

The Rapture of the Wicked

by John Weaver

The Bible teaches that the wicked will be forcibly seized and snatched away, both in time and in history, and permanently at the coming of our Lord.

Duration: 57:19

Scripture: Joel 3:13, 2 Peter 2:3-6, Revelation 12:5

Topics: "Rapture"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses questions asked before he left and aims to provide answers through various passages from the Bible. The title of the message is 'Our Hearts Content: We are More Than Conquerors Through Him Who Loved Us.' The preacher emphasizes that as wickedness increases in the world, so will God's judgment, which serves as evidence of a future judgment to come. He references 2 Peter chapter 2 to highlight God's judgment on angels, the old world, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The preacher also emphasizes that association with a godly person does not guarantee salvation, as seen in the example of Lot's wife.

Transcript

The message that I'm going to preach today is predicated and based upon some questions that were asked me before I left and I'm going to try to answer some of those questions and hopefully show you several passages that will give you something to consider. Now, I'm going to preach a message and I'm going to give you the title of it and you're going to be very surprised at the title, but I think before I finish you'll see why I entitled it like this. The name of this message is just simply, The Rapture of the Wicked.

The Rapture of the Wicked. Now, that's an amazing statement and an amazing subject. Now, let me begin by saying that when you begin to study eschatology, eschatology is the doctrine of last things.

Eschatos is the Greek word for last. Now, when you study eschatology there are three main eschatological positions. They are premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism.

Now, let me just go ahead and say this. I have very many dear friends that hold each of those eschatological positions. I never make eschatology a matter of fellowship.

In reality, neither should you because it is a subject on which many good men disagree. Now, let me point something out. A premillennialism, an amillennialism, and a postmillennialism all believe that Jesus Christ

is coming back literally, visibly, and bodily.

They just disagree on when and how. You follow me? So, the main point is though every one of them agree that he's coming back literally, visibly, and bodily. Now, when you begin to think about premillennialism, you've got to understand that there are two basic positions.

There is what is known as historic premillennialism. Historic premillennialism did not and does not believe in a rapture. Dispensational premillennialism is that which teaches the rapture.

Now, I'm going to share something with you this morning which you can find for yourself, but there is a book out. It was written by Dave McPherson, and the name of the book is The Incredible Cover-Up. The book originally was published under the title The Unbelieved Origin of the Pre-Trib Rapture Theory, but it's a book that is well worth reading because Dave McPherson documents in his book that the dispensational view of the rapture was begun in the 1800s by a woman by the name of Margaret MacDonald.

She was a self-styled prophetess who one day, supposedly under the influence of God, she was speaking in tongues and had a vision and related to a Roman Catholic priest the theory of the dispensational rapture view of the church. This Roman Catholic priest then taught this concept to a man by the name of John Nelson Darby. Now, John Nelson Darby was of the Plymouth Brethren.

He was an individual who was quite prominent in the Plymouth Brethren movement, but John Nelson Darby had a student who was studying under him who was very adept, and this student took this theory, believed it, and then he put it in the footnotes of a bible. Would you like to guess who this student was? Cyrus Ingersoll Scofield, C.I. Scofield. And so the dispensational rapture view really did not even come into existence until the 1800s.

That is when all of the quote-unquote prophetic conferences really began. Historic premillennialism never held to a rapture. Historic premillennialism just believed that Jesus Christ was coming back for his own.

Now, the word rapture itself does not occur in the bible. Of course, there are several words that are used quite frequently that do not occur in the bible. For instance, the word trinity does not occur in the bible, but the word rapture is not in the bible.

The word rapture that we have is from the Latin word rapio, which means literally to seize or to carry by force. Sometimes the word rapio is even used in reference to rape. So the word actually means to seize or to carry by force.

Now, there is a difference between what is known as the rapture theory and the fact that our Lord is coming again. I've repeatedly told you, and I'm saying this again for emphasis, historic premillennialism did not believe in the rapture. However, historic premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism all believe that Jesus Christ is returning visibly and bodily and will indeed gather his own into himself and destroy the wicked.

Now, the Greek word that is normally used for the catching up of the saints, this word is harpazo. It is used in our bibles, I think, 13 times, and only one time out of the 13 does it have reference to the saints. Now, let me show you how this word is used.

Look in your bibles, whole Luke 17, we're certainly coming back there, but look in your bibles to begin with to Matthew 11 and verse 12. And we're talking about the word harpazo, which is translated in 1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 17, caught up. Okay, here it is.

Matthew 11 and verse 12, he says, and from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence and the violent, take it by force. Now the phrase, take it by force is from the Greek word harpazo. So it literally means to seize or to catch by force.

Now look in Matthew 13 and verse 19, here is a scripture where our Lord is talking about how Satan snatches away the word of God. And he says in verse 19, when anyone here at the word of the kingdom and understand it, did not then come at the wicked way and catch it away or take it away or forcefully takes away that which was sown in the heart. So note now it has reference to taking by force.

Now look in the book of John chapter six and verse 15, John chapter six and verse 15, John six, verse 15, when Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force. Once again, it's harpazo to make him a king. He departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Look in John 10 and verse 12. I'm trying to show you how that each one of these references refer to taking something by force. John 10, verse 12, he says, but he, that is a hireling and not the shepherd who's on the sheep or not see it, the wolf coming and leave it, the sheep and flee it.

And the wolf catch it them and scattered the sheep. Now the word catch it. The wolf catch it.

Them is the same word. Now does the wolf, uh, coats, the sheep sheep to come to him gently. No, he takes him by force.

He steals it. He takes him away. Look in John 10 and verse 28.

He said, I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. And the word pluck is the same word harpazo.

It means to snatch or to take away by force. Jesus Christ says, no man can forcibly take his own from him. Look in the book of Acts chapter eight and verse 39, Acts eight and verse 39.

Here is a reference to Philip and the Bible says, and when they were come out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away, Philip, that is literally seized him and forcibly took him away. And the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing.

Then if you look in Acts 23 and verse 10, Acts 23 and verse 10, once again, here's what the word of God says, Acts 23, verse 10. And when there arose a great decision, the chief captain, fearing less, Paul should have been pulled into pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them and to bring him into the castle. So here it is to take him by force.

Now, if you will turn right on over there, just a few other passages to first Corinthians chapter 12 and verse two, actually, and verse four, because it is the same word. It's second Corinthians. I'm sorry.

Second Corinthians 12 verse two, the apostle Paul says, I knew a man in Christ about 14 years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell her whether out of the body, I cannot tell God know of such in one called up. Now the word called up here literally means to seize or to take by force. It's the same word.

Harpozzo verse, verse four, he said, how that he was called up. It's the same one. Now, the interesting thing is this, and I cannot tell you this dogmatically and neither can anyone else.

But, uh, when the apostle Paul is saying that he was one caught up in heaven, many scholars will tell you, uh, that this probably happened when the apostle Paul was stoned and left for dead at least. Or you remember that now, whether it happened then or not, I don't know, but Paul is saying that he was forcibly caught up. Well, what in the world is death by stoning? Is that not a forcible taking away of your life? I mean, you know, it has that connotation there.

So it is used right here in that sense. Now, if you will turn over to first Thessalonians chapter four, here's the only instance, the only instance where this word is used in relationship to the saints being called up in first Thessalonians chapter four and verse 17, the apostle Paul says this, 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 so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Now, what I'm trying to say is this, and let me explain this right here. There is a difference between is a Jesus and exegesis. Ice and X are two Greek words.

Ice is a preposition, which means into X is a preposition, which means out of now, when you talk about is a Jesus, it means you read into a passage that which you want to see. Okay. Exegesis means you bring out of the passage that which is there.

Now, please understand that anybody can make the Bible say anything they wanted to say by reading into it their preconceived ideas. You follow that? It's just like the man who says, well, I believe that the earth is flat, and I'm going to prove it to you from the Bible because he gathered his elect from the four corners of the earth. Well, now, and by the way, there are people and I have known people who actually believe that the earth was flat.

Well, I mean, and that's why they believed it. Well, I'm just saying, you know, here's this traditional passage that is used to teach the rapture. And here is the only passage where the word called up is used, but the catching up does not necessarily equate to the rapture.

I mean, he catches us up, but that does not necessarily mean it's one in the same thing. If you follow me now, let me go ahead and give you another one. Look in your Bibles to Jude and verse 23, but I'm just showing you every time this word is used.

Now it has to do with a forcible catching away. Look in Jude and verse 23 and others say with fear, pulling them out of the fire. That is a forcible, pulling them out of the fire, hating in the hating, even the garment spotted by the flesh.

And then if you look in Revelation 12 and verse five, the last passage here, it is Revelation 12 in verse five. And she brought forth a man child who was to rule over all the nations with a rod of iron, iron, and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne. Now the word harponzo literally means to seize or to carry away by force or to snatch away forcibly.

Now, the thing that I want you to see, and I'm going to show you this from the Bible scripture, not only indicates that it is indeed the wicked who are going to be forcibly seized and snatched away, but I believe the Bible clearly teaches this. Now let's go back. First of all, to Psalm 37, I'm still trying to give you some introduction.

We're going to come back to Luke 17, but look in Psalm 37. Psalm 37 is indeed a tremendous passage. Look what he says.

Psalm 37, beginning with verse one, fret not by self because of evil doers, neither be about envious against the workers of iniquity. Now, wait a minute. Why does he tell us not to fret because of evil doers? Why does he tell us not to be envious against the workers of iniquity? Now here's why verse two, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb.

Now, verse two tells us that the wicked will be cut down and that this will be soon or it will be hastily done. Now the word soon actually means promptly, quickly, or speedily. Now let me tell you what Psalm 37 is.

Psalm 37 is an encouragement to the righteous that the righteous shall indeed inherit the earth, irrespective of the wicked and their power and their wealth. Look in Psalm 37 and verse 11. But the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Now let me just add this right here. When God says, and the meek shall inherit the earth, please remember the word meek does not refer to someone being a foot mat and letting you wipe your feet all over them. I read one time about this verse being posted on a bathroom wall and someone had written, the meek shall inherit the earth.

And then someone had come and written under that, if that's all right. Well, that is not what the Bible talks about when it talks about meekness. You know what meekness is? Let me tell you.

The Lord Jesus Christ was Moses. Numbers 12, three. Now the man, Moses was more meek than any man on the earth.

And the meekest man on earth, God, when he said, God, I pray that a new thing will happen. I pray that the earth will open up and Dathan and Abiram and Korah and all their company will go down alive in the hell. Now, brother, that's meekness.

You know what meekness is? It is disciplined strength under God. That's why he says in Matthew five, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the kingdom of God. They shall inherit the earth.

The meek literally there is the tamed of the Lord. Those who are broken to yoke. In other words, we as meek individuals do not avenge ourselves and do not do our own thing.

Our strength is disciplined and we act under the command of God. Now I want you to watch this. Look in verse 34, Psalm 37, verse 34.

Now he says, but the meek shall inherit the earth. Verse 11 and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Let's go to verse 34.

Wait on the Lord. That's that disciplined strength. Now don't strike back, wait on the Lord and keep his way.

And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land. Watch it. When shall we inherit the land? When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

Now look what else he says. I've seen the wicked in great power spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and lo he was not.

Yea, I sought him and he could not be found. Now look what he says. God says, I am going to exalt my people to inherit the land.

When are we going to inherit? When the wicked are cut off. And he said it doesn't matter if the wicked are in great power. It doesn't matter if he spreads himself like a green bay tree.

God is going to literally cut them off. Now how does God cut off the wicked? Now let me show you something. God cuts them off in time and in history as well as at the end of the earth.

How does he cut them off? He cuts them off with temporal judgments. Now I want you to look in your Bibles very quickly to several passages. Look in Psalm 55 and verse 23.

And boy, I hope you can think of some men when I read this verse. Psalm 55 verse 23. The psalmist says, but thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction.

Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in thee. Did you hear that? Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.

Now you think of the quote unquote leaders in our country who have been cut off in the prime of life. And they were wicked ungodly men. He says bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.

Why? Because the judgment of God cuts them down. I got news for you folks. We ought to tremble for some of our leaders like our president who are openly defying the law of God.

God says bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. Look in Proverbs 10 and verse 27. Proverbs 10 verse 27.

Proverbs 10 verse 27. The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. So God says I'm going to give the wicked a shorter life.

Look at it in verse 30. The righteous shall never be removed. Now watch this.

But the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. Sounds to me like God's going to take care of some of them. Look in Proverbs 11 and verse 31.

And boy, I like this verse. Proverbs 11 verse 31. Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth.

Now, do you know what the word recompense means? It means to be paid to pay back, literally to pay back. The righteous shall be paid back in the earth, much more the wicked in the center. Now listen to me.

If God rewards our righteousnesses in time and in history, and He does, He says much more I'm going to reward or pay back the unrighteous in time and in history. So if God will bless us for our obedience to Him, then God will curse the wicked for their disobedience to Him. Now, I want you to turn back to Job 19 and look at verse 29.

And let me show you this biblical principle. And then I think you can put all of this together. Job 19 and verse 29.

Look what God says. Job 19 verse 29. God says, be afraid of the sword.

Isn't that an amazing statement? Be afraid of the sword. Why would God have to say that? Well, look, be afraid of the sword for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword that you may know that there is a judgment. What is God saying? God is saying every temporal judgment, every time God punishes, either by the sword or by some cataclysmic event, that temporal punishment is just proof positive that there is a final, eternal punishment and judgment.

You see that? So what God is doing to the wicked, when He cuts them off in the middle of their pride, when God cuts them off in great power, all He's doing is saying, look everybody, there is indeed a judgment to come. Now, there is going to be a time when the wicked shall be removed permanently. And that is, of course, at the coming of our Lord.

But God is quite able to cut the wicked off in time and in history. Now, what I want to do the rest of my time this morning is this. I want to show you some verses in the Bible that very clearly teach what I call the rapture of the wicked.

Please remember, I'm using the word rapture in the sense that Harpazo was used in those twelve instances that I showed you to mean to seize forcibly and to take away by force. Now, watch this. Let's go back to our text, Luke chapter 17.

Luke 17. Luke 17. Now, let's read it.

And I want you to watch this carefully. I'm going to spend a little time dealing with this. Luke 17.

Let's begin reading with verse 26. And as it was in the day of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark.

And the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of the Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

Even thus, that is likewise, shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, that is the day that he's revealed, he who is on the housetop and is stuck in the house, let him not come down to take it away. And he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you that in that night, what is that night? Back up to verse 31, it's that day.

What is that day? Verse 30, it's the day when the Son of Man is revealed. I tell you that in that night, there shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other left.

Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wherever the body is thither will the eagles be gathered together. Now let's stop.

Let's go back. Because the Bible says in verse 26, As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. Now, you can hear all kinds of sermons preached on this, because verse 27, They did eat and they drank and they married and they were given in marriage until the day that Noah

entered in the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Now, we hear about, Boy, today men are marrying and giving in marriage. Well, men have always done that. Okay? Now, what is the point that he is making? Look at it very clearly in verse 27.

Well, let's look at verse 26. He says, As it was in the days of Noah, now just like it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. Now, Lord, what happened in Noah's day is going to happen in Christ's day when he returns.

Now, watch this. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. What happened? The wicked were destroyed.

Now, he says, Just like it was in the days of Noah, so it's going to be in the days of the Son of Man. He said, I destroyed the wicked in the days of Noah. I'm going to destroy the wicked when I return.

Now, wait. Let's go further. Verse 28, Likewise, also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

Now, what happened when God delivered Lot? He destroyed the wicked. Now, let me ask you a question. Do you think the wicked politely and willingly and voluntarily submitted themselves to destruction? Oh, no.

He destroyed them by force. He seized them and carried them away into destruction by power. Let's go on.

Verse 30, Even thus, just like I pointed out in the days of Noah and the days of Lot, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In other words, it's going to be just like that, he said. Now, before we go any further, let me point something out.

If you would hold Luke 17, but turn over your Bible to 2 Peter 2, 2 Peter 2, and let's look beginning there with verse 3, 2 Peter 2 and verse 3. Watch this carefully. Do you remember Job 19, 29? Be ye afraid of the sword? Why? For the sword bringeth punishments, that ye may know that there is a judgment to come. He said, God made them an example unto all those that should hereafter live ungodly, and delivered just Lot.

Now, look at verse 9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished. God says, I know how to deliver my people. I also know how to preserve the wicked for their punishment.

Now, the thing that I'm trying to show you is this. In every one of these instances, in the days of Noah, in the days of Lot, it was sure and sudden destruction upon the wicked. Now, when he says in verse 30, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed, that is, he's going to destroy the wicked just like he did in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot.

Now, it is clear that judgment is the issue. Verse 30, even thus shall it be. That is a time of judgment.

Therefore, in verses 31 through 36, you have some warnings. What are the warnings? Well, verses 31 through 33 are a warning against an unsaved, or an unsound, I should say, an unsound and unreal profession of faith, which means it is indeed an unsaved profession as well. But look at it in verse 31.

He says, In that day he which shall be upon the house stopping his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away. And he that is in the field, let him not likewise return back. Remember Lot's wife.

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. Now, wait a minute. What is he saying? And especially the key point is verse 32.

Remember Lot's wife. Well, not only look back, but now watch this. Lot was a godly man.

He was a righteous man. And the Bible says, He vexed his righteous soul with their ungodly and unlawful deeds. But Lot's wife was not a Christian.

Here is a woman who was associated with a godly man, but she was an ungodly woman. Her associations with a godly man did not save her from the judgment of God. Now, wait a minute.

An unsound and an ungodly member of the church will not be spared just because they associate with the godly. You follow me? I wish I had time to deal with Matthew chapter 7. Lot's wife was not spared because of her association with Lot. Neither will empty professors be spared because of their association either with Christians or with the church.

Now, look in verses 34, 35, and 36. He says, I tell you in that night there shall be two men in one bed. The one shall be taken, the other shall be left.

Two women shall be grinding together. The one shall be taken, the other left. Two men shall be in the field.

The one shall be taken, the other left. Now, let me show you something before I go any further. All my life I have heard preached and taught that verses 34 through 36 talk about the rapture of the saints.

One of us is going to be taken away and the other is going to be left. That is not what these verses are teaching. The context is the context of judgment.

Now, I want you to see something. I want you to hold this. I'm going to come right back to it, but turn over in your Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 2 and look at verse 19.

You talk about a powerful verse, and this verse is exemplified in Luke 17. Look in 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 19. 2 Timothy 2 verse 19.

Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let everyone that name is the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Now, watch it. Watch this carefully. He says the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal.

What seal? The Lord knoweth them that are his. Now, folks, the opposite is also true. Bad English, but good theology.

He knows them that he is too. And what does he do to those who are not his? Well, let's look back. Let's look in Luke 17 now.

Watch this. Now, please remember, he's talking about judgment in the days of Noah. He's talking about judgment in the days of Lot.

He says, likewise, it's going to even be so when the Son of Man is revealed. Then he says, remember Lot's wife. In other words, folks are not going to be spared because of their association.

And then he says in verse 34, I tell you that in that night there shall be two men in one bed. One's going to be taken. The other's going to be left.

Then he says there's going to be two women shall be grinding together. One shall be taken. The other's going to be left.

Verse 36, two men shall be in the field. One taken, one the other left. Where are these individuals taken to? Are they taken to heaven? No.

And they answered, verse 37, who is the they? Well, if you look back in verse 22, and he said unto his disciples. So he's talking to his disciples. And they answered unto him, where, Lord? In other words, Lord, where are they going to be taken? We want to know.

Where are they going? And look what Jesus Christ said. He said unto them, wheresoever the body is thither also will the eagles be gathered together. Boy, what a strange answer.

Wherever the body is, there's where the eagles are going to be gathered together. What in the world does that mean? Let me ask you a question. How many of you have ever seen these old westerns? You see the man crawling through the desert, barely can go.

He's dehydrated, no water. He keeps seeing the mirages. And please tell me what's always circling.

The buzzards, or the birds of prey, the carnivores, the flesh eaters. Now let me show you something. Whole Luke 17, but turn back in your Bibles to Job 39.

Job 39, and let's begin with verse 27. Job 39 and verse 27. Look at what he says.

Job 39, verse 27. Doth the eagle mount up at thy command and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock upon the crag of the rock in the strong place. From this she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

Her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain are, there she is. Are you getting the idea that those folks who were taken in Luke 17 are not exactly taken to heaven? It's judgment. Look in your Bibles to Proverbs 30 and verse 17.

Proverbs 30, verse 17. He says, Proverbs 30, verse 17. The eye that mocketh his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagle shall eat it.

Now, the disciples say, Lord, where are these folks going to be taken? And his answer is, wherever the body is, there's where the eagle's going to be. They're going to be taken to judgment. They shall die.

They shall be killed. So when you look back in Luke chapter 17, when he talks about two sleeping in bed, one taken and one left, and he talks about two in the field, one taken and one left, and two grinding and one taken and one left, the ones that are taken are not taken to heaven. These individuals are taken away to judgment.

They're destroyed. Now, wait a minute. I want you to look at the parallel passage in Matthew 24 and verse 28.

Matthew 24 and Luke 17 are parallel passages, and I want you to see the word that is used by our Lord in Matthew 24. Look in Matthew 24 and verse 28. Here it is.

For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Well, what's a carcass? A dead body. So he says, wherever the carcass is, that's where the eagles are going to be gathered.

Now, I want you to note how Matthew teaches exactly the same thing that Luke does. Let's begin reading in verse 37. Matthew 24, verse 37.

Watch this carefully. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days of Noah, for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

What happened in the days of Noah? Yes, the destruction was sudden, and people say Christ is going to come back sudden, and that may be true. I'm not going to dispute that one little bit. But the point that he's making is this, that the wicked were destroyed suddenly.

It was the wicked that were forcibly taken away. Verse 40, there shall be two in the field, the one shall be taken in the other lap. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken in the other lap.

Watch therefore, for you know not what hour the Lord doth come. And so, look what he says in verse 43. But know this, if the good man of the house had known in which watch the thief would have come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

But know if you would, the whole context is a context of judgment. So, Matthew 24 is a parallel passage, and it teaches essentially the same thing. And verse 20, well, look in verse 27.

I didn't read it, but let's go back and read it. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even in the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered.

What's he saying? I'm going to destroy the wicked. Now, turn in your Bibles to Matthew 13. I want to show you a parable, and then I want you to see our Lord's interpretation of that parable.

Matthew 13, and let's begin reading with verse 24. Matthew 13, verse 24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who sowed good seed in his field.

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? For whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this.

The servant said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow until the harvest. In the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Now watch this, Gather ye together first the tares, and buy them in bundles to burn them.

But gather the wheat into my barn. Now let me just stop right there for a moment. What was to be gathered together first? The tares.

He said, You gather them together first, and buy them in bundles. For what purpose? To burn them. Now, if you think that that interpretation is wrong, then what you need to do is read further.

Because the Bible says, and let's begin looking in the same chapter, Matthew chapter 13, verse 36. Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And the disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

And he answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. Very obvious. The field is the world.

The good seed are the children of the kingdom. But the tares are the children of the wicked one. Do you see that? One saved, one lost.

The enemy that sowed them is the devil. Now watch this. The harvest is the end of the world.

And the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this world, or at the end of this age. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and which do iniquity.

Now, what offends and what does iniquity in God's kingdom? Sinners. So he's going to gather all that out. Now watch verse 42.

And shall cast them into a furnace of fire. Then there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Ah, look at verse 43.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father, who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Now, when's the righteous going to shine forth? When he takes care of the wicked. Who's he going to get first? He's going to get the wicked.

This world is ours. This is God's earth that he's given for his people. And the tares are mixed in with the wheat.

But in the end, he's going to take the tares out. And the wheat's still going to have this world. And we shall shine in our Father's kingdom.

Now, I want you to note this same thing is taught in so many passages of the Bible. But look in your Bibles to 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. And look what the Apostle Paul says beginning there with verse 7. 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 7. I like this passage. Paul says to these saints, and to you who are troubled, rest with us.

Now, watch this. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe because our testimony among you was believed in that day. Now, look.

Paul says when our Lord comes back from heaven, how's he going to come? He's going to come in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the gospel. What is he going to do? He's going to take care of the wicked first. And then he says, verse 10, after they are punished, he says when he shall come to be what? Glorified in his saints and be admired of all them that believe.

In other words, our Lord, as he comes back to be worshiped and honored by his people, he will destroy the wicked and the ungodly. Now, let me show you two other passages. Look in Psalm 58.

I know that just a few weeks ago, I preached on this passage. In fact, you have the tape today. But I want you to see Psalm 58.

Let's just read it again. It's only 11 verses. Psalm 58, verse 1. Do you indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do you judge uprightly, O you sons of men? Yea, in heart you work wickedness.

You weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. The wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

Their poison is like the poison of a serpent. They are like the deaf adder that stop at her ear. But shall not hearken to the voice of charmers charming never so wisely.

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth. Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord. Let them melt away as waters which run continually.

When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces as a snail which melteth. Let every one of them pass away like the untimely birth of a woman that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away even with a whirlwind, both living and in his wrath.

Are you watching? The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance. He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous.

Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth. Now, folks, if the righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, if the righteous shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, that means then the wicked are taken away and the righteous are left. Look in your Bibles to the book of Joel chapter 3. Joel chapter 3. Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos.

Joel chapter 3. And let's begin reading with verse 13. Watch this. Joel 3 verse 13.

Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. Now, I want you to note, this passage is a passage of judgment. He says, you put in the sickle, why? For their wickedness is great.

This multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, listen, many people try to preach that as it relates somehow to salvation. It doesn't relate to salvation. It relates to judgment.

He says the day of the Lord is near. And then he says the sun and the moon shall be darkened. These are eschatological figures which are always used in relationship to the judgment of God.

In practically every passage that you turn, it doesn't matter Old Testament or New Testament, you will come up that the wicked will be taken away first. So if there is a rapture, it will be the rapture of the wicked in the sense that they will be forcibly seized and forcibly carried away under judgment. Now, let me make just a couple of illustrations and applications.

Listen carefully. If you understand this truth, and if you hear this truth, it ought to make an unconverted man tremble. You know a lot of people think that somehow when the Lord returns, they're going to have a quote-unquote second chance.

And that is bad theology. You don't even have a first chance. Salvation is not by chance.

Salvation is by grace. But some people think that somehow when the Lord comes back, there's going to be somehow a lapse of time and they can repent and they can believe. Listen, folks.

Number one, repentance is God's gift. Number two, faith is God's gift. And number three, the Bible says when Jesus Christ comes, He's going to come back in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God.

The ungodly shall be destroyed first. That means you say, well, I'll tell you what, Brother Weaver, I'm going to wait to seek the Lord. You better not.

You better start begging Him for mercy and begging Him for grace and begging Him to give you repentance and faith. Because God is going to take care of the wicked first. The second application is this.

What a tremendous encouragement this is for the people of God. What did He say? Fret not thyself because of evildoers. Neither be thou envious of the workers of iniquity.

Why? For they shall soon be cut off. Listen, folks. We can endure anything as long as we know there's going to be an end.

Even one of my sermons. But dear friend, let me tell you something. You and I can look and it grieves us that the wicked are in power, that the wicked are ruling, that the wicked have the wealth, that the wicked are doing everything they can to destroy the people of God and the work of God.

But rest assured, there is no need to fret. The sovereign God is on the throne and He shall overthrow them. And the kingdom and this earth will be ours.

And we can glorify and admire and worship and serve and praise the Lord Jesus to our heart's content. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Now, watch, if you would, these next four years.

As wickedness increases, so will God's judgment. And we'll see that God's Word is true. Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.

And when God judges in time and in history, we need to check it in our mind, that's just proof and evidence that there's a judgment to come. And when God takes care of the wicked one by one in history, it means He's going to take care of all of them when He returns. Blessed be His name.

Father, we bow to Thee this day. We thank Thee for Jesus Christ and the fact that He is our Lord, that He is our King, and that He's on the throne. We thank Thee, Father, that we shall shine in Thy kingdom and we shall serve Thee unhindered and worship Thee untouched when Thou dost destroy the wicked.

We give Thee praise for Your grace to us and confess we're saved and we are what we are only by the marvelous, matchless grace of God. Thou didst not give us what we deserved, but Thou didst give us mercy and grace. And for that we praise Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

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