earthquake will run into Jerusalem as the mountain divides and divide the city into three parts, killing seven thousand people and destroying 10% of the city. Now notice carefully, when this happens it will be **within ONE HOUR of the time (or at the exact same time) that the two witnesses are resurrected**, and as we have seen, those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Messiah will follow the resurrected dead into the air to meet the Messiah. Friends, you can already see there can be **no rapture** such as is commonly taught by the ministers of ch-rchianity since the people of Yahweh who are alive at the end will still be here all through the tribulation and will **follow** their resurrected brethren into the air to meet Yahshua the Messiah. When He returns, His Body of Believers will **meet** Him in the air and they will immediately come down on the Mount of Olives to establish the Kingdom of Yahweh.

Do you see how the prophetic Scriptures all harmonize; how they all enlarge upon the same picture when they are **ALL** brought together and studied? Actually, we now already have enough evidence from these prophetic passages to declare the doctrine of the secret rapture to be totally erroneous, but we have only just begun our study and we shall continue to unearth other passages that will further condemn it as we go through other prophetic passages.

Matthew 24

The time element of Matthew 24 and the other prophetic passages that Yahshua spoke to His disciples and other interested listeners is vital to our understanding of when He will return and under what conditions.

An amusing incident once happened to me. Sitting at the table with me during a wedding reception were some of my Christian relatives. In the course of our conversation the subject of the rapture emerged. One of them asked what I believed about the rapture. I informed them that there was no rapture to be found in the Bible and that the Scriptures were quite plain about this point. Self-righteously one of them remarked, "Well, if **you** want to stay here during the tribulation then stay, but **I'm** going to heaven!" My only answer was to turn to Matthew 24 and read several verses, but that was enough to produce a stunned silence. Let us read them here. "**For then shall be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.**" (Matthew 24:21-22). By way of inserting some parenthetical commentary, this passage shows that the tribulation will come upon **ALL** this earth after a period of worsening conditions such as are described in verse 7. They are called "**the beginning of sorrows**" in verse 8.

Possibly the reason for some people believing in a mid-tribulation second coming of Messiah or a rapture then is because of the clauses, "And except those days had been shortened," and "... those days shall be shortened." However, one interpretation of the shortened days may be found in Revelation 8:12, "**And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was struck, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it.**" We can read more passages similar in thought content and time element as this one. For instance, in Zechariah 14:6-7 we read, "**And it shall come to pass**

in that day, that there shall not be light; the bright ones shall withdraw themselves: but it shall be one day which is known to Yahweh; not day, and not night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light." You will notice also that the **elect are still here** during the tribulation and this is the reason Yahweh will intervene.

We can easily harmonize Matthew 24 now. This tribulation time will be one when conditions will be in such turmoil that it would be an era unique in history. **Never again** would things be as bad as in the Great Tribulation. Now notice how Yahshua blends this prophecy of Matthew 24 into Old Testament prophecy such as we have already seen. "**But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall 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: 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 on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels [the archangel leading with a shout] with the sound of the great trumpet [the last trump] and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**" (Matthew 24:29-31). (Note again the emphasized words.)

How perfectly clear and plain! Yahshua will gather His elect together from around the world immediately after the tribulation of those days. It will be a time when the earth will apparently be out of the restrictions of its orbit or will be spinning faster on its axis. From a reduction in the length of the day and night the earth will go into a kind of semi-gloom, neither light nor dark as the stars appear to fall from heaven. This effect could be

achieved if the earth itself would tear loose from its orbit and hurtle through space or if the rate of speed of its axis spin would be increased. Yahweh has predicted through the prophet Isaiah, "When the windows of heaven above are opened and the earth's foundations shake, the earth is utterly shattered, it is convulsed and reels wildly. The earth reels to and fro like a drunken man and sways like a watchman's shelter; the sins of men weigh heavily upon it, and it falls to rise no more," Isaiah 24:19-20, **N.E.B.** In Isaiah 13:13 we read, "**Therefore I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of its place, in the wrath of Yahweh of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.**" Since the days at the end of the tribulation will be cataclysmic, the earth will be a tortured wreck flying out of control. Perhaps this will come about through some atomic explosions or the influence of other planets or stars, in addition to the judgment of Yahweh which He pours out upon the wicked people of the age. The earth would be totally destroyed were it not for the intervention of Yahshua the Messiah. He will return to resurrect the righteous dead and gather the righteous living ones, beginning the Kingdom of Yahweh on a reformed earth. We do not deny that time at the close of the age will also be shortened because of the deplorable wickedness of the people, so this also could hasten the coming of Yahshua. "**For Yahweh will execute his word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short,**" Romans 9:28. As a sign that He is about to intervene, Yahweh will cause the earth to go into erratic orbital or rotational movements (just as in the time of Yahshua, Yahshua 10:9-15), but He will also at that time cut short the allotted time of the age of man. Therefore, **no man can tell the day or the hour** when Messiah will return, but the people of Yahweh will know the **approximate** time because we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:4,

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” We must be prepared to meet the challenge of the tribulation era and to meet the Messiah in the air.

Context Determines When Yahshua Will Take His People

After considering the fact that Yahshua the Messiah will only return **AFTER** the tribulation and gather His body to Himself, arriving on the Mount of Olives to establish the Kingdom of Yahweh, as we have read in Matthew 24, we may now determine the time element involved in the passage relating to those who are taken and left. You may review the verses in Matthew 24:40-41 and Luke 17:34-36. When you read the chapters in context you will note that these verses are speaking about the second coming of Messiah, when He comes to claim His bride and to establish the Kingdom of Yahweh on this earth. **There is nothing in either of these passages that REMOTELY HINTS at a secret rapture.** Yahshua wishes to warn His people that they should beware of turning back into the worldly culture even though He might delay His coming for them. He wishes to encourage them to seek to live for Him even though the world follows its carnal nature. He shows that when He returns He will select His own people from among those of the world; His people will be taken (called up to meet Him in the air) while the worldly people will be left to suffer the final punishment of the wrath of Yahweh. Consequently, it is absolutely obvious that even this one point that the proponents of the secret rapture use proves to be invalid and **will not stand the test of contextual scrutiny.** It might be pointed out here that so many erroneous doctrines disintegrate when we examine them in the light of context simply because one

can tear a verse out of almost any place in the Bible and **force it** to say something that was never intended by the author when He wrote down his thoughts contextually and systematically just as you and I think and speak. Consequently, context will determine the truth of a doctrine or its fallacy since it is the one concept that forces all to be truthful and honest with the Word.

Yahweh’s People Always Protected Through Times of Trouble

Throughout the Scriptures we find that the Word of Yahweh deals with the concept of remaking this earth into an Edenic paradise such as it was in the time of the creation. Man lost that paradise through sin and the earth became corrupted because of human misconduct and misuse. However, the last chapter of the Bible predicts that eventually after mankind has reached the end of their trail of rebellion, Yahweh will intervene and restore this earth to the potential for which it was originally created. Throughout the time of human rebellion against Yahweh’s righteous government, there would always be a witness for His truth in existence on earth. Although small in number as a group and scattered, sometimes only consisting of one person or one family, these people would submit themselves voluntarily to the government of our Heavenly Father and would renounce the worldly system of things. One might use for an example Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and EliYah (Elijah) the prophet. Each one of those men was protected miraculously by Almighty Yahweh throughout their lives.

Let us look at EliYah the prophet for just a moment. He was the servant of Yahweh and served as His representative during a time of great apostasy. Israel had accepted the worship of Baal and forthwith Yahweh had punished them for their religious aberration by send-

ing an extended drought upon the land. However, Yahweh protected His own representative by sending him to the brook Cherith where the ravens (Arabs) fed him. When the water of the brook dried up Yahweh sent him to the home of a widow of Zarephath where the vessel of oil did not run dry and the barrel of meal did not become empty during his stay. Read this faith-building account in 1 Kings 17. Almighty Yahweh **provided** for His representative during this terrible time of persecution and famine, not by taking him to heaven, but by taking care of him on this earth. He protected him also from the persecution of the Israelite state by hiding him from the destructive intents of Jezebel later in his ministry.

Now remember, the Assemblies of Yahweh today are fulfilling the same mission as that performed by EliYah the prophet, which you can see in Malachi 4:5-6. The Scriptures predict terrible famines for the last days at the close of the age, Matthew 24:7. We can see that when the two witnesses prophesy they have power to shut up heaven so that it will not rain during the time of their ministry, Revelation 11:6. This will be three and a half years, which is exactly the same period of the duration of the famine in the days of EliYah the prophet, Luke 4:25 and Jacob 5:17. Was EliYah taken to heaven as a place of protection during this time of religious trouble when Yahweh intervened in the affairs of men? Certainly not! We have already seen that EliYah received supernatural protection right here on this earth through miracles which happened to provide him with food and water, while he was also protected from the wicked intent of Jezebel to destroy him.

Will the people of Yahweh also receive protection during this time of trouble as they seek to feed the people of this world spiritual food? We can find that the people of this earth will be fed with spiritual food while they are in the wilderness

condition, Revelation 12:6. The two witnesses will be here witnessing in Jerusalem and they will be the chosen representatives of Yahweh, Revelation 11. No one can hurt them during their ministry because they are protected by Yahweh. The remainder of His people will also be protected.

Let us consider a little known passage here which will be helpful to our understanding. It is found in Isaiah 33:7-24. We hope that you will read this entire chapter at your earliest convenience. For your benefit it will be quoted from the Moffatt translation. "When the warriors wail in the open, and the envoys of peace weep sore, at treaties broken by the ruthless foe, reckless of any pledge; when the land laments and languishes, when Lebanon withers in shame, and Sharon sinks to a desert, and Bashan and Karmel are leafless; Yahweh cries, 'Now I arise, I will exalt myself; foes of my folk, your plans are all futile, your fury shall consume yourselves; nations shall be burned to ashes, like thorn-bushes cut and kindled; till lands afar hear all that I have done, and the near lands own my might.' In Zion sinful men are terrified, the impious are seized with shuddering, crying, 'Oh who can live with such a devouring Fire? Who can live on, with such a lasting Flame?' He who scorns to profit by oppression, he who will not clutch at any bribe, he who listens to no plans of murder, he who will not look at crime, he who lives uprightly, just in word and deed, he shall dwell far out of reach of harm, as in a stronghold on the cliff, secure, **his bread provided, and his water sure.** Your eyes shall see the King in all his splendour, and gaze upon his broad domain; till, musing on the terror that has vanished, you ask, 'Where are the tyrant's officers, who taxed us, charged us, took our tribute?' These insolent creatures you shall see no more, that folk with foreign tongue mysterious, who chattered in a jargon meaningless. No, you

shall see your quiet home, Jerusalem immovable, a tent whose pegs shall never be pulled up, whose ropes are never to be rent. And there, instead of broad streams circling round, we have the glorious Yahweh as our river, a river never raided by a galley, sailed by no ships of war; Yahweh Himself rules us, Yahweh is our captain, Yahweh is our king, He, He alone, defends us; even blind folk then shall share rich plunder, even lame folk loot at large; none in the land shall say then: 'I am sick,' for all who live there have their sins forgiven."

Do you see then that we will not go to heaven in some kind of secret rapture, but we will be protected supernaturally, as on a cliff secure, our food provided by Yahweh and our water supply will be assured even during this time of famine. We can count on Yahweh to protect us right here on earth because this will be the time when we must witness this Truth to all the people on earth as they are suffering judgment for their wickedness. Yahweh will protect His people just as He did in Egypt for the Israelites, while the plagues were falling on their Egyptian neighbors. He will keep His people from this hour of trial and testing which shall come upon all the earth to try those who dwell upon the earth, Revelation 3:10. When His people obey Him there will be no need to punish them with the wicked, but Yahweh is obligated to spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him, Malachi 3:17. It is imperative that we qualify now if we wish to receive that protection.

Parousia

While many fundamental Christians believe in a secret rapture, some of them have taken a word out of the Scriptures and have built a case for a **SECRET second coming** long before the Messiah returns **visibly**. According to their contention this occurred in 1914. No one has seen the Messiah return

then, but He returned invisibly and is now ruling in the midst of His enemies, they say. Apparently this is derived from the translation of the Greek word "parousia" as found in **Strong's Concordance**. Let us examine this word.

In the **Strong's Concordance** Greek Lexicon you will find the word listed as #3952. The definition reads, "a being near, i.e. advent (often return; spec. of Messiah to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked); (by implication) physically - aspect." It has been translated in the KJV as "coming or presence."

Does this then indicate that the Messiah only came secretly in 1914 and is now ruling in the midst of His enemies? Periodically we learn of various groups setting dates for the Messiah's return. **No one knows the day nor the hour when He will return and this is by His own mouth!** Matthew 25:13, **"Watch therefore, for you know not the day nor the hour."** See also Matthew 24:42, Mark 13:35-37, Luke 21:34-36. Let us examine also Matthew 24:44 before we continue with this study. **"Therefore be you also ready; for in an hour that you think not the Son of man comes."** Does that sound as though anyone would know the day or the hour when Yahshua would return? One group set the date 1914 as the time for Yahshua's second coming just as another group had set 1844. When the date passed without the return of Yahshua the Messiah, some other explanation had to be fabricated to substantiate the date as being accurate, so it was decided by this group to produce a "secret" second coming. Now when you don't wish someone to be able to prove something, the best way to handle such a situation is to invent some intangible or abstract theory. However, the Inspired Scriptures condemn the concept of a secret second coming just as they do the secret rapture.

Let us call forth several other Scriptures to substantiate that when

Yahshua returns it will not be with a **“secret coming”** nor with a **“secret rapture.”** *“... every eye shall see him,”* Revelation 1:7. Notice also those identical words in Matthew 24:30. *“... and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”* Yahshua has already said that when He returns it will be a visible coming and it will be with such brightness that it will slay the wicked. ***“And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Sovereign Yahshua shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and annihilate by the manifestation of his coming,”*** 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Yahshua the Messiah is not secretly here among us at this moment, any more than He was in the previous 1800 years since His ascension into heaven. He has always been here with His people in the world through His Holy Spirit and that Holy Spirit is calling from among the masses of the world a people for His Name. When He returns it will be when the **“anti-Messiah”** is ruling and this man will be destroyed by the **brightness of His coming!** Certainly you can see a prophecy of a visible coming here because it will be an illuminating glow of such intensity that all can see it. This did not happen in 1914 nor has it occurred up to the moment this article is being written. The event is still future because when it happens all people on earth will know about it since they will see Him returning.

Where Did the Rapture Theory Originate?

Some time ago a little paperback book of only 123 pages came to my desk which traces the history of the rapture theory to its source. The book is called **“The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin.”** It was written by Dave McPherson and the book was published by Heart of America Society, Kansas City, Missouri, copyright 1973. This book was favorably

reviewed by Dr. J. Barton Payne for the **Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society**; Dr. Payne is the professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis and is a fundamental theologian of note.

In this book Mr. MacPherson traces the origin of the secret rapture (he calls it the Pre-Trib—tribulation—rapture) and its ultimate source in 1830 to a Miss Margaret MacDonald. At this time the young lady was having visions and dreams more than likely brought on because she was dangerously ill, almost at the door of death. There is even some evidence presented in the book that there may have been a “speaking in tongues” manifestation among the little group of people who were involved in this incident, although there is no record of Margaret herself engaging in it. Let -us quote here from a narrative published by Robert Norton in a book called, **“The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church,”** 1840, as quoted in the book under consideration. “Throughout the morning I had felt very unwell, and disinclined to converse with any one; so much so that when Mrs. _____ called as usual to inquire for me, I wished not to see her, and told her I was not able to talk with her, but she might pray. A few verses of the 106th Psalm were sung: while singing that part of it ‘His tender mercy doth endure,’ &c. I was quite overpowered with a sense of the presence of [Yahweh], and constrained to cry out, ‘Eternity, eternity will never unfold its depth.’ Immediately I was so swallowed up in [Yahweh] I did not see those who were with me in the room, nor hear their voices singing, but I heard the trump of [Yahweh] sounding in my ears so loud that all other sounds were lost. Indeed I heard unutterable things: the sound of the trumpet seemed to wax louder and louder as if that moment [Yahweh] was to have been revealed. I felt surrounded by the

heavenly hosts, a multitude which no man could number, and heard them singing ‘Alleluia, for [Yahweh Elohim] omnipotent reigneth.’ Oh, it was a blessed sound, and I felt constrained to join with them, and sing loudly the same glorious song. I did not feel on this earth - I thought it had vanished at the presence of [Yahweh]. In spirit I saw [Yahshua] coming in the glory of His Father and of all the holy angels, so that I was quite swallowed up in transport. I thought I had just to open my eyes and see the King in his beauty. No language can express the glorious things which were made to pass before me, nor the power with which they were brought to me. I was constrained to cry out for a speedy revelation of the glory that all flesh might see it. I felt there was indeed a weight of glory, and a need be that we should be changed in order to bear it. While I was desiring so much the speedy arrival of the day of [Yahshua], that passage ‘[Yahweh] so loved the world,’ &c. was powerfully impressed on me, and that the long suffering of [Yahweh] is salvation, not willing that any should perish. I felt that the spirit of [Yahshua] was weeping, the same as He did over Jerusalem, over the world which was daring Him to His face. But the unbelief of the world seemed nothing in comparison of the coldhearted indifference of the people of [Yahweh] to the souls of men perishing around them, whilst [Yahshua] was longing with an intense desire to make himself known to them. I saw the want of the mind of [Messiah] in an awful manner, and how the Spirit was grieved in them, as if they hindered the work of [Yahweh] and the coming of [Messiah]; seeing that nothing kept back his appearing but that souls might be brought in. I heard as it were the Spirit saying ‘O will ye not ask that I may give life to dead souls.’ A great many passages were brought to me about the willingness of [Yahweh] to give whatever we would ask; it was as if [Yahshua] stood saying

'Ask that ye may receive,' and I was constrained to cry to those who were with me to ask for souls to be brought to [Yahshua]. I felt the love of [Yahweh] to the world in a way I had never done before, and that [Yahshua], the same yesterday, today, and forever, was longing over souls with an intensity of love altogether inconceivable. It appeared so awful that His people should be so little of one spirit with Him, instead of crying night and day for them, seeing that the day of salvation would so soon be over; and that it was the unbelief and limiting of [Yahweh] which His own people were guilty of, which hindered mighty works from being done. I was made to cry much that there might be a great ingathering before the day of [Yahweh]. Whilst so doing the ministers who are now preaching and writing against the truth, were brought before me as standing in the way. No language can express the agony of spirit I felt. The passages in the prophets where woes are denounced against unfaithful pastors, were brought before me as awful truths. The words 'Hell hath enlarged her mouth' were all I could utter. I wondered we would cease crying for mercy in them." (Pages 59-60) [Sacred Names inserted by the Assemblies of Yahweh.]

By 1834 the rapture theory had taken such root that an associate of Miss MacDonald could write to his sister the following letter. "And now Mary I have given you this imperfect outline of my [Elohim's] wondrous and merciful dealings with me, the most worthless sinner to whom ever grace and pardoning mercy was extended; and all the men in the world may rise up and cry delusion, fanaticism, imposture, yet I will (by grace) believe my [Elohim's] guidance in all this and wait patiently upon Him that He may carry on His work in His own way and perfect that which concerneth us and maketh us ready for His appearing. And why do I write this to you? Is it to gratify your curios-

ity? No! it is to show you in all this I have not acted inadvisedly, nor rashly, but patiently, yielding myself to the guidance of [Yahweh]. It is because I am anxious if possible, to remove prejudice out of your mind. It is because I believe the time of Babylon's destruction draweth nigh. It is because I love you and John that you also should flee out while yet there is time, while yet there is mercy (But he seemed as one that mocked unto his son's in law Gen. xix 14). It is because the time of the world's doom draweth nigh, it is because the time of sealing is come, it is because [Yahshua] is nigh, even at the door. It is because there is no safety where you are, because you cannot be sealed where you are, it is because if you are not sealed you must be left in the tribulations, while those who have obeyed His voice shall be caught up to meet Him. It is because of these things and because I love you, that I have written to you so large a letter with my own hand, and I commend it unto [Yahweh's] hand, I pray Him to bless it to you, to John and Anna. It is for His glory I have written it. May His own good will and pleasure be done with it, it is useless to multiply words. May grace and mercy and peace be yours etc etc." Ibid.

Mr. Mac Pherson has stated in his book that there is no record of any rapture theory being preached in nominal christianity before the incident just quoted. At the time when Miss MacDonald was having her manifestations there was a little group of believers seeking to restore the Apostolic worship. However, it is obvious from reading the book that their efforts were unfruitful because they retained unscriptural concepts and ideas that had crept into Messianic worship over the intervening eighteen centuries since the Messiah had placed His Faith into the hands of the Apostles. It could be that these erroneous ideas were responsible for the thoughts of Miss MacDonald, or it could also be that she was slightly delirious from her

illness. However, since her doctrine did not square with what the Bible teaches it should have been ignored.

Nevertheless, a book was published by her minister, Pastor Robert Norton, and was undoubtedly read by a number of other preachers. They promulgated the doctrine of a secret rapture in their sermons rather than doing as they have been instructed to do in 2 Timothy 4:2. Ideas about the Bible sometimes appear to be plausible, but the Bible itself is the final authority and must be consulted to prove whether these doctrines are in harmony with it's teachings. If as we have just shown, the theory is in error, then it must be rejected with no further hesitation.

Trial By Fire

The Bible contains some additional points that show the time sequence of events just before the Messiah returns. We might turn to Matthew 13:24-30 where the account of the wheat and the tares is found. The parable shows that the good man (Yahweh) sowed good seed in His field (the world), but while he slept an enemy (Satan) came and sowed tares among the wheat. The good man's servants asked their master if they should pull up the tares. He told them, "**No, lest while you gather up the tares, you root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn,**" verses 29-30. If we turn to Revelation 14:14-20, we will see that the harvest of the earth (both, good and bad people) is reaped almost simultaneously, where the wheat is harvested and then the grapes are thrown into the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Yahweh.

As we have seen, fire plays an important part in the judgment of the wicked people of the earth and it will also play a vital role in the

refinement of the people of Yahweh. Let us turn to 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. Here we read, ***“For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Yahshua the Messiah. But if any man builds on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work shall endure which he built on it, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.”***

How perfectly plain and clear! Each person will have to stand a test and that will be in the fire of judgment when the wicked people are destroyed. Each person’s work must be tried by fire to see what sort it was that was erected upon the true foundation, Yahshua the Messiah. Those who have built with sound material will be spared, but the works of those who build with error will be destroyed. So there will be no secret rapture but protection for the righteous who have erected a true Spiritual house.

Let us take several more Scriptures into account that will focus upon this fiery trial of each person. We read in Zechariah 13:8-9, ***“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, says Yahweh, two parts in it shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left in it. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Yahweh is my Elohim.”*** Once more we may observe that Yahweh has predicted that He will bring a portion of the people of this earth through the refining fire of judgment because He will protect them. He will give them

this blessing because they trust in Him and call upon His Name. He does not promise to take them to heaven during that period of judgment, but that He will bring them through the trial without harm by protecting the faithful ones.

Another passage of Scripture that deals with this same subject of Malachi 3:1-3. ***“Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and Yahweh, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, behold, he comes, says Yahweh of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Yahweh offerings in righteousness.”*** Once again we have a passage of Scripture that describes a refinement to take place when the Messiah returns to His temple. He will refine His ministers so that they can offer an offering in righteousness to Him. There will be a fiery trial of the believers also, while the wicked are being destroyed. Yahweh will give protection to those who know His Name and revere it. He will shelter them if they have built their spiritual house with enduring sound doctrines and have come to know Him. Again we should note that there is no hint of being taken to heaven, but once more it is obvious that the believers will be protected right here on this earth.

Psalm 91

This well-known Psalm is an excellent example of the Old Testament promises relating to protection of the True Worshipers during the terrible time of trouble predicted to come upon this world in the end days. Almighty Yahweh inspired Psalm 91 to be written to encourage the Body

of Messiah to maintain their faith steadfastly in His promises. The Psalm begins with the declaration that those who dwell in the hiding place (KJV - secret place) of the Most High shall abide (live) in Yahweh’s protection. Yahweh will protect His people from any evil in this time of trouble. Notice verse 15-16 carefully. ***“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, And show him my salvation.”*** Both the beginning and ending of this Psalm reveal the benevolence of Yahweh as He spares His people from harm in the shelter He will provide for them. No hint of a rapture appears here and yet it is obvious that this Psalm describes the tribulation. The people of Yahweh are still here during this period.

Psalm 91 is a graphic portrayal of the tribulation period. Notice the words, pestilence (verse 3), terror (verse 5), arrow (possibly guided missiles, verse 5), pestilence and destruction (verse 6). These things are also described in Revelation 6:1-8 and Matthew 24:5-24. The reader must realize that when the Apostle John was shown his vision he was unable to describe the things he saw in modern language, but he wrote down a description of the vision as best he could in the terms he knew. For this reason some people feel that the prophecy of Revelation cannot be understood, however, we must realize that it is the “unveiling” (uncovering) of Yahshua the Messiah rather than His attempt to hide something from His people.

Notice the devastation that is described in verses 7-8. ***“A thousand shall fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you behold, And see the reward of the wicked.”*** If we take these numbers literally it means that one righteous person would be spared while he is standing among eleven thousand

wicked people who are slain. This means that in a city of a hundred thousand people nine people would escape, so don't be alarmed if you think that the Assemblies of Yahweh is small or insignificant. Those who will be saved and spared will also be indeed few in number. Rejoice that you have found that little flock! If you take the world population figure and divide it by 144,000 you would arrive at a figure of one person in a little less than twenty thousand people, so the Psalmist was very close to the population figure of the end times. This is another indication that we are today rapidly approaching the designated time when these prophecies would be fulfilled.

Now notice the protection offered by Yahweh. ***"For you, O Yahweh, are my refuge! You have made the Most High your habitation; There shall no evil happen to you, Neither shall any plague come near your tent. For he will give his angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and adder: The young lion and the serpent shall you trample under foot."*** (verses 9-13).

Here again we can see that when someone is living under the protection of the Almighty He will be spared from any harm. Although he will be able to see all around him the punishment of the wicked, none of those things will fall upon him. It is clearly obvious that there will be no rapture but that the teaching of the Bible on the end times

is protection from harm right here **on this earth.**

What is the reason why Almighty Yahweh promises to protect His people from harm during this time of judgment? We have already seen that the **TRUTH of Yahweh** will be the shield and buckler (armor) around the people of Yahweh, verse 4. Then in verse 14 we find a new concept inserted. ***"Because he has set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because HE HAS KNOWN MY NAME."*** Those who think that there is no need to get plenty of oil in their vessels will not be heeded when the earth endures this time of trial and testing. Those virgin believers who have acquired plenty of oil (the Sacred Name) in their vessels (their minds and hearts) will be blessed with answered prayer and protection. When one obeys the Truth of Yahweh and keeps His Word, calling upon His Name in faith, no evil will befall him and he will be spared from judgment. Essentially the reason is because Almighty Yahweh will not have to judge anyone who is doing His Will, but He is obligated to spare him in time of trouble because he is obedient to the Truth. This is the blessing of Yahweh upon those who have entered into a covenant with Him. Have you entered into this agreement with Yahweh? Are you making His Truth your armor of protection? Are you calling upon His Name through Faith in Yahshua the Messiah? Time is short and you should begin to acquire these things now.

Conclusion

An article such as this demands a summary and conclusion. By reflecting a few moments on the contents it should be obvious that there is no promise of any secret rapture of the believers before the tribulation, but there is protection offered by the power of Yahweh. One could write an even more lengthy paper on this subject were all of the Scriptures that apply to it to be employed. However, we have taken some of the most outstanding texts and brought them to your attention.

Perhaps the standout passage is Matthew 24:29-31. It is obvious that the elect of Yahweh will still be here on this earth during the tribulation and immediately after the tribulation they will be gathered when the great trumpet sounds and the angels assemble them from their scattered places around the earth. There can be no quarrel with this passage because it tells the entire story in order of prophetic time sequence. We might note that Yahshua warns His readers to beware and not be led astray during this troublous time by following the false messiahs, leaving us no doubt that during the tribulation period they will still be flesh and blood, right here on this earth with the power over their own lives. Daniel 11:35 shows that some will fall to try the others.

This article demands a conclusion from each reader. Will you come out for sound doctrine? Or will you continue to hold fast to unprovable theories that will deceive you when in fact you need to be doing something to prepare for the time ahead?