

The Flight of the Watching Ones

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Isaiah 26:20-27:1

20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.

21 For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.

27:1 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

Posttribulationists are often accused of having a martyr complex. Pretribulationists have a hard time swallowing the idea that Christians will have to suffer the same fate as the wicked during the tribulation. But the fact is, orthodox posttribulationism does not place believers within the wrath of God. Scripture bears abundant witness to the fact that God intends to preserve and protect His own during His wrath in the great tribulation. The difference between pretribulationism and biblical posttribulationism is the location of the place of refuge (in heaven or on earth), and whether believers are active or passive in their escape from God's wrath to the place of refuge.

The passage above instructs God's people to go into places of hiding during the great tribulation until the wrath of God is past. Obviously the intent of this command is that believers not be harmed by God's judgment. The warning is directed towards "my people." Contrary to the assumptions of dispensationalists, "my people" refers to Jewish and Gentile Christians. This can be proven by the context. Isaiah 24 – 26 is a single prophecy concerning the people of God. In Isaiah 25:6-7, the subject is the marriage supper of the Lamb. Then in verse 8 Isaiah wrote, "He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken." The first clause, "He will swallow up death forever," was quoted by Paul and applied to the resurrection of Christians.¹ The second clause, "the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" was quoted by John in

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:50-54

Revelation and applied to Christians.² Therefore, the third clause, *“the rebuke of His people He will take away...”*, also refers to Christians. There is no difference between *“His people”* in this verse and *“My people”* in Isaiah 26:20 quoted above. The command to hide during the great tribulation is for Christians.

Other Old Testament Scriptures indicate that believers will be preserved by God during the great tribulation. *“At that time **Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;** And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time **your people shall be delivered,** Every one who is found written in the book.”*³

In the Great Temple Discourse⁴ and the Olivet Discourse⁵ Jesus indicated that His alert followers must flee at a certain time to a place of refuge. After describing the signs of the end of the age, Jesus said: *“Be watching therefore, praying in every season, so that you may be counted worthy to **flee** all these things that will occur, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man.”*⁶ Most English translations have the word “escape.” This is often misunderstood by pretribulationists as being passive (referring to the rapture). But the Greek word literally means to “flee.” It is in the active voice, meaning one must take the initiative and flee by his own volition at the proper time.

We find a similar statement in Matthew 24. *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea **flee** to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”*⁷ The time to flee to safety is plainly stated by Jesus: *“when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place.”* The place to flee is simply “the mountains” for those living in Judea. But, notice Jesus clearly referenced Daniel 12:1 (quoted above), when He

² Revelation 7:17; 21:4

³ Daniel 12:1

⁴ Luke 21

⁵ Matthew 24; Mark 13

⁶ Luke 21:36 my translation

⁷ Matthew 24:15-18

spoke of the unprecedented time of trouble.⁸ And that passage states plainly that God's people who are "written in the book" will be delivered. The Hebrew word translated "delivered" literally means "escape" or "flee." Those written in the book will flee and escape from the "time of trouble."

Revelation 12 pictures a woman giving birth to the male child (Jesus) who is then caught up to God and His throne. Afterward, the serpent seeks to harm the woman and her offspring. But, Satan is defeated by Michael and his angels, the very same "Michael" mentioned as the protector of God's people in Daniel 12:1. *"And the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place there, having been prepared from God, so that they may be nourishing her there a thousand two hundred sixty days." ... And two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman, so that she might fly to the wilderness to her place where she is nourished there a time, times, and half a time from before the snake. And the snake projected a current of water from his mouth after the woman, that he might sweep her away with the current. And the land rescued the woman. And the land opened its mouth and swallowed the current the dragon projected from its mouth. And the dragon was enraged against the woman, and departed to battle with the remnants of the seed of her, of those who are keeping the commandments of God and holding the testimony about Jesus.*"⁹ This passage speaks of supernatural aid being given to the woman in her flight, as well as being nourished in the wilderness for the entire 1,260 day period. The text does not directly state who it is that nourishes her in the wilderness. However, Michael and his angels are key players in this passage, and they are also key to the deliverance of God's people in tribulation in Daniel 12:1. It is a pretty safe bet that Michael and his angels are the ones who nourish the woman during her wilderness seclusion.

Dispensationalists (pretribulationists) misapply this passage to national Israel also. But, they are not correct. The Apostle Paul's allegory in Galatians 4 indicates that national Israel (which rejects Jesus Christ) is the seed of Hagar. Christians are the seed of Sarah, the promised seed. In chapter 3, Paul argued that the Abrahamic Covenant was made with Abraham and his "Seed." *"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' [plural] as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' [singular]*

⁸ Matthew 24:21 is a paraphrase of Daniel 12:1

⁹ Revelation 12:6,14-17 my translation

who is Christ."¹⁰ That is, the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant were to Abraham and His singular "Seed" (who is Christ). Paul then included all baptized Christians, both Jew and Gentile, within this "Seed" to whom the Abrahamic Covenantal promises pertain. *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*¹¹

In the following chapter, Paul used an allegory to illustrate that God reckons national Israel (which clings to the Law of Moses) as the descendants of Hagar. He reckons "Abraham's seed" to be Christians (both Jew and Gentile). Paul plainly called both Jewish and Gentile Christians the descendants of Sarah, the mother of the children of promise.

Galatians 4:21-31

*21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar — 25 for this **Hagar** is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and **corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children** — [national Israel] 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is **the mother of us all**. 27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband." 28 Now **we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise**. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, **we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.**" [Sarah]*

¹⁰ Galatians 3:16

¹¹ Galatians 3:26-29

The promised Seed did not come through Hagar, but through Sarah. Hagar's son, Ishmael, was indeed a child of Abraham, but only "according to the flesh." Isaac, Sarah's son, was the child of promise. And it was through Isaac that the promised "Seed" (who is Christ) would come. Those baptized into Christ are one with Him. Therefore, we are "*Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.*" In the last statement above, Paul called all Christians the children of Sarah. She is the "woman" pictured in Revelation 12, through whom Christ came. Therefore, it is not national (unbelieving) Israel, the "*children according to the flesh,*" that the woman represents. Rather, she represents the "seed of promise." And since Gentiles have become part of the seed of the woman, the flight of the woman into the wilderness refers to both Jew and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ. She does not represent an ethnic race, but the people of God who are heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant.¹²

The earliest Christians universally understood this woman to represent the whole body of the redeemed, from both the Old and New Testaments, all who are in Christ.

*"Now concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary, John also speaks thus, 'And I saw a great and wondrous sign in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, ... And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.' That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church."*¹³

*"The woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and wearing the crown of twelve stars upon her head, and travailing in her pains, is the ancient Church of fathers, and prophets, and saints, and apostles."*¹⁴

When the woman flees into the wilderness, the serpent's wrath will be focused on "*the remnants of the seed of her, of those who are keeping the commandments of God and holding the testimony about Jesus.*" Note that "remnants" is plural in the Greek. This refers to

¹² Romans 4; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 2:11-17

¹³ Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 60, 61, 64

¹⁴ Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse, 12:1

individuals left behind who do not flee to the place of refuge. Pretribulationists suppose that there is a distinct “remnant of her seed” who alone are followers of Christ. They call them “tribulation saints.” They then suppose the “woman” does not have the “testimony of Jesus.” However, the clause “*the seed of her, of those who are keeping the commandments of God and holding the testimony about Jesus,*” describes all of the woman’s “seed.” The “remnants” (plural) of this seed refers to those who do not flee to the places of refuge. All of her seed has the testimony of Jesus. But the dragon is only able to attack “the remnants,” the portion which does not flee to the wilderness.

Notice that supernatural assistance (eagles’ wings) is given to aid the woman in her flight. There is also supernatural intervention of a defensive nature (the land swallowing the Dragon’s flood).

The Location of the Place of Safety

Both pretribulationists and posttribulationists have supposed that the place of refuge in this passage is the area of Bozrah in southern Jordan,¹⁵ perhaps in the ancient fortress of Petra. This location is derived primarily from two passages in the KJV. “*Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, **Moab**; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.*”¹⁶ ‘Moab’ is part of modern Jordan. However, the Masoretic Text reading here (followed by the KJV) is heavily opposed by much older manuscript evidence from the LXX,¹⁷ Syriac,¹⁸ and Targum.¹⁹

Most modern translations reject the Masoretic Text here, and follow the LXX reading. Instead of “*let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab,*” these older witnesses say just the reverse, “*Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you...*” This fits better within the context of the whole chapter, which is about judgment upon Moab, and the survival of a small remnant of Moab. The preceding two verses refer to the flight of Moabites, not Christians or Jews. “*For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; so shall be the*

¹⁵ http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/03120601.htm
<http://www.endtimepilgrim.org>

¹⁶ Isaiah 16:4-5

¹⁷ A Greek translation of the Old Testament made by 70 Jewish scholars around 250BC

¹⁸ Ancient Christian translations into Aramaic

¹⁹ Ancient Jewish translations of the Old Testament into Aramaic

daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon." The Moabites are "as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest." The "fords of the Arnon" refers to the shallow portion of the Arnon river which would have to be crossed by Moabites fleeing north around the Dead Sea. Notice it is the Moabites who are fleeing. Isaiah continues: "Take counsel, execute judgment; Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; Hide the outcasts, Do not betray him who escapes." Clearly, the clauses, "hide the outcasts" and "him who escapes" refer back to "the daughters of Moab" in the previous verse. If the KJV reading is correct following the Masoretic Text, God would be saying to the fleeing Moabites who have been "as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest," who were trying to escape destruction themselves, to "let my outcasts dwell with you." The LXX reading, followed by most other translations, makes much better sense.

The second passage that is used to support the Bozrah flight theory is Micah 2:12. "I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of **Bozrah**, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men."²⁰ However, the Hebrew word "bozrah" itself means a "sheepfold." The KJV does not translate the term, but assumes that it is a proper name and transliterates it instead. But once again, the context argues strongly against the KJV reading. It is clear that a "sheepfold" is meant, not a location in south Jordan. The NKJV renders it as follows: "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the **fold** (KJV has "Bozrah'), Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people." Regardless of translation, the text says "as" or "like" the sheep of a sheepfold (or Bozrah). The words, "as" or "like" point to a similarity or comparison. They do not identify the location of the sheepfold. Bozrah is **not** the place of hiding.

The LXX reading of Micah 2:12-13 is most interesting, and refers specifically to the time of tribulation. "In assembling, all of Jacob shall be gathered together. In receiving, I shall receive the remnant of Israel. Together I will establish their return, as sheep in **tribulation**, as a flock in the midst of their fold, they shall leap from among men. Ascend through the breach before, in front of them. **They broke through, and went through the gate, and came forth through it. And their King went forth before, in front of them, and the Lord shall lead them.**"²¹ This

²⁰ Micah 2:12

²¹ My translation

passage is almost certainly what Jesus had in mind in His Good Shepherd Discourse. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name **and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him,** for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."²²

It seems clear enough that Micah 2:12-13 refers to the last days, regardless of which translation we read. The "sheep" metaphor used in Micah refers to the followers of the Messiah. It is repeated again twice, both times in reference to the faithful followers of Christ in the last days emerging from the tribulation into the Kingdom.

Micah 5:2-5

2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

3 Therefore He shall give them up, Until **the time** that **she who is in labor has given birth;** Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel.

4 And **He shall stand and feed His flock** In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth; 5 And this One shall be peace.

This prophecy mentions the birth of the "male child" in Bethlehem, and again uses the sheep metaphor, "He shall stand and feed His flock," referring to Christ's Kingdom. This is further expanded in chapter 7, where the location of the place of hiding is plainly stated.

Micah 7:14-15

14 Shepherd Your people with Your staff, The flock of Your heritage, **Who dwell solitarily in a woodland, In the midst of Carmel;** Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, As in days of old.

15 "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders."

²² John 10:1-5

The “flock of Your heritage” dwells “solitarily in a woodland, in the midst of Carmel.” This is the location of the place of safety for Christians fleeing Judea when the abomination of desolation occurs. When Christ returns, He will lead His followers out of this “sheepfold” in the caves of Mt. Carmel into the green pastures of Bashan and Gilead to feed. He will also perform the same kinds of miracles that He did during the exodus according to verse 15.



Carmel is a mountain range in north western Israel. It extends from Haifa, on the Mediterranean Sea, about twenty miles south east to the valley of Megiddo. Carmel is filled with forests and caves, and has long been a place of hiding during times of war and calamity.²³ “The mountain beckoned the

fugitive from afar, and in all ages has offered asylum to the hunted in its caves and wooded glens.”²⁴ Carmel was Elijah’s hideout from the wicked Ahab and Jezebel, and where he defeated the prophets of Baal.²⁵ “The whole ridge is deeply furrowed with rocky ravines filled with dense jungle. There are many caves in its sides.”²⁶ Clearly, when Jesus said for those **in Judea** to “flee to the mountains,” He had Micah 7:14 in mind. He was instructing His followers in Judea to flee north to the caves of Carmel. Those who flee south to the barren wilderness of Bozrah will be in very serious trouble indeed, since this will be a place of judgment and wrath, not safety.²⁷

²³ Amos 9:3

²⁴ http://bibleatlas.org/mount_carmel.htm

²⁵ 1 Kings 18

²⁶ Easton’s Bible Dictionary

²⁷ Isaiah 34:6-10

Are There Other Places of Refuge?

Is Carmel the only place of refuge during the great tribulation? Or will there be other places for those not living in Israel? The answer is given by Jesus when describing the final gathering together of His elect. *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.”²⁸*

Jesus’ elect will be gathered from all over the earth at the end of the tribulation. This strongly implies that they will have been in hiding in many similar safe zones. Where are these places of refuge? Obviously, the Scriptures could not list them. But, they will be revealed at the proper time by means of a special signal, as I will explain.

The Time to Flee

There is a set time to flee, and a very brief window of opportunity for those who are alert. There is a time when it will be too late to be received into such places of hiding.

Luke 17:26-37

*26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the **days** of the Son of Man:*

27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

31 “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.

32 Remember Lot’s wife.

33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

²⁸ Mark 13:24-27

34 I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be **taken** [received] and the other will be **left** [rejected].

35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be **taken** [received] and the other **left**. [rejected]

36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be **taken** [received] and the other **left**." [rejected]

37 And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

This passage is about "the **days** (plural) of the Son of Man."²⁹ His being "revealed"³⁰ refers to His wrath in the latter half of the tribulation. The likening of the "days of the Son of Man" to "the days of Noah" and "the days of Lot" indicates the flight of the righteous to places of safety **by their own power**, to avoid the destruction of the wicked. And it indicates the obliviousness of the wicked to what is about to befall them. "**Remember Lot's wife**" is a warning against hesitating when it is time to flee.

This passage is almost universally misunderstood. Many suppose that the reference to those "taken" refers to the rapture. It does not. It refers to those who flee being **received** into designated places of safety. John 1:11 uses the same Greek word (paralambano) in the statement, "He came to His own, and His own did not **receive** Him." Likewise, the word "left" does not necessarily mean left behind. The Greek word is "aphiemi," meaning to be left, forsaken, omitted, or rejected. Jesus used this word when rebuking His disciples for hindering the children from coming to Him. He said, "do not **forbid** them from coming to Me."

Notice the warnings not to return to gather one's goods from his house. These warnings are identical with Jesus' Olivet Discourse, where this same event is placed at the time of the abomination of desolation. Note:

Matthew 24:15-28

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

²⁹ Verse 26

³⁰ Verse 30

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! [plural]

20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

25 See, I have told you beforehand.

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Both of these passages refer to the same "flight." Both include the warnings for those on the housetops not to collect their belongings, or those in the field not to return home. Both passages contain the same riddle, "For wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." Yet, Matthew's account clearly tells us when this "flight" will occur, "when you see the abomination of desolation..." Therefore, it is clear that Luke 17 is not describing the gathering of the elect either before or after the tribulation, but the flight of the righteous to places of safety when the abomination of desolation occurs. Verse 33 is further proof. "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." This refers to those seeking to preserve their belongings, their loved ones, or their lifestyle. They are like Lot's wife. But, those willing to forsake it all and flee with nothing but the clothes on their backs, will end up preserving their lives. Such instructions cannot apply to a "rapture," either before or after the tribulation, because in the "gathering" of the elect we are passive.³¹

³¹ Matthew 24:31, the angels will "gather together His elect"; 1 Thessalonians 4:17, "we who are alive and remain shall be caught up" [passive voice].

The Sign Identifying the Places of Refuge

The way God is going to direct watching believers to the places of refuge is plainly stated by Jesus in both Matthew 24 and Luke 17. It is the congregating of eagles. Yes, this is meant literally, to indicate the locations of the places of safety to which they are to flee with all haste! Jesus' statement in Luke's account about the location of eagles gathering was a direct response to the disciples' question, "Where Lord?" They specifically asked Him the locations of the places of safety and provision.

Luke 17:31-37

*31 "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. 32 **Remember Lot's wife.***

33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

34 I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be [received] and the other will be [rejected].

35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be [received] and the other [rejected].

36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be [received] and the other [rejected]."

*37 And they answered and said to Him, "**Where, Lord?**" So He said to them, "**Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.**"*

This is why Revelation 12 indicates that the woman was given "*wings of a **great eagle***" in order to flee to her place of safety. The gathering of the eagles immediately following the abomination of desolation will identify the locations of the places of refuge for Christians who are watching and praying.

Note also that in Matthew's account, Jesus warned against coming out of the places of hiding prematurely, before the second coming of Christ is observed. "*Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' **do not come out!***" Jesus stated clearly that some will try to seduce believers into coming out of their places of hiding by announcing that Christ has returned. Jesus said, don't do it! Wait until you see the Son of Man blasting across the sky from east to west. This is when He will blow the trumpet to dispatch His angels

to gather together His elect from their hiding places in the north, south, east, and west (the four winds, the farthest parts of the earth).³²

There is another seemingly strange passage in Revelation that mentions an eagle. And interestingly, its location is precisely at the mid-point of the 70th week, between the 4th and 5th trumpets. *“And I saw and heard **an eagle flying in mid-air**, saying with a great voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe, land dwellers, from the remaining trumpet blasts of the three messengers about to sound!’”*³³ Following this, the three “woes” are announced. The first is *“a star, having fallen from heaven to the ground, and he was given the key to the shaft of the abyss.”*³⁴ This is Satan’s ejection from heaven by Michael, which is also described in the vision in Revelation 12, and is when the woman is given eagles’ wings to flee into the wilderness. It is no coincidence that this flying “eagle” proclaims the three ‘woes’ of the great tribulation that are about to follow at precisely the same time the woman is given *“wings of a great eagle”* to flee, and also the exact time Jesus said to flee, identifying the locations as being where *“the eagles³⁵ will be gathered together.”* There can be little doubt that the gathering of eagles over the places of safety is the sign of where to flee.

God used an interesting metaphor when reminding Israel of His supernatural intervention in the exodus. *“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.”*³⁶ The “eagles’ wings” metaphor referred to His mighty acts including parting the Red Sea, feeding them with manna, and providing water from the rock. There is little doubt that the provision of “eagles’ wings” for the woman in Revelation 12 was also meant to point to this passage. It indicates a parallel between these events. And this is why Micah wrote: *“As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders.”*³⁷

Watching for signs and fleeing at the proper time are not the only criteria for being “received” into the places of refuge during the great tribulation. Remember, Jesus said, *“Be watching therefore, **praying in every season**, so that you may be **counted worthy to***

³² Mark 13:24-27

³³ Revelation 8:13 my translation

³⁴ Revelation 9:1

³⁵ Many translations incorrectly render this as “vultures.” The Greek word means “eagles.”

³⁶ Exodus 19:4

³⁷ Micah 7:15

flee all these things that will occur, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man."³⁸ Knowing the signs and acting at the proper time are clearly not enough. Prayer is also necessary. One must be found "worthy" of God's supernatural deliverance.

Consider what Jesus said to the church of Philadelphia: "***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."³⁹ Not all Christians will be preserved and fed in the time of trial, only those who keep Jesus' words. There is no promise of preservation for those who do not keep Jesus words. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that those who keep His commandments in that sermon would be likened to one who built his house on the rock. That house would stand firm in the coming storm. But the foolish Christian who does not take Jesus' commandments seriously will not fare well in the coming storm. Jesus also warned that many Christians would fall away, "*but he who endures to the end shall be saved.*"⁴⁰ According to Revelation 7, only those who have "*washed their robes*" will find their way out of the tribulation into Christ's Kingdom.⁴¹

Make sure you have repented of sinful habits. Follow Jesus' commandments in the Sermon on the Mount. Stay alert and watch for the gathering of eagles when the abomination of desolation⁴² occurs, and then make all haste to the places of safety. Don't worry about gathering supplies. God will provide just as He provided manna from heaven for the Israelites fleeing Egypt. He will aid the righteous in their escape with supernatural measures, as He did in the days of Noah, in the days of Lot, and in the days of the exodus. Don't hesitate or turn back. "*Remember Lot's wife!*"

³⁸ Luke 21:36 my translation

³⁹ Revelation 3:10

⁴⁰ Matthew 24:13

⁴¹ Revelation 7:13-17

⁴² Daniel 12; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:1-4

Exodus 9:22-26

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt — on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt."

23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt.

24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

25 And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field.

26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.

Psalms 31:20

20 You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues.

Psalms 32:6-7

6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.

7 You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

Psalms 37:18-25

18 The LORD knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish; And the enemies of the LORD, Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away.

21 The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives.

22 For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth, But those cursed by Him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.

25 I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.

Psalm 37:37-40

37 Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; For the future of that man is peace.

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; The future of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.

Psalm 57:1

1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by.

Psalm 91

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence.

4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,

6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you.

8 Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place,

10 No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;

11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.
12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.
16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

Proverbs 18:10

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

Jeremiah 39:18

18 For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me," says the LORD."

Jeremiah 45:5

5 And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh," says the LORD. "But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go."'"

Zephaniah 2:3

3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, Who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden In the day of the LORD's anger.