

The world staggers like a drunkard and sways like a shaky hut.

(Isaiah 24:20, NIV)

QUESTION:

Could you please explain the meaning of Isaiah 24:18-20?

Isaiah 24:18-20 (NIV):

*18 “Whoever flees at the sound of fear will fall into a pit; whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a trap. For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake.
19 The earth is broken apart, split wide open, shaken violently.
20 The earth reels like a drunkard and sways like a hut in the wind; it is weighed down by the burden of its sins and will collapse, never to rise again.”*

Theological Explanation:

This passage vividly illustrates the spiritual and moral condition of the world in the last days. The imagery of the earth staggering like a drunkard signifies the instability caused by widespread sin and rebellion against God.

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- **Spiritual Drunkenness:** In the Bible, drunkenness often symbolizes a loss of control and moral confusion (Proverbs 23:29-35). Here, the earth itself is personified as a drunk, overwhelmed by the “weight of its sins,” indicating the pervasive corruption and judgment looming over creation.
- **Foundations Shaken:** The “foundations of the earth” shaking (v. 18) can be understood both literally (earthquakes and natural disasters) and spiritually (the shaking of human institutions, governments, and moral order). Hebrews 12:26-27 speaks of God shaking “not only the earth but also the heavens,” referring to a divine judgment that removes what can be shaken so that only what is eternal remains.
- **Judgment and Collapse:** The earth “will collapse and not rise again” (v. 20) symbolizes the ultimate judgment and purification. This aligns with prophetic themes found in both Old and New Testaments where the current creation is subjected to decay and will be replaced by a new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1). **The Rapture and End Times:** This passage foreshadows the final cataclysmic events leading to the Day of the Lord, a time when God’s wrath will be poured out on the unrighteous. For believers, this period includes the promise of the **rapture** the sudden catching away of the Church as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 before the full outpouring of divine judgment.

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12 *"I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,*
13 *and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree shaken by a strong wind.*
14 *The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.*
15 *Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and free person hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.*
16 *They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*
17 *For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?'"*

Theological Significance:

- These apocalyptic visions describe the cosmic disturbances and the overwhelming fear that will grip all people at the time of God's final judgment.
- The imagery portrays not only physical upheaval but also spiritual terror before the holy presence of God and the Lamb (Jesus Christ).
- This passage underscores the absolute sovereignty and justice of God, reminding

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believers to remain vigilant and faithful.

- The “wrath of the Lamb” shows that Christ, who is our Savior, will also execute righteous judgment on the earth.

Application and Urgency:

We live in perilous times, as Isaiah and Revelation warn us. The world is metaphorically “drunk” on sin, and the signs of the end times are unmistakable: natural disasters, moral decay, global pandemics, and increasing lawlessness.

- If you are not yet saved, this is a solemn call to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, who alone can save you from judgment and give you eternal life (John 3:16; Romans 10:9).
- For believers, take comfort in God’s promises of protection and the soon coming rapture (1 Thessalonians 5:9). The time is short, and the trumpet could sound at any moment. Do not be complacent or distracted by worldly concerns. This is the hour to seek God earnestly.

Maranatha

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