

FINAL KINGDOM PREPARATIONS

Matt. 24:29-35; Rev. 20:4-6

The second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth begins with the rapture. This event is secret with only the believers seeing Him. He comes into the air and calls out His own and takes them to Heaven. He then judges the earth in a seven-year tribulation and prepares it, and especially Israel, for His return to rule and reign. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, He will return to the earth to establish His kingdom. He will then rule the world for 1,000 years.

Matthew 24 and 25 give the order of events for the Lord's return to set up His kingdom. It is immediately after the tribulation, which is described in 24:4-26. His return is actually what ends this terrible time and is described in 24:27-30. At that time, He will regather Israel to her land (24:31); judge her (25:1-30); call the Gentiles before Him and judge them (25:31-46).

The armies that have gathered around Jerusalem are destroyed. **Zechariah 14:2-3**, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.... Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." **Revelation 19:19, 21**, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

The beast and false prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire. **Revelation 19:20**, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

I. THE FIRST RESURRECTION WILL BE FINISHED (Rev. 20:4-6).

A. There are two resurrections (John 5:24-29).

- 1. The resurrection of life.*
- 2. The resurrection of damnation.*
- 3. The time between them is 1,000 years.*

B. The first resurrection has three parts.

- 1. Christ was the first to be raised out from the dead.*
- 2. The dead in Christ are next at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:16).*
- 3. The tribulation martyrs and Old Testament saints follow at the end of the tribulation (v.4).*

Daniel 12:1-3, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake...And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

At the rapture all the believers on earth will be removed and taken to Heaven. There will be no one to witness for Christ. But He says that during the tribulation period the gospel will be preached to all nations. **Matthew 24:14**, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Who will be the preachers?

At the beginning of the tribulation the Lord will save and seal one hundred and forty-four thousand Jewish men to do this job. **Revelation 7:4**, "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." **Revelation 14:4-6**, "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto

them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” Many, both Jews and Gentiles will be saved. A large number of these will be martyred by the Beast. The rest will live to enter the kingdom.

We do not know when this will happen, but if it is soon there could be 1.6 billion people alive on earth at the end of the tribulation. These will be called before the Lord and judged.

II. ISRAEL WILL BE GATHERED AND JUDGED.

A. These are Jews that survive the tribulation.

Ezekiel 20:34-38, “And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.” **Malachi 3:2-5**, “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness...And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.”

B. There is a twofold result of this judgment (Matt. 24:36-41).

1. The unsaved are cut off.

Ezekiel 20:37-38, “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.” **Matthew 24:51**, “And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” **Matthew 25:30**, “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

2. The saved enter the kingdom.

Romans 11:26-27, “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” **Matthew 25:21**, “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

III. THE GENTILES WILL BE CALLED BEFORE HIM AND JUDGED (Matt. 25:31-46).

A. These are the Gentiles that survive the tribulation.

Joel 3:1-2, “For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”

B. There is a twofold result of this judgment.

1. The saved enter the kingdom (Matt. 25:34-40).

The ones who are saved heard the gospel and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The proof of their salvation is the way they treated the believing Jews.

2. The unsaved are cast into everlasting fire (Matt. 25:41-46).

The ones who are lost heard the gospel and refused to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The proof of their lost condition is the way they treated the believing Jews.

The Lord Jesus will then personally rule the world for 1,000 years. The resurrected saints will rule with Him. **Revelation 20:6**, “Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

He has promised that this will be a relaxing and restful time. It will be enjoyable. It will be filled with activity that is challenging, fulfilling, and exciting. It will be one thousand years of peace, righteousness, justice, fairness, cleanliness, and prosperity. God is not going to allow sin to completely spoil what He planned for this world. When the thousand years ends, we will not return to the daily grind of everyday life but will go on to the even greater state of eternal bliss with a new heaven and a new earth.

Are you prepared to meet Christ when He returns? The rapture may happen today. Only those who are saved will be taken. The rest will enter the terrible days of the tribulation.