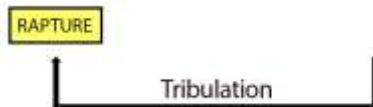


04 – PROPHECY PARABLES

- ✓ Up to now, we've been looking at Parables that preach the Gospel. The last theme I want to look at (in this series) is Bible Prophecy.
- ✓ I'm sure you've all heard of the Rapture. (There's some debate about when it happens, but I think *most Christians DO* believe it exists.) In case you're not familiar with the Rapture, I'll explain.
- ✓ **The Rapture is the first phase of the Second Coming.** At the Rapture, Jesus comes down as far as the clouds, and we're caught up to meet Him in the air. At that point, we're whisked off to Heaven. Once we're gone, the Tribulation starts.

1 Thess. 4:16-17 – “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which 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.”

- ✓ Like I Said: There's debate about the when it happens. Personally, I believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture. (Meaning: We leave here before the Tribulation begins.) That's my opinion, and you don't have to agree with me.



- ✓ I don't want to talk about the Rapture this morning. I want to talk about an event that's so similar (to the Rapture) that people confuse the two. This second event takes place at the end of the Tribulation.



- ✓ I call this second event “the Rapture in Reverse”. (We don't talk about it much, but it's the subject of at least five of Jesus' parables. If He spends that much time explaining one event, it must be important. So, we've got to get it right.) Before we look at Scripture, let's go over it one more time.

A. The Rapture - (Happens before the Tribulation)

At the Rapture:

1. Jesus descends as far as the clouds
2. Believers are caught up, and ...
3. Whisked off to Heaven, and ...
4. Once we're gone, the Tribulation starts

B. The Rapture in Reverse - (Happens after the Tribulation)

At the Rapture in Reverse:

1. The angels go forth – (not Jesus)
2. Unbelievers are caught up, and ...
3. Thrown into Hell, and ...
4. Then the Millennium begins



- ✓ See the difference? They're exactly opposite! At the Rapture believers are caught up and taken to Heaven. At the Rapture in Reverse unbelievers are caught up and thrown into Hell. (Big difference!)

- ✓ Let's skip ahead to the Second Coming and watch it happen:

Put Yourself in the Story ...

- ✓ It's the last day of the Tribulation. Armageddon is underway, and it's not going well.

Zech. 14:2 – “On that day, I will gather all nations to fight against

Jerusalem; and the city shall be taken, and the houses looted, and the women raped; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity ..."

- ✓ So, half of the city falls! Then, just when it looks like the second half is going to fall, God does something He hasn't done in thousands of years. Remember the plague of darkness in Egypt? (God shut out the lights on the Egyptians.) He does it again here! Israel's losing the battle, and God shuts out the lights!
- ✓ It's a supernatural darkness! You can't turn on a lamp, and you can't "flick your Bic". It's complete darkness! Why would God do that? He's giving people one last chance to receive Christ.
- ✓ See, at the Rapture, it's not too late to get saved. But at the Second Coming, it is! Once Jesus splits the clouds on that final Day, it's eternally too late! So, God shuts out the lights (for 24 hours), and lets everyone make a final choice.
- ✓ When the "lights" come back on, it's too late to get saved. So, the unbelievers are gathered up and thrown into hell. (There's no point keeping them around. They can't get saved!) So, the unbelievers are removed, and the 1000-Year Reign begins.

The Wheat and the Tares

Mt. 13:24-30 – "God's kingdom is like a farmer who planted wheat in his field. That night, while his servants were asleep, his enemy sowed tares among the wheat and slipped away before dawn. When the wheat came up and ripened, the tares appeared as well."

- ✓ If you're not familiar with "tares", let me help you out. Tares are weeds, but they look just like wheat.



Wheat



Tares (Dandelion)

- ✓ They look the same on the outside. But if you break the tares open, the kernels are black. (What a great picture of an unbeliever! You can't tell a saint from a sinner, by looking at the *outside*. But an unbeliever's heart is dark with sin.)

"The farmhands came to the farmer and said, 'Master, that was clean seed you planted, wasn't it? Where did these tares come from?' He replied, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said, 'Do you want us to go and pull the tares up?' But he said, 'No, because if you pull up the tares, you might uproot some of the wheat along with it. Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I'll tell the reapers: Gather the tares first and tie them in bundles to burn them but collect the wheat in my barn.'"

Jesus' Explanation of the Parable

Matt. 13:38-43 – "I am the farmer who sows the pure seed. The field is the world, the pure seeds are My people ... the tares are the children of the wicked one. The harvest is the end of the world (age). The reapers are the angels."

- ✓ Now watch what happens ...

"Just as the tares (weeds) are gathered up and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of the age (Tribulation). The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will REMOVE out of the kingdom, all those who practice lawlessness and lead others into sin (unbelievers), and will throw them into the furnace of fire; where people will cry in great agony and defiant rage."

- ✓ The King James says, "gnashing of teeth". I used to think that meant "pain", (and it probably *does*, to some extent.) But, according to *this*, they're gnashing their teeth in "defiant rage". (Even in judgment, their hearts don't change.)
- ✓ Since salvation is no longer possible, the unbelievers are thrown into hell, and on earth, the Millennium begins.

- ✓ This isn't the only parable that describes this scenario ...

The Parable of the Net

Matt. 13:47-48 – “Also, God’s kingdom is like a net that was put into the sea. The net caught many different kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled the net to the shore. They sat down and put all the **good fish** in baskets and threw away the **worthless fish**.”

- ✓ That was the parable. Now, here’s the interpretation:

v. 49-50 – “So it will be at the **end of the age** ...”

- ✓ “The Age” ends with the Tribulation. (Every dispensation begins with the blessing of God and ends with the failure of man. This one’s no different.)

v. 49-50 – “So it will be at the **end of the age** (Tribulation); the **angels will go out and gather up the evil people**, separate them from the good, and shall **cast them into the furnace of fire**; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Why Is This Important?

- ✓ If you don’t know there are two similar events, you can confuse the two and draw some really bad conclusions.