A ‘Rapture - To Be Or Not to Be - Part 1

Introduction

Most followers of the Scriptures agree that we are in the very last days of this current age and that the return of Mashiach is imminent. Thus the importance of correctly interpreting what Scripture tells us about this period is paramount. Although there is a lot of material available concerning what will occur at the culmination of this age most of it, if not all, has been prepared without any cognizance of Isa. 46:10,

‘...declaring the end from the beginning, and from of old that which has not yet been done, saying, ‘My counsel does stand, and all My delight I do.’

The prophet is telling us that the future can be found in the past. In other words the events surrounding Israel as recorded in the Tanakh (Old Testament) are foreshadows of the future events described in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament). In a nutshell, Israel’s history is the key to understanding end time prophesy. It is on this maxim that this article has been produced.

A misconception of end time events could have damaging results. It is this premise that has led me to write this article. For example, a salient end time event is the timing of what the apostle says in 1Thess.4:16-17 concerning Mashiach’s gathering of His followers: what Christianity call a ‘Rapture.’ Almost without exception papers available today place this event at a specific time but what if the calculation is incorrect? What if that which is expected doesn’t happen when anticipated? Not only would this be devastating to many, it could result in a massive loss of faith? So it is of paramount importance we get the facts right. I do not want to infer that I have all the answers, I am not that presumptuous. However, I believe that Father YHWH is continually providing enlightenment which necessitates constant re-evaluation of interpretation. We are all forever learning.

This article is in two parts;

Part 1: Considers the end time events heralding the return of Mashiach and the start of His millennial rule.
Part 2: The timing of Mashiach’s Gathering of His People: 1Thess.4:16-17

Part 1: The Events Heralding the Return of Mashiach and the Start of His Millennial Age.

Two Kingdoms: Two Ages

For those who have never realised, scripture tells us that Elohim has two Kingdoms that will exist at different times/different ages. These two Kingdoms are referred to as Mashiach’s Kingdom and the Father’s Kingdom,

Then Yahusha sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came to him, said, explain to us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said to them, He that sows the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sows them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (Matt.13:36-43).

So we have the Kingdom of Mashiach (Son of Man) and the Kingdom of the Father, of course eventually everything is handed back to the Father by the Son.

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Now when Mashiach was with His Talmidim (Disciples) He gave many parables, introducing each with the words, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like…..” but which Kingdom was He referring to? Well from the above abstract it is clear that Mashiach cannot be referring to the Father’s Kingdom because within the kingdom He is describing reside both the righteous and the unrighteous – evil ones. The presence of unrighteousness is the main difference between these two Kingdoms. Thus when Mashiach talks of the Kingdom of Heaven He is referring to His Kingdom which we are told He will rule with a rod of iron. Let us look at one more parable in the same chapter,

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matt.13:47-50).

This parable also refers to a Kingdom occupied by both the righteous and the unrighteous. It also cannot be referring to the Father’s Kingdom. So what is the timing and period of these two Kingdoms? Well, we are told that the Son will hand everything back to the Father (1Cor.15:24), thus Mashiach’s Kingdom must precede that of the Father. What is more, before He can hand things back to the Father there has to be a purging (judgement) of the unrighteous because the apostle tells us that the unrighteous will not inherit the Father’s Kingdom (1 Cor.6:9). We do not inherit Mashiach’s Kingdom because it is an earthly Kingdom. If anything, it is Mashiach who inherits the remnant left living on earth after the tribulation and the pouring out of YHWH’s wrath.

So Mashiach’s earthly kingdom is first but when is it and for how long? Well, we need to collect together two verses; one from the Tanakh (Old Testament) the other from the Brit Hadashah (New Testament),

After two days He will revive us, on the third day He will raise us up and we will live in His presence (His kingdom). (Hos.6:2).

Blessed and set-apart is the one having part in the first resurrection. The second death possesses no authority over these, but they shall be priests of Elohim and of Messiah, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.(Rev.20:6)

Now we know the Father has set 7,000 years for this creation and it was 4,000 years from Adam to Mashiach’s birth'. So from the time of Mashiach’s birth there are 3,000 years left for this creation. It is 2,000 years since Mashiach walked on earth and His Millennial reign will complete the time remaining for this creation. The end of Mashiach’s millennium rule will herald the end of this creation – a new heaven, a new earth and the start of the Father’s Kingdom.

Remember for scripture a ‘day’ is like a thousand years and the 3 days referred to in Hosea reflect the 2 Day period from Mashiach’s birth to His return. The 1 Day in the verse refers to Mashiach’s millennial rule in the land with, as verse says, His people.

As a final word on this aspect we can refer to Isaiah,

No more will babies die in infancy, no more will an old man die short of his days, he who dies at a hundred will be thought young and at less than a hundred thought cursed. (Isa.65:20)

These verses are concerning a future age in which there is death, dying and people cursed. Again this cannot be the Father’s Kingdom because of the inhabitants of the Father’s Kingdom Mashiach says, “They shall be like angels neither marrying nor given in marriage.”(Matt.22:30). The verse from Isaiah has to be talking of the millennium – Mashiach’s Kingdom.
The End of the 6,000 Years (The 6 Day)

The events that will herald the return of Mashiach are two-fold;

- First will be the tribulation; in all probability this will be a third and last world war. It is difficult to establish at this time what will be the ignitor of this final conflict but it will most likely include a final Muslim attempt to rid the Middle Eastern area of the Jewish people and claim the land for Islam.
- Second will be the outpouring of YHWH’s wrath.

The Tribulation

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<th>For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be famines, plagues and earthquakes.</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>And these are the beginning of the birth pangs</td>
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<td>For then there shall be great distress, such as not been since the beginning of the world, until this time, no nor ever shall be</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, set up in the Holy place, he who reads let him understand</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Then they shall deliver you up to affliction and kill you and you shall be hated by all nations for My Name's sake</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Then let those who are in Judah flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the house-top not come down to take whatever from his house. And let him who is in the field not turn back to get his garments. And woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing children in those days. And pray that your flight does not take place in winter or on the Sabbath</td>
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<td>And then many shall stumble and they shall deliver up on another and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise up and lead many astray. And because of the increase in lawlessness the love of many shall become cold. But he who shall have endured to the end shall be saved.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>For wherever the dead body is, there the eagles shall be gathered together</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>And if those days were not shortened, no flesh would be saved but for the sake of the chosen ones, those days shall be shortened</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>And immediately after the distress of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give its light and the stars shall fall from the heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>And the sign of the Son of Adam shall appear in the heaven and then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn and they shall see the Son of Adam coming on the clouds of the heaven with power and much esteem</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>For as lightning comes from the east and shines to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Adam be</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His chosen from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>And this Good News of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations and then the end shall come</td>
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Mashiach explains how the tribulation will unfold in Matthew 24:7-30. Although Mashiach has provided all of the information appertaining to the tribulation it needs re-arranging in to the sequence below for us to obtain a clearer understanding.

I offer the above as a more likely sequence of the events described by Mashiach and want to comment on three verses in particular,

Verse 7 item 1

Nation will fight against nation; the tribulation at the end of the 6 Day will be of man. It is man's hostility against man. It is not YHWH’s wrath
Verse 31 item 13
When Mashiach comes He will collect together His chosen. This is not a ‘rapture’ it is an earthly gathering of the righteous during the tribulation whom He will take to a safe place. We will comment more in Part 2.

Verse 14 Item 14
This will happen during the Millennial rule of Mashiach after which is the end of the creation age and the ‘Eighth Day.’

The Outpouring of YHWH’s Wrath

Why after a catastrophic tribulation (WW III), is it necessary for YHWH to then pour out His wrath on what is left of the earth? The answer is provided in verse 22 above.

Verse 22 item 9
Today man has at his disposal weaponry capable of destroying not just the whole human race but all life forms on, above and below the earth. The Muslim states want to eradicate the Jewish people from the land and a third war will present them with the opportunity. YHWH cannot let this happen because of His covenant with Avraham and so, as prophesied, He will punish the enemies of Israel. However, what is remaining of His chosen that have survived the tribulation, what Scripture refers to as ‘a remnant,’ He will take to a place of safety where they will be shielded from the out-pouring of His wrath upon the earth.

Conclusion to Part 1

The creation record of 6 days of work/toil followed by a 1 day Shabbat rest is the blueprint for humanity. Humanity has to experience 6 Days (6,000 years) of toil after which will follow a 1 Day (1,000 year) Shabbat rest in the presence of Mashiach. The transposition from the 6 Day to the 7 Day will be via a very traumatic time which all mankind; both the righteous and unrighteous, will experience. However, as said above YHWH’s Chosen He will take to a place of refuge, which is discussed in Part 2 of this article.

Clifford Fearnley 2016

\[1 \text{ Refer to article YHWH’s 7000 Years in www.undertorah.com} \]