
The Rapture

By Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)

I want to examine the theological concept of "rapture". I have been taught that Christians will, some day, be raptured to heaven to spend eternity with [HaShem](#). I would like to see if this concept can be substantiated from scripture.

Who are the "saints"?

Daniel 7:23-27 *"He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. 'But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'*

If you believe that the righteous are the "saints", then it is the righteous who will be oppressed and handed over to the fourth beast. It is the righteous, then, who will ultimately have the sovereignty, power, and the greatness of the kingdoms!

If all the righteous are "raptured to [heaven](#)", then who is oppressed and handed over? Who will be ruling?

Who are the ones "who overcome"?

Revelation 2:26-28 *To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations-- 'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'--just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star.*

If you believe that the righteous are the "over-comers", then the righteous will be ruling on earth! So, why would they be "raptured" to heaven? These same questions could be asked of those who are purchased in the following verses:

Revelation 5:9-10 *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

Those who are "purchased" will also be reigning "on the earth". So, why do we have a rapture to heaven?

We can see where the righteous will spend eternity in the following passages:

Bereshit (Genesis) 13:14-15 *HaShem said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever."*

If Abram does not get his land, on earth, forever, then HaShem is a liar!

Shemot (Exodus) 32:13 *Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by*

your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'"

If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob don't get this land, on earth, forever, then HaShem is a liar!

Yahoshua (Joshua) 14:9 *So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed HaShem my God wholeheartedly.'*

If Yahoshua (Joshua), the Israelites, and their descendants don't get this land, on earth, forever, then [HaShem](#) is a liar!

Tehillim (Psalms) 37:8-11 *Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil. For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in HaShem will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.*

Tehillim (Psalms) 37:27-29 *Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever. For HaShem loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off; The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.*

Who is the Psalmist addressing? Obviously the righteous! Yeshua echoed this same sentiment in:

Matityahu (Matthew) 5:5 *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 37:21-28 *And say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign HaShem says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I HaShem make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.'*"

Here we plainly have the righteous being called Israelites, and they inherit the land.

With this background, lets look at the classic passages used to justify a "rapture" of the righteous to [heaven](#):

I Thessalonians 4:15-18 *According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

Notice that the destination is not specified as "heaven". There is also no mention of these righteous going anywhere! We see clearly that they will be "with the Lord" forever. So, where will the Lord be?

Revelation 21:1-4 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

HaShem will be dwelling with men on earth! This means that we will be on earth with Him.

Another passage often used to support a rapture is:

Matityahu (Matthew) 24:36-42 *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; And they knew nothing about what would happen **until the flood came and took them all away**. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*

Luqas (Luke) 17:34 *I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left...*

The above passage presumes that we know what happened in the days of Noah. So, lets look at what happened in the days of Noah:

Bereshit (Genesis) 7:1-4 *HaShem then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, And also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."*

It appears that Noah and his family were the only ones who were not taken from the land of the living. Noah is the only one righteous in this generation. Therefore, we can see that the [wicked](#) were all destroyed. In this passage we also note that no one was physically removed from the earth.

So, in the Matityahu (Matthew) passage, the ones who were taken away were the wicked ones (note that "all" were taken away by the flood).

Matityahu (Matthew) 24:36-42 *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; And they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all (wicked) away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; (the wicked) one will be taken (by the flood) and the other left (the righteous one). Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; (the wicked) one will be taken (by the flood) and the other left (the righteous one). "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.*

We can see that in the days of Noah, and in the days of the return of the [Mashiach](#), that the wicked will be taken and the righteous will remain on earth. If there is a rapture, the only ones raptured will be the wicked. In the days of Noah we see the righteous preserved in the midst of the tribulation which killed the wicked. They

were not removed from it.

This parable and the story of Noah are both consistent with the pattern HaShem has shown in the Torah. Lets look at what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah:

Bereshit (Genesis) 18:20-25 *Then HaShem said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous That I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before HaShem. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"*

Luqas (Luke) 17:28-30 *"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.*

Again the pattern is consistent; the wicked are killed and the righteous stay on earth.

Mashiach, in Matityahu (Matthew) 24, is repeating what the TaNaK (Old Testament) has consistently taught. Observe:

Mishlei (Proverbs) 2:21-22 *For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; But the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it.*

Mishlei (Proverbs) 3:25-26 *Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, For HaShem will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared.*

Mishlei (Proverbs) 10:30 *The righteous will never be uprooted, but the wicked will not remain in the land.*

Tehillim (Psalms) 37:9 *For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in HaShem will inherit the land.*

Tehillim (Psalms) 37:10 *A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.*

Tehillim (Psalms) 37:22 *Those HaShem blesses will inherit the land, but those he curses will be cut off.*

Tehillim (Psalms) 37:28 *For HaShem loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;*

Tehillim (Psalms) 37:29 *The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.*

Mishlei (Proverbs) 10:25 *When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.*

Lets also notice that this is consistent with what [Yeshua](#) spoke in other places:

Matityahu (Matthew) 13:24-30 *Yeshua told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your*

field? Where then did the weeds come from?' "An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' "No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

The first to be taken are the wicked weeds. We also know that Yeshua's barn is the [Temple](#) from:

Malachi 3:10 *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says HaShem Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.*

This barn, that the righteous are gathered into, is the Temple (My house) which is in [Jerusalem](#), on earth.

The constant refrain of scripture is echoed in:

Tehillim (Psalms) 115:16 *The highest heavens belong to HaShem, but the earth he has given to man.*

We never see men dwelling in heaven, but we do see [HaShem](#) coming to dwell with men:

Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*

Yochanan (John) 3:12-14 *I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,*

[Mashiach](#) says that NO ONE has gone into [heaven](#) except ...

Some have suggested that Enoch and Elijah were “raptured” and that this is the precedent for the rapture of ALL the righteous. I point out that there were more righteous folks on earth at the time of these two men, yet they were not "taken". I suggest that these two do not represent a decent argument for the rapture of all the righteous.

I think that “The ecclessia” is the ecclessia of II Luqas (Acts) 7:38. These Torah observant folks are promised an "[inheritance](#)" of land in Israel. These folks are eagerly looking forward to the promised land. So, when they are gathered from the four corners of the earth, their destination is the land of Israel. This is the total focus.

Another verse used to teach rapture is:

Revelation 20:4-5 *I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Yeshua and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.*

We can see an obvious resurrection and we see the righteous "reigning" with [Yeshua](#). Lets go see where we "reign":

Yirimiyah (Jeremiah) 23:5 *"The days are coming," declares HaShem, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.*

Revelation 5:10 *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

Revelation 11:15 *The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."*

I can conclude that the [resurrection](#) of Revelation 20:3-4 will have the righteous resurrected and reigning with Yeshua on earth.

The next rapture passage is:

II Thessalonians 2:1-3 *Concerning the coming of our Lord Yeshua Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, Not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.*

This passage indicates that we will be gathered to Him. There is no hint of where the gathering place is. Since we know that we will be reigning with Him for a thousand years, Revelation 20:4, and since we know that He will be reigning on earth, we can infer that the place is earth.

Some see rapture in this passage:

Matityahu (Matthew) 24:29-31 *"Immediately after the distress of those days 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

Marqos (Mark) 13:24-27 *"But in those days, following that distress, 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; The stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.*

Again, no destination is mentioned. I see nothing to indicate that the righteous leave the earth, and our previous scriptures seem to indicate that our destination is Israel.

Lets start by asking why the following folks don't get to be raptured? Why do they have a dwelling on earth "forever" whilst others have another dwelling place?:

Tehilim (Psalm) 37:29 *The righteous shall inherit the earth, and dwell therein for ever.*

This would be manifestly unfair!

Now, lets ask another question: If HaShem wanted folks to be dwelling in [heaven](#), why didn't He do that in the first place? Obviously [Gan Eden](#) was the ideal place for man. This is consistent with Psalm 37:29.

Now, lets clinch this deal:

Revelatiob 21:10 *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*

In this verse we see the place that was prepared in Yochanan (John) chapter 14. Yes, it WAS in heaven. However, the place where it will be used by the righteous will be ON EARTH! This also is consistent with Psalm 37:29.

Thus we see that Yochanan (John) 14 does not SAY that the righteous are going to [heaven](#), rather that the place that is being prepared is in heaven.

CONCLUSION:

The TaNaK and the Nazarean (New Testament) codicil agree that the righteous have their eternal dwelling on earth. We do not ever see people dwelling in heaven. The scripture all agree that only the wicked are removed from the earth. I see no [justification](#) for saying that the righteous will be raptured to heaven. The pattern of scripture is for [HaShem](#) to protect the righteous in the midst of tribulation, not to remove them.

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