

## 10.

### WORTHY TO ESCAPE

I believe it would be a mistake to think that there will be no places of refuge or safety to which believers can flee before or during the tribulation. It would be wrong to think that there is nothing which we can do, now or in the future to survive what is coming. Obviously, some believers do make it through to the end of this tribulation period.

Speaking about the coming rapture, Paul writes about "...we who are alive and remain" (I Thess 4:15) thus indicating that at Jesus' coming there are still living believers. The Antichrist, in spite of his best efforts, will not get everyone.

Also along these lines, in Revelation 12, we read about a holy woman who gives birth to the man-child. The dragon persecutes this end-times woman. He spews "water" like a flood out of his mouth (vs 15) trying to destroy her.

But the earth “helped the woman...and swallowed up the flood” (vs 16).

This may mean that the Antichrist puts a great effort into extinguishing the church. He will give it his best shot. But the earth is so big that the Antichrist just cannot reach into all the corners and kill everyone. His greatest efforts are not enough to span the globe. The sheer size of the earth “swallows up” his attempts. He has too many other issues to deal with and too many other things on his mind.

Consequently, it may be realistic to conclude that there are some countries or places on the earth where Christians will be relatively safe. There may exist places where the power and influence of the Antichrist will be less. I am not talking here about some kind of total immunity from persecution, but about places which will be impacted less by the agenda of the Antichrist.

According to the Bible, there must exist “a place prepared by God” to which this woman is able to flee (vs 6). This place, singular in the Word, could in practice be many different places around the world. Or, it could be a continent or some larger area which includes many different countries. (The “wings of a great eagle” in verse 14 could possibly refer to airplanes.)

Logically, these localities would be in countries which are energy self-sufficient. They

would be places that do not depend on foreign oil. They would either produce enough of their own oil or have other alternatives to use for fuel. They might be areas with large Christian populations which would resist pressure to kill believers and Jews. They would be remote, that is, isolated from other parts of the world.

They would probably be countries which are not considered to be "key" in the global economies. It would be helpful if they had monetary and/or banking systems which are not completely dependent on the rest of the world. Also, these countries would likely be less developed. Such could be the places (or the "place") which today are (is) being prepared by God to shelter some of His own from what is coming.

Such nations or areas of safety would probably have plenty of local agriculture. They might have a system of food production and distribution which does not rely heavily on transportation over long distances. They would likely generate their own electricity. In short, they would be places which are less dependent on the rest of the world for their day-to-day living. These would be good places to which to flee.

One part of the world which historically has been an area of refuge is Central and South America. Some of these nations produce oil. Many grow their own food and manufacture a large part of other necessary goods. This region

is not central to the world economy and is somewhat isolated in terms of distance. Politically and militarily, it is not pivotal to the present world order. I certainly don't mean to offend the citizens of these countries by saying this. It is only that this may be a good place to consider for believers who must flee.

Interestingly, this location of relative safety is a place "prepared by God." This means that He has arranged everything in terms of geographic position, oil self-sufficiency, food production, etc. to work to protect His people who flee there.

The overall strategy here is not something that a man or a group of men has planned out. This will not be a result of some new Christian movement. Rather it is some place which God has furnished. It is not the result of human preparation such as hoarding of food, or buying land but somewhere which our Lord has arranged.

I believe it extremely unwise to think of anywhere in the United States as a place of refuge. It is already the focus of hatred for the Middle Eastern nations. According to the reasoning in the previous book of this series entitled *Babylon*, it will probably be attacked by nuclear weapons and largely destroyed.

The aftermath of such an attack would produce death by fallout, famine and widespread lawlessness and confusion. This country would

not be safe. It could not be thought of as a “place prepared by God.”

Further, it is very possible that after such a nuclear attack, other nations which are hungry for land could invade the U.S. Some, such as China, might not even give much consideration to the safety of their troops in regard to residual radiation, but merely be motivated by the thought of grabbing a huge chunk of arable land. China and others are very short on agricultural areas and could decide that they should take advantage of the situation.

It might sound absurd to you today, but it is very possible that with the U.S. brought to her knees, various other countries, including Mexico, Russia, China and others would send troops to gobble up land and/or to “restore order.”

Think about it. If some catastrophe like this happened to another country, would the U.S. send troops to “help out” or “restore order?” Certainly they would. Therefore, other nations will do so also. Many surviving Americans might consider these troops to be “invaders.”

Such a situation would provoke even more confusion and probably guerrilla warfare. This would be especially true if these other nations were under the influence of the Antichrist and committed to helping him carry out his agenda of exterminating believers. Certainly this would not be a place of refuge “prepared by God.”

## WHAT MANNER OF PEOPLE?

What we have been discussing is both sobering and somewhat frightening. Here in this book we have a word of warning. We see that our time is short. Therefore, "...what manner of persons ought [we] to be in holy conduct and godliness?" (II Pet 3:11). Since our Lord is going to return to this earth, very probably in "this generation" how should this knowledge affect our living?

I believe it would be valuable for all of us to take a moment and consider the following questions. What are our priorities? What are our goals? What are we pursuing with our time, energy and money? How are we using the gifts which God has given us?

Are we, as faithful servants, investing in a way which will please our Master when He comes? Are we building His kingdom? Are we serving His body? Are our lives a testimony of humble purity and love? Or are we mainly serving ourselves and pursuing our own interests while putting seeking and serving God in second place in our lives?

If we cannot honestly say that God is our number one priority, then it is time to repent – His kingdom is at hand. Very shortly, our faith and our commitment to Him and His people is going to be tested, severely tested. This test will

be based on our love for God and our love for one another. It will show whether or not we are willing to die for Him and/or for other believers, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Will we deny Jesus and betray our brothers and sisters or will we be faithful even unto death? Will we go along with the Antichrist program to preserve our present lifestyle? Will we turn in others to save our own skin? Will we be willing to suffer and even die?

It will be much better for you if you settle these issues in your heart today. This writer is convinced that what the future holds will not be pleasant or easy. Perhaps we have just a few more years of relative peace to get our hearts right with God, to do His will and to accomplish the purposes for which He created us.

There is absolutely no time to waste! Perhaps we have squandered some of God's precious time already. Possibly we have become "weary while doing good" (Gal 6:9), being discouraged by the apathy of others, lack of "success" or the difficulties which we have encountered.

God will certainly forgive us for what is past, yet the future is before us. Definitely, it is time to: "...strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed" (Heb 12:12,13).

One thing to do immediately is to stop our involvement with anything and everything we know that is not God's will. No one will have to tell you what this is. You no doubt already know in your heart what it is that you have in your life which doesn't please Him. You know what it is that will make you ashamed if He were to come today. As you repent of these things, you will find His forgiveness.

The next thing to do is recommit your life to Him. Firmly decide and then declare to Him that you will dedicate the rest of your life to Him and to doing His will. It is not yet too late. While it is still called "today" (Heb 3:7) do what you know you should to renew your relationship with Him and begin from today onward to do His will.

Today, there is still time. There is time to serve Jesus by laying down our lives to serve others in His name. There is still enough daylight to work the works of God (Jn 9:4). Take full advantage of it! When the persecution starts, it will be very difficult to travel, preach, teach and evangelize. The work of the Lord will be complicated by many barriers and difficulties. Wars and turmoil will make it very tough to complete what God has given you to do.

So, get going now! Use the time which is still available to us and make the most out of it! Begin today to lay aside those things which have been hindering you from doing the work

of the Lord that He has called you to do. Don't put it off any longer. We should be "redeeming the time because the days are [and will become even more] evil" (Eph 5:16).

## **WE SHOULD NOT WALK IN DARKNESS**

It is not God's will for His children to be in darkness. Paul teaches us that "...you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief" (I Thess 5:4). Therefore, believers who are intimate with Jesus will see what is coming. He will show it to us. It should be no surprise to any believer.

God's children should not be in a position of being weighed down with the "cares of this life," and then have that day "...come upon [them] unexpectedly" (Lk 21:34). Rather, walking in intimacy with Him, we should be keenly aware of the signs of the times which are unfolding before us (Mt 16:3). As we understand the times, we can then adjust our life to more perfectly align with the will of God in these last days. Walking in intimacy with Him, we can be ready for what is coming.

The events which are coming upon this earth should not be a discouragement for us but an encouragement. Jesus, after teaching His disciples about the signs of the times and the coming end of the age says: "Now when you see these things begin to happen, look up and lift

up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Lk 21:28).

These things should be an encouragement for us to know that our life of struggle and travail, our labor, our frustrations and our pains are soon to end. So, just as a long-distance runner sees the finish line and so increases his pace to finish strongly, so we too have the opportunity to see the end coming and make a last push toward the goal.

Naturally, no one wants to suffer. It is simply our human tendency to want to avoid any pain and difficulty if we can. Our heavenly Father does not like to see His children suffer either. Yet, the "perilous times" which are coming upon the earth will serve two purposes for God.

One purpose for sending His judgments upon the ungodly is that this may help some of them turn to Him because of their sufferings. A proof that His love still exists for the ungodly is that in the middle of His judgments upon the earth, He will send an angel to preach the gospel from the midst of heaven (Rev 14:6).

The second purpose is to purify His own children by allowing them to suffer persecution. It is sad but true that the church of our day is not perfect. She is not "without spot or wrinkle" (Eph 5:27). In fact, the situation is honestly lamentable. The more you look, the more problems you can see. The number of believers

involved in selfishness and sin is beyond count. So, God will use the coming time of trial to test, refine and purify His sons and daughters. It will be a time of trial which will benefit those believers who turn their hearts back to God in the midst of it. Through the furnace of affliction, believers will be purified during the tribulation period.

Those who did not seek God before this time will have an opportunity to do so. Any believers who did not take advantage of their time to become ever more like Jesus will need a little heat and pressure to refine them to perfection.

The coming tribulation period will be one of God's ways to accomplish His purposes in His people. He will use all these things for our good and to further His eternal plan as we turn to Him in the the hours of trial. Please remember again that the word "tribulation" in the New Testament does not refer to God's judgments on the world, but to what the Antichrist will do to believers and Jews.

### **WORTHY TO ESCAPE**

But it may be that this intense purification will not be the same for all Christians. Depending upon where believers live and what their relationship with Jesus is, the intensity of this persecution may vary. It is possible that for

some there may even be a way of escape. We find a hint of this in the gospel of Luke where we read: "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Lk 21:36). This "escape" could be effected in several different ways.

It seems as if there are a few whose lives are pleasing to God who will not need the coming testing and refinement. Some are already living righteously. Their lives are already purified and ready. Therefore, God will not need to allow them to go through the time of trial. If you are ready to meet the bridegroom, having your robes spotless and white, then perhaps no further fiery trials and testings are necessary.

One verse which supports this idea is found in Revelation 3:10. Here Jesus says to some faithful believers: "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."

So we see that one good way to avoid the coming persecution and tribulation period is to allow God to purify your life today. If God considers that you are ripe – that your life is wholly pleasing to Him – you have His promise that He will protect you from what is coming. He will "keep you from the hour of trial."

Does this mean that there will be a partial rapture before the tribulation? I cannot say. However, such a "rapture" is not really necessary to fulfill this verse. It seems very clear that God will find a way to remove and/or protect His faithful followers from danger. How He will do this is not explained.

One possibility is that it could be through death. Although many fear death and look upon it negatively, this is not God's viewpoint. We read: "The righteous perishes, and no man takes it to heart; merciful men are taken away, while no one considers that the righteous is taken away from evil [that is to come KJV]" (Is 57:1). You see, God can and will arrange to take some of His children home before the future events become intense.

There is also another possibility. It could be that some of the righteous will have the foresight and wisdom to flee to that "place" of refuge which God has prepared before things get really bad. This is the "place" which we have spoken about before. It is somewhere God is setting up for this very purpose.

One translation of Luke 21:36 cited above, hints at such a possibility. Instead of being "counted worthy" to escape, some ancient biblical texts read: "may have strength to escape." This translation hints at the prospect that some will have the spiritual foresight and divine guidance to get themselves out of harm's way.

This understanding would also coincide with the verses in Proverbs which read: "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished" (Pr 22:3; 27:12). These passages reveal the possibility of God guiding His servants in the last days to take steps which would protect themselves and their families from the worst of the persecution which is coming. This would show that person to be "prudent."

However, God's ways are always far above ours and it is difficult to imagine how He might lead His children. It is quite possible that He might use all of the above means (along with others which we have never imagined) to protect those who love Him supremely from the evil days ahead.

This book has not been intended as a complete dissertation on end-times prophecy. Our object here was to look closely at the Antichrist, the events leading up to his arising and the things which could take place afterward.

Knowing what is coming will aid us all in looking in the right direction so that we will not be blind-sided by the future. Walking in the light of God, we can see how things are unfolding and then take any necessary steps of preparation which He might show us. May God add His anointing and blessing to you as you meditate on these things.

*Other books by this same author:*

**FROM GLORY TO GLORY**  
**THY KINGDOM COME**  
**GENUINE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY**  
**BABYLON**

*Available from the publisher:*

**"A GRAIN OF WHEAT" MINISTRIES**  
P.O. Box 644  
Leominster, MA 01453 U.S.A.

or

Contact the author directly:  
David W. Dyer  
1-715-830-0126  
davidwdyer@yahoo.com

*"A Grain of Wheat" Ministries is looking for book distributors. If you are interested, please contact us for more information.*