

The Torah and the Rapture?

When John McKee asked me to write concerning the Torah's teaching on the rapture, I was delighted. What? The Torah doesn't say anything about the rapture, you may quip. Well, suppose I told you I think so? I'm sure most of you may think I'm pushing things a little too far; but please bear with me. Do I think the Torah literally says something about the rapture? No. However, if you are familiar with the Torah as a prophetic document, you shouldn't be surprised that it may actually address this subject in some manner. In order for this teaching to make sense, we must understand the prophetic nature of the Torah.

The Torah, A Shadow of Things to Come

In previous articles, we saw, through numerous examples, that *events in the lives of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs were prophetic shadows of future events in the lives of their children*. In other words, the narratives of the Torah are not isolated historical events, cut off in time from the future. To the contrary, *the greatest wisdom of these stories pertains to their prophetic and Messianic significance*. Therefore, it is imperative for us to understand that the Torah's narratives have more to do with the *future* than the past! Sometimes it's easy to read the Torah as if it were only written for the generation who lived out its events. But this is not the case. Let me give you two examples. In I Corinthians 10:1-13, Paul stated that *the stories of the Torah were written **FOR** the benefit of the generation upon whom the end of the ages had come!* According to verse eleven, to whom do the stories of the Torah have their greatest significance? Paul seems to be convinced that they were penned for the benefit of the last generation! He states, "Now all these things happened unto them for examples and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come (I Corinthians 10:11)." You see beloved, the reason why Paul could come to his conclusion was because he understood the prophetic nature of the stories of the Torah. He knew that the prophecies of the past were prophetic blueprints for the future. What's most significant though is the fact that he believed their greatest significance was for the last generation, or those "upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Let me ask you another question. Of all the people who have ever lived on the earth or who will ever live, to whom do you think the book of Revelation will be most relevant? I would have to say that the book of Revelation should be most relevant to the generation who will experience its events. After all, the reason for writing the book was so that the last generation would understand the signs of the times and have hope. Notice that we have just thematically linked the stories of the Torah to the book of Revelation just by noting *to whom both writings are most relevant—the last generation!* Let's see if we can find more thematic connections between the Torah and the book of Revelation.

Next, let's look at the specific stories Paul said were so significant to the last generation. I Corinthians 10:1-2 is a clear reference to the splitting of the Red Sea. I Corinthians 10:3-4 is a reference to Adonai's provision of bread and water to Am Yisrael once they had left Egypt. I Corinthians 10:5-10 is a reference to events that occurred during their wilderness journeys as recorded in the book of Numbers. Paul stated that these events are the ones that were written for the benefit of the last generation. Taken together, these events comprised two important phases of Am Yisrael's (the people of Israel) history—their exodus from Egypt and journey to the Promised Land. So what's the connection between these events and the last generation? The exodus from Egypt and the journey to the Promised Land were simply prophetic shadows of a greater exodus and journey which is to occur in the last days. I believe the story of the exodus of Am Yisrael from Egypt, culminating in their arrival, conquest and settlement in the land of Canaan, is a foreshadowing of the exodus of the last generation of Adonai's people from the world into the Millennial Kingdom. This is why I Corinthians 10 and the book of Revelation are so intimately connected. In order to substantiate this assertion I'd like to show you a few of the many ways the exodus

and wilderness journeys are thematically connected (unmistakably related) to the events of the book of Revelation.

- ◆ In Hebrew, the word Pharaoh, פַּרְעֹה, is a combination of two words, פֶּה, meaning mouth, and רַע, meaning bad or wicked. Together they mean "bad/wicked mouth." A quick glance at references pertaining to the anti-Messiah (Daniel 11:36, Revelation 13:5-6, and 17:3 [blasphemous names]) shows that one of the main characteristics describing him is his *boastful, blaspheming mouth*. Therefore, Pharaoh is our first shadowy picture of the anti-Messiah. The connection between the meaning of his title and the characteristic of the anti-Messiah is strong and clear.
- ◆ The theme of the first fifteen chapters of the book of Exodus is, let my people "go" out of Egypt. One of the major themes of the book of Revelation is for the people of Adonai to "come out" of Babylon, the false system of religious worship (Revelation 18). In both instances, Adonai is interested in His people leaving a system of life which is opposite that found in the Torah.
- ◆ In the exodus, Adonai used Moses and Aaron as His *two witnesses* before Pharaoh and all Egypt. In the book of Revelation, a major theme is that of the two witnesses. They will function as Moses and Aaron functioned, being able to perform supernatural miracles that actually involve changing the normal course of nature.
- ◆ In the exodus, Adonai used plagues against Egypt to encourage the Egyptians to repent and know יהוה, God of the Hebrews. In the book of Revelation, Adonai uses plagues to encourage men to repent from their sins. In fact, there are many similarities between the plagues in the Exodus and those in the book of Revelation.
 - There are plagues of hail in the books of Exodus and Revelation,. The descriptions are very similar with only a few differences. In the Exodus, Adonai used hail and rain mixed together. Exodus 9:25 states that "throughout Egypt hail struck everything *in the fields*—both men and animals; it *beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree*." In Revelation 8:7 Adonai uses "hail and fire mixed with blood" with the result that "*a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up!*" As you can see, the devastating effects of the hailstorms in both stories are clearly thematically connected as well. Furthermore, both books (Exodus 9:22 and Revelation 16:21) relate that the hail fell on people as well.
 - Exodus 9:10 recounts the plague of boils which came upon the Egyptians. Revelation 16:1-2 is the account of the first vial, which caused a noisome and grievous sore to appear upon those who had the mark of the beast!
 - In Exodus 7:20, Moses and Aaron turned the waters of the Nile river into blood. The second and third vials in Revelation 16:3-6 show how the waters of the sea and rivers will be turned into blood!
 - Exodus 10:21-23 is the account of darkness that was cast upon the land of Egypt. Revelation 16:10-11 pertains to the darkness of the beast's kingdom. Furthermore, in Revelation 9:1-2, the smoke of the bottomless pit causes the sun to be darkened on the earth!
 - Exodus 10:12-15 is an account of the plague of locusts which destroyed the crops of Egypt. Revelation 9:1-6 is the account of a plague of locusts which, instead of harming crops, have the power to inflict pain upon those who do not have the seal of Adonai in their heads.
 - Exodus 8:2-4 is the account of the plague of frogs. Revelation 16:13-14 is the account of the frogs, unclean spirits, which were sent into the world.
- ◆ Deuteronomy 8:1-2 informs us that the journeys through the wilderness (which began in the book of Exodus) were a time of *testing* for Am Yisrael. Revelation 3:10 informs us that the 3 1/2 year tribulation is a time of testing for the entire world (including Adonai's people).

- ◆ In Exodus 1-2, Pharaoh tried to destroy the future deliverer and ruler of the nation of Israel (Moses) by having all baby boys cast into the Nile. In Revelation 12, hasatan tries to destroy the manchild who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Note the following similarities:
 - In Exodus, the one to be destroyed (Moses) was destined to rule and exercise authority. In Revelation 12, the manchild to be destroyed is destined to rule the nations with a rod of iron.
 - In Exodus 1-2, Pharaoh tried to destroy Moses at his birth. In Revelation 12, hasatan tries to destroy the manchild at birth!
 - In Exodus 1-2, Moses the deliverer was supernaturally preserved by Adonai. In Revelation 12, the manchild is supernaturally delivered from the hands of hasatan.
 - In Exodus 1-2, Pharaoh tried to use the waters of the Nile River to destroy the deliverer. In Revelation 12, hasatan tries to use water to destroy the remnant of the woman's seed. Are these mere coincidences?
- ◆ In the Exodus, there was an unprecedented display of power from both kingdoms as Pharaoh's necromancers tried to duplicate (and succeed to a point) the wonders of the Elohim (God) of Israel. In the book of Revelation, there is an intense power struggle between the two kingdoms. Wonders are performed by the two witnesses as well as the false prophet and beast.
- ◆ In the Exodus, Adonai made a distinction between the children of Israel and Egypt. In the book of Revelation there is a distinction between those in Adonai's kingdom and those who aren't. Those within the kingdom of God are sealed on their forehead. Those within the kingdom of hasatan have the mark of the beast on their foreheads and hand.
- ◆ In the Exodus, this period of testing occurred in the wilderness. In Revelation 12, the woman's seed flees to the wilderness from the presence of hasatan.
- ◆ The Torah informs us that the children of Israel made 42 stops during their wilderness journeys before they arrived in the Promised Land. In the book of Revelation, the period of time in the wilderness before the Millennial Kingdom is 42 months.

Given the numerous thematic relationships between the Exodus and the book of Revelation, we should immediately be able to understand that the story of the exodus of Am Yisrael from Egypt, culminating in their arrival, conquest and settlement in the land of Canaan is a foreshadowing of the exodus of the last generation of Adonai's people from the world into the Millennial Kingdom (our Promised Land). In fact, the story of the Exodus is a Torah foundation for understanding the book of Revelation! Understanding the who, what, when, where, why and how of the exodus will provide valuable information to help interpret the book of Revelation.

At some point, we as believers must understand that the Torah is a prophetic document with a prophetic message applicable to all generations. More importantly, we should know that the Torah's greatest prophetic message is intended for the last generation—the generation that will experience the great tribulation and witness the return of Yeshua HaMashiach. The numerous and undeniable connections between the story of the exodus and the book of Revelation, as well as Paul's connection of the events of the exodus to the last generation serve to exemplify and fortify that point.

With this understanding, let's make the following critical prophetic parallels:

- 1) The exodus of Am Yisrael from Egypt and their journey through the wilderness is thematically equivalent to the final exodus of the body of Messiah out of the world system and their journey through the wilderness of the peoples.
- 2) The possession by the children of Israel of the Promised Land (the land that flows with milk and honey), is thematically equivalent to the possession of the Millennial Kingdom by the body of Messiah.

Hopefully, the thematic connections above have convinced you of my assertion concerning the relevancy of the Torah for the last generation. So what is the practical relevance of those prophetic connections? Let's consider the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine. Those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture believe that they will be translated from this earth to heaven without experiencing the tribulation. This hope of going to heaven is based on the assumption that heaven is our possession in the after-life. In reality, our immediate possession will be that of the Millennial Kingdom (1,000 years *on this present earth*) followed by the eternal state when Adonai comes from heaven to live on the *new heavens and the new earth* (see Rev. 20-22, II Peter 3:10-13 and Matt. 5:5). Therefore, although many believers in the Church have been taught to hope for a home in heaven, our destination is actually a home on earth whether during the Millennial Kingdom or eternal state (once the new heavens and the new earth have been created). We will see later why this false hope is important.

Let us ask the following question. When the children of Israel left Israel, *where did they think they were going?* Possibilities may include 1) into the wilderness to worship Adonai, 2) directly to the Promised Land and 3) into the wilderness to worship Adonai followed by a quick trip to the Promised Land. A careful examination of the book of Exodus reveals that although Pharaoh thought Israel was only going out to the wilderness to worship Adonai (Exodus 3:18; 4:23; 5:1, 3; 7:16, 26; 8:4, 16, 21-25; 9:1, 13, 17, 28; 10:3, 7, 8-11, 24-26; 12:31-32 and 14:5), the Israelites expected to worship Adonai in the wilderness and then make a quick jaunt to the Promised Land (Exodus 3:7-12, 16-17; 6:6-8; and 13:5, 11). If you read the above passages very carefully, you will notice that whenever Moshe speaks to Pharaoh, he always tells him to let Israel go on a short journey into the wilderness to worship/serve Adonai. He never tells Pharaoh to let the people go so that they can be free from slavery! In contrast, whenever he speaks to the children of Israel, he tells them that they'll worship in the wilderness *and then go to the Promised Land!*

So what went wrong? Why didn't Am Yisrael go directly to the Promised Land after receiving the Torah? They took forty years to get to the Promised Land. For various reasons, *Adonai purposed that the children of Israel obtain the Promised Land only after a period of testing and endurance.* Furthermore, they had to dispossess the countries through warfare (more on this point later). Although the children of Israel thought they were going directly to the Promised Land, in actuality, they were at the threshold of many years of testing in the wilderness.

What analogy can we make to the last generation? An understanding of the two critical thematic parallels between the original Exodus and the end-time Exodus clearly shows us the following:

- 1) Am Yisrael was promised a kingdom in the Promised Land. All believers have been promised a kingdom, the Millennial Kingdom.
- 2) Am Yisrael made an exodus from Egypt. In the last generation, Adonai's people will make an exodus from this world (spiritual Egypt).
- 3) Am Yisrael wanted to go directly to their land inheritance apart from the wilderness experience and apart from fighting for the land. Believers today want to go directly to their land inheritance (the Millennial Kingdom) apart from the wilderness experience and apart from fighting for the land. They want to be RAPTURED!

As you can see, things haven't changed much over the centuries and we are no better off than our ancestors. When it is time for the body of Messiah to make its exodus from this world into the Millennial Kingdom, most expect to go there without any period of wilderness testing. We don't expect to go through any wilderness trials. We don't want to fight the battles of Jericho and Ai. We want to go right to our inheritance. We want the inheritance without any struggle. But that is impossible. There were basically two obstacles Am Yisrael had to overcome in order to obtain the Promised Land—the wilderness and warfare.

Why the Wilderness?

If Am Yisrael had obeyed Adonai, they would have gone straight to the Promised Land. However, that was not the case. They tempted the Holy One many times and outright forsook the covenant when they worshipped the golden calf. Because of their disobedience, Adonai made Am Yisrael go through the wilderness experience which served two purposes for two different groups of people. First, the wilderness was a time when those who were unfaithful to Adonai were judged as illustrated by Deuteronomy 4:3-4:

You saw with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor,⁴ but all of you who held fast to the LORD your God are still alive today.

As this passage states, the wilderness consumed all the rebels. The incident of Baal Peor was the last test for Am Yisrael. It occurred on the plains of Moab where Am Yisrael camped before crossing the Jordan to inherit the Promised Land. Those who passed that final test were able to receive their land inheritance. But the wilderness was the place where the unfaithful were judged. This same scenario is about to occur at the end of the age. This is why Paul stated that it is time for judgment to begin in the house of God. It's not an easy message, but it's the truth. Most church-goers have no idea of the prophetic significance of the tribulation or its relationship to the wilderness journeys. They just think it's a bad time on the earth. And the reason they think such is because by neglecting the Torah, the wilderness of the tribulation has been stripped of its intended meaning and purpose! Its prophetic context has been obscured through the dismissal of the Torah as relevant for our generation. Well, Paul certainly didn't think the Torah had nothing to do with the last generation. He made the connection and hopefully more of us will begin to make the same connections.

Secondly, those who would later inherit the Promised Land were purified and refined to help them possess the land and establish the nation. This is illustrated by Deuteronomy 8:1-5:

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

In this passage, Moses was speaking to those who made it through the trials of the wilderness. Thus, we see that the wilderness trials weren't just about the destruction of the ungodly. They also had another Divine purpose. The wilderness trials refined the faithful, equipping them for the battles that loomed ahead when Am Yisrael would need to dispossess nations greater and mightier than themselves. This is the same agenda Adonai has for a select group of people at the end of the age. The experience gained in the tribulation will help them bring in the Millennial Kingdom. Just as Am Yisrael had to fight in order to take possession of the land, so likewise, the last generation will undergo intense battles in the great tribulation. This is the other aspect of Adonai's endtime purpose that most believers are totally unaware of.

Why the Warfare?

It is unfortunate that most believers think they are receiving heaven as their reward. Although heaven may be the place where we will await the resurrection, the rejuvenated earth of the Millennial Kingdom and the new heavens and new earth of the eternal state are where we will find our ultimate destiny. Note how many passages promise us the earth (Psalm 25:13; 37:11, 22; Matthew 5:5)! Just as Am Yisrael inherited land, so likewise, the last generation will inherit land! It's called the Millennial Kingdom. Furthermore, just as Am Yisrael had to fight numerous enemies who were far mightier, so likewise, the last generation will be fighting an enemy who is far mightier, hasatan! Beloved, that's why the Torah gave us a picture of Am Yisrael going up against super-sized (Numbers 13:33 and Deuteronomy 3:1-11) giants and cities fortified to the heavens as she went to possess the land. It was all to teach us about the final battles which will be waged by us mere humans against hasatan and his demonic spirits, all of whom are mightier than we. However, the key to victory is that our weapons are made mighty through the Holy One to the pulling down of hasatan's kingdom. You may not know this but the tribulation is simply the final battle that began in the Garden of Eden. You remember the scene don't you?

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and **between your seed and her Seed**; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel** (Genesis 3:15)."*

Now many of you may balk and say, "That verse pertains to Yeshua's battle with hasatan!" Well, that's true. However, as with so many other passages in the scriptures, many passages have more than one level of interpretation. Now let me share with you how you can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this verse pertains to the warfare to be waged by believers against hasatan at the end of the age. First, read Genesis 3:15 again and listen to the words carefully. Now read Romans 16:20:

*And the God of peace **will crush Satan under your feet shortly**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen*

Note the choice of Paul's words! What do you think Paul had in mind when he used the phrase "under your feet"? Could there be any mistaking? Of course he was thinking of Genesis 3:15. Note how he has interpreted Genesis 3:15 as a battle between the saints and hasatan instead of Yeshua and hasatan! All we need to do is understand when the timeframe of "shortly" was to occur. We have the answer to the time frame in Revelation 12:17, which you should also compare with Genesis 3:15!

¹⁷*And the dragon was wroth with **the woman**, and went to make war with the **remnant of her seed**, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*

Isn't Genesis 3:15 about a **woman** and her **seed** just as in Revelation 12:17? Isn't the seed of the woman of Genesis 3:15 suppose to **crush hasatan's head** as stated in Romans 16:20? And who is this seed of the woman—those who obey the mitzvot (commandments) of God and have the testimony of Yeshua HaMashiach? You see beloved, Genesis 3:15 is a prophecy of the final battle of the book of Revelation! History as finally approached the final hour where Messiah Yeshua, will put down all authority and rule through His body. And His body is us!

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Thus the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 can be fulfilled through Messiah Yeshua and the body of Messiah simultaneously because we are His body! We are the foot (body) of the Messiah who will crush the head of hasatan. Taken together, Genesis 3:15, Romans 16:20, Revelation 12:17 and Ephesians 1:22-23 clearly

demonstrate that there will be a final battle at the end of the age between the body of Messiah and hasatan. We will be victorious. But...

How can we be victorious if we aren't here on the earth—the grand battlefield—to face our enemy? How will we defeat hasatan if we've been raptured to a secure heaven? How will we fulfill our destiny to possess the Millennial Kingdom if we're cowering in heaven? This final battle prophesied of in Genesis 3:15, Romans 16:20, Revelation 12:17 and Ephesians 1:22-23 is totally missing in the theology of everyone who believes in the rapture! They don't have the slightest clue as to the real purpose of the wilderness wanderings nor the great tribulation. They don't understand that the battles for possession of the land by Am Yisrael were prophetic shadows of the final battle between the body of Messiah and hasatan over the land (the earth). What's most disheartening is the fact that the Torah has been so neglected that we cannot see nor fulfill our Divine purpose, because we know not that we were placed in this period of time for such a time as this. A time of warfare and victory. Instead of understanding these truths, which can easily be understood from a pro-Torah perspective, most believers are fettered by humanistic wisdom concerning "why Adonai wouldn't allow them and their loved ones to go through the tribulation."

A light bulb has gone off within many of you. However, I know some of you want so desperately to cling to the rapture doctrine. Let me be blunt so as to hopefully shock you into reality.

Genesis 3:15, Romans 16:20, Revelation 12:17 and Ephesians 1:22-23 clearly demonstrate that there will be a final battle at the end of the age between the body of Messiah and hasatan. This battle will take place during the time period known as the great tribulation. There is no rapture. If you are alive when the great tribulation "starts" you will be on the earth, not in heaven. And you'd better know how to follow Torah and use your spiritual weapons. The rapture is a fairytale! You've simply inherited a lie, one of many lies that Ephraim inherited precisely because of his rejection of Torah.

A scripturally based understanding of the prophetic nature of the Tanakh will clearly help anyone understand that the events of the past are blueprints of the future. If we truly want to walk in the footsteps of our Savior, then we need to forget about the rapture fairytale (which in my mind is simply one of many end-time doctrines of demons) and replace it with the truth of the scriptures. Our lack of understanding of the prophetic nature of the Tanakh has predisposed us to believe many things that are totally at odds with the eternal plan of the Father. In the final analysis the tribulation battle between the saints and hasatan will be a total victory for us. While it is true that many saints will be martyred during the tribulation, it is also true that there will be an abundance of supernatural deliverances for many others just as in the past. Therefore, even those martyred in the Messiah will be gaining victory over hasatan. How can I say this? Because, if we are one of those martyred we will be following in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior Yeshua who gained His greatest victory over His enemy hasatan through His death!

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; **that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil** . . . (Hebrews 2:14)*

*And **they overcame him** (hasatan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and **they did not love their lives to the death** (Revelation 12:11).*

Although the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 states that we will crush hasatan's head, it also states that our heels will be bruised. This bruising may be our deaths as martyrs. But it is truly only a bruise because of the surety of the resurrection. Despite the martyrdom of many saints, the tribulation battle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman will be one of the greatest times of deliverance for the body

of Messiah. The deliverance of Am Yisrael at the splitting of the Red Sea, the salvation of the three Hebrew men and the rescue of Daniel from the lions pit are just a few of the prophetic pictures of victories that will occur during the tribulation period. The bottom line is that whether through death or deliverance we will win the battle over our enemy. But this can only occur because we'll be here, on the earth to engage him in battle, not in heaven waiting for him to kill some more Jews, which is part of the rapture deception.

The last prophetic parallel I'd like to make concerning our generation and the generation of the Exodus pertains to the general attitude of those who are so sure that "we'll be raptured out of here." Why was it that Am Yisrael was so afraid to go in and possess the Promised Land? It was their fear of war. When Adonai originally brought Am Yisrael out of Egypt he had them take a longer route towards Canaan because He knew they would fear war (Exodus 13:17). Later, in the book of Numbers, it was their fear of warfare that caused them to have to wander in the desert for forty years. Remember the sin of the spies? Nothing has changed. People have scouted out the prospect of the land of the Millennial Kingdom. And although it looks great, the only way to obtain it is through the wilderness and battles of the tribulation. Many, like the ten spies who feared warfare from the inhabitants of the land, have opted for the easy way out, believing that they will be raptured from the impending warfare. However, in the end, their choice of the rapture option will be the same option as was chosen by those who opted to return to Egypt. They never made it because it was never one of Adonai's options. The only other option other than obeying the commandments and possessing the land was to die in the wilderness.