

# God's Everlasting Covenant

presents

## The Truth About the Rapture – The Wheat and the Tares

Do you want to know the real truth about what Christians have called “The Rapture?” Are you interested in knowing what the Scriptures actually teach? If you do, then please continue with us.

In our view, what actually takes place during the end of the age has been widely misunderstood. Books like the “Left Behind” series have greatly affected the lens or filter through which most Christians have interpreted what the Bible has to say about the subject. This is why it is so important to study the Bible within the historical, textual and cultural context from which it was written, namely, a Hebraic mindset, rather than a western or Greek one.

Other Jewish roots pastors and teachers, such as Mark Biltz of El Shaddai Ministries or Daniel T. Lancaster of First Fruits of Zion have taught extensively on the subject of the so-called “Rapture”, more than what we can cover in this short teaching. However, we do feel it deserves some special attention from a different perspective and thus, the reason for this study.

Let's begin with a well-known parable that Yeshua taught about the wheat and the tares.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while the people were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and then went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads of grain, the tares also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, “Sir didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where have the tares come from?” He answered, “An enemy has done this.” The servants asked him, “Then do you want us to go and pull them up?” But he said, “No, because if you pull up the tares, you might uproot some of the wheat at the same time. Let them both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest-time I will tell the reapers to collect the tares first and tie them in bundles to be burned, but to gather the wheat into my barn.”

Matthew 13:24b-30

There is a lot more to this parable than meets the eye. The first thing a good student should do is ask questions. Who is the farmer? Who are the good seed? Who are the tares? The reapers? What is the barn? This is exactly what the disciples do. They ask what the meaning of the parable is. Let's go back to the Scriptures and let Yeshua interpret it for us.

His disciples approached him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares in the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world. As for the good seed, these are the people who belong to the Kingdom; and the tares are the people who belong to the Evil One. The

enemy who sows them is the Adversary, the harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters (reapers) are angels. Just as the tares are collected and burned up in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out of his Kingdom all the things that cause people to sin and all the people who are far from Torah; and they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where people will wail and grind their teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let him hear!”

Matthew 13:36b-43

Here, I must make a confession. I have read this parable hundreds of times, never realizing the order of the harvest. Who is collected or harvested first? The tares are. This is very, very important as we shall see later.

Now, if the wheat is gathered into the barn, where are the tares gathered? Yeshua also answers this for us in another place when He is explaining what will happen at the end of the age. Let's go to Matthew 24 and we'll highlight some things we should pay attention to.

“For when the Son of Man does come, it will be like lightning flashes out of the east and fills the sky to the western horizon. Wherever there's a dead body, that's where you will find the vultures.

Matthew 24:27-28

Admittedly, this seems a bit obscure. What does He mean about the dead body and the vultures? We will answer this question in a few moments. Let's read on where Yeshua gives us more details about that day.

“But when that day and hour will come, no one knows – not the angels in heaven, not the Son, only the Father. For the Son of Man's coming will be just as it was in the days of Noah. Back then, before the Flood, people went on eating and drinking, taking wives and becoming wives, right up till the day Noah entered the ark, and they didn't know what was happening until the Flood came and swept them all away. It will be just like that when the Son of Man comes. Then there will be two men in a field – one will be taken and the other left behind. There will be two women grinding flour at the mill – one will be taken and the other left behind. So stay alert, because you don't know on what day your Lord will come.”

Matthew 24:36-42

This presents more questions. Who is taken and who is left behind? Where are those who are taken going? And this still doesn't answer our question about the vultures being gathered from the previous verse.

Now traditionally, these verses have been interpreted to mean that those who are taken are “raptured” to meet the Lord in the sky. In each group, the one “left behind” is not a believer and so must go through the Tribulation. However, that is not the case. Let's go to a parallel passage in Luke 17 which gives us a little more information.

“Also at the time of the Son of Man, it will be just as it was at the time of Noah. People ate and drank, and men and women married, right up until the day Noah entered the ark; then the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was in the time of Lot – people ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built; but the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. That is how it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed...I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed – one will be taken and the other left behind. There will be two women grinding grain together – one will be taken and the other left behind.” Then they asked him, “Where Lord?” He answered, “Wherever there’s a dead body, that’s where the vultures gather.”

Luke 17:26-37

So where are the ones who are “taken” going? They are going where the vultures are gathered. Why are the vultures gathered? Because the dead bodies of the ones who are taken are going to be their food. Let’s look at another passage in Ezekiel 39, where the Lord is speaking through the prophet to Gog or the Antichrist and what will happen to him, his troops and all the peoples with him.

“You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you, your troops and all the peoples with you; I will give you to be eaten up by all kinds of birds of prey and by wild animals. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken says the Lord God...as for you human, the Lord God says you are to speak to all kinds of birds and to every wild animal as follows: ‘Assemble yourselves and come, gather yourselves from all around for the sacrifice I am preparing for you, a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, where you can eat flesh and drink blood! You will eat the flesh of heroes and drink the blood of the earth’s princes – rams, lambs, goats and bulls, fattened in Bashan, all of them. You will eat fat till you are gorged and drink blood till you are drunk at the sacrifice I have prepared for you. At my table you will be satiated with horses, horsemen, heroes and every kind of warrior,’ says the Lord God.”

Ezekiel 39:4, 5, 17-20

The tares, who are the evil men and women who belong to the Adversary, are the ones “taken.” They are the horsemen, heroes, warriors, and princes of the earth who have sided with God’s enemy against Israel, His people and against His holy city, Jerusalem. They are those who are far from Torah. They are going to be brought to Israel, where all the nations are gathered against Jerusalem. This is what is known in Christendom as the battle of Armageddon. There, they will be destroyed by Yeshua. Sadly, rather than being willing to eat His flesh and drink His blood in submission to His Lordship over their lives, they themselves will become the food for all the birds and wild animals, who will eat their flesh and drink their blood. We really don’t like to think about this gory and graphic scene, but this is what Yeshua clearly taught. This is what He meant when He said, “Wherever there’s a dead body, that’s where the vultures gather.”

This fits perfectly with Yeshua’s parable. First the tares are gathered by the reapers, His angels, and they are bundled together and burned. They will be destroyed in the valley of Jehoshaphat

and then thrown into the eternal fire where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” to quote another translation. Then the wheat, those who were left behind, will be gathered together from the four corners of the earth and brought into the barn. This should sound really familiar to us because this is “rapture” terminology. All of the followers of Yeshua will be “harvested” by His reapers, the angels, from all over the earth. So, where is the wheat taken? What is this “barn” that Yeshua referred to?

To answer that question, we need to step back in history a bit to the time of Ruth and Boaz. In Ruth 1:22, we learn that Ruth, a Moabite woman, accompanies her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi, back to her home in Bethlehem. They arrive at the beginning of the barley harvest, which would be during Passover. In Ruth 2:1, we are told of a relative of Naomi’s named Boaz, who was very wealthy. Ruth wants to take care of her mother-in-law and asks to be able to go and glean or gather grain behind the reapers (according to the laws of the *Torah*) which allowed for poor people to sustain themselves. Naomi consents, and Ruth goes out and happens to come upon a field that belongs to Boaz, their relative. Now, it is important to realize that Boaz was a very wealthy man, and according to the culture of the day, this would mean that he probably owned a lot of land. Ruth may not have been in Bethlehem when she first happened upon the field belonging to Boaz (Ruth 1:3). It’s possible that she had walked to Jerusalem, which is only about two miles away from Bethlehem, about a 45 minute walk. Also, in verse 4 it says that Boaz had arrived from Bethlehem when he asked about the girl from Moab who was gleaning in his field. This makes it clear they were not in Bethlehem since the Scripture tells us that Boaz just arrived from there.

Now, let’s go to Ruth 3:1-6. We find that Naomi tells Ruth to go to the threshing floor, where Boaz will be winnowing barley. Winnowing is the process of separating the wheat from the tares, and this is done at the threshing floor. It is also important to realize that Ruth and Boaz were King David’s great grandparents. Let’s take a little side trip again, this time into I Chronicles 21 where we begin to learn something interesting about the threshing floor.

To set the context, David had decided to take a census and he counted the men, and God was displeased with him. It wasn’t the census that was the problem, but the way David did it. God didn’t want his people to be counted. Rather, they were to collect a ½ shekel coin for the Temple tax, and they could count the coins and thereby arrive at how many people there were. This is because God never wants His people to be relegated to just being a number. Because David disobeyed His instruction, God sends a plague on Israel for David’s sin.

So the Lord sent a plague on Israel; 70,000 of the people of Israel died. God also sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem, but when he was about to carry out the destruction, the Lord saw it and changed his mind about causing such distress; so he said to the destroying angel, “Enough! Now withdraw your hand.” The angel of the Lord was standing at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

I Chronicles 21:14-15

Then, in verse 18, we find that the angel of the Lord ordered that David build an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan (or Araunah) the Jebusite. And in verse 22, David asks Ornan if he can purchase the threshing floor so he can build the altar. In verses 26-28, we read that David

did indeed purchase the threshing floor, he built the altar and he made sacrifices to the Lord there, which stopped the plague.

Now, let's skip ahead a bit to 2 Chronicles 3:1-2.

Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah where the Lord had appeared to David his father. Provision had been made for this at the place David had chosen, the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. He began building in the fourth year of his reign.

We see from these Scriptures that the threshing floor is the Temple mount. The place where the wheat and tares are separated are on the threshing floor. It is this threshing floor where Boaz, as a type of Messiah, was winnowing the barley. It is here where Ruth met Boaz and asked him to be her kinsman-redeemer. It is this place which David purchased from Ornan the Jebusite and built an altar to the Lord. It is the same place where sacrifices were offered, and later, where Solomon built the Temple. This is the barn which Yeshua referred to. The wheat are gathered together by the angels to meet Yeshua in the air and to join Him in battle to fight His Adversary after the tares are gathered to Jerusalem for the Battle of Armageddon to be destroyed. It all takes place on the threshing floor, on the Temple mount of Jerusalem! Jerusalem is the threshing floor, where the followers of Yeshua are separated from the followers of Satan. It is a very sobering thought and a serious reminder that we need to make sure we are on the right side of the issue when it concerns Jerusalem.

It is also very interesting to note something about the difference between the wheat and tares. When they are young, they look almost exactly alike. This is probably why the farmer (Yeshua) told his servants not to pull them up, because he didn't want to destroy the roots of the wheat. What is interesting is that as they mature, they are more distinguishable. The wheat is taller and the heads of the wheat, where the grain is located, become heavier and stronger. The wheat produces better and stronger seeds (grain). Because of their heads, the wheat bows in the wind. The tares are shorter and they stand up straight in the wind because their heads are not as heavy, owing to smaller seeds that are weaker. It is also interesting that the seeds of the tares are actually poisonous when eaten, and they can make someone very sick by causing nausea, vomiting and a severe headache.

The parallel here is vividly clear! Yeshua warns us that there will be those who look like they are His followers, but in reality, they are from the adversary. They will produce some seed, but it will be poisonous. Listen to the words of Paul to Timothy:

But realize this, that in the last days, difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

These are serious and sobering words. Remember, the tares are those who are far from *Torah*. They have a form of godliness, but in reality, they are arrogant. They will not bow in the wind, who is the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit), but are lovers of their own flesh. They may look like the wheat when they are in church, but they do what they please during the rest of the week. Yeshua said we will know them by their fruit. This should make us think back to the heads of grain and what they produce. It also speaks to us about the teachings we “consume.” Remember that the heads of the tares are poisonous. This should remind us of false teachings. There are many teachers out there, and what they say sounds good. But if their teachings lead people away from the *Torah* and the words of Yeshua, they cannot be teaching the truth. What these wolves in sheep’s clothing teach can divide and destroy the followers of Yeshua.

This also makes me think of the poisonous teachings of replacement theology, which is the teaching that the “church” has replaced Israel and has resulted in the belief that the Jerusalem is an international city belonging to all people and therefore, no longer has any special significance for Christians. Unfortunately, this belief system has resulted in the separation of the people of God – the Gentiles in one camp and the Jews in another. But praised be His blessed Name! He is bringing us back together and restoring the Hebraic foundations of our faith...this is why the threshing floor is in Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is the place where God has placed His Name for all eternity. It is the place from where the “Stone of stumbling, the Rock of offense” will reign – Yeshua is the stone over which men either stumble in their haughtiness and pride or upon which they throw themselves in humility. The threshing floor in Jerusalem will reveal all.

Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people. Jerusalem is the Holy City of God. Jerusalem is the City of the Great King, and Yeshua is the King of the Jews! If you want to meet your Redeemer, you will find Him on the threshing floor where He is readying to separate the wheat from the tares. It will be the final harvest!

Even so, come quickly Messiah Yeshua!