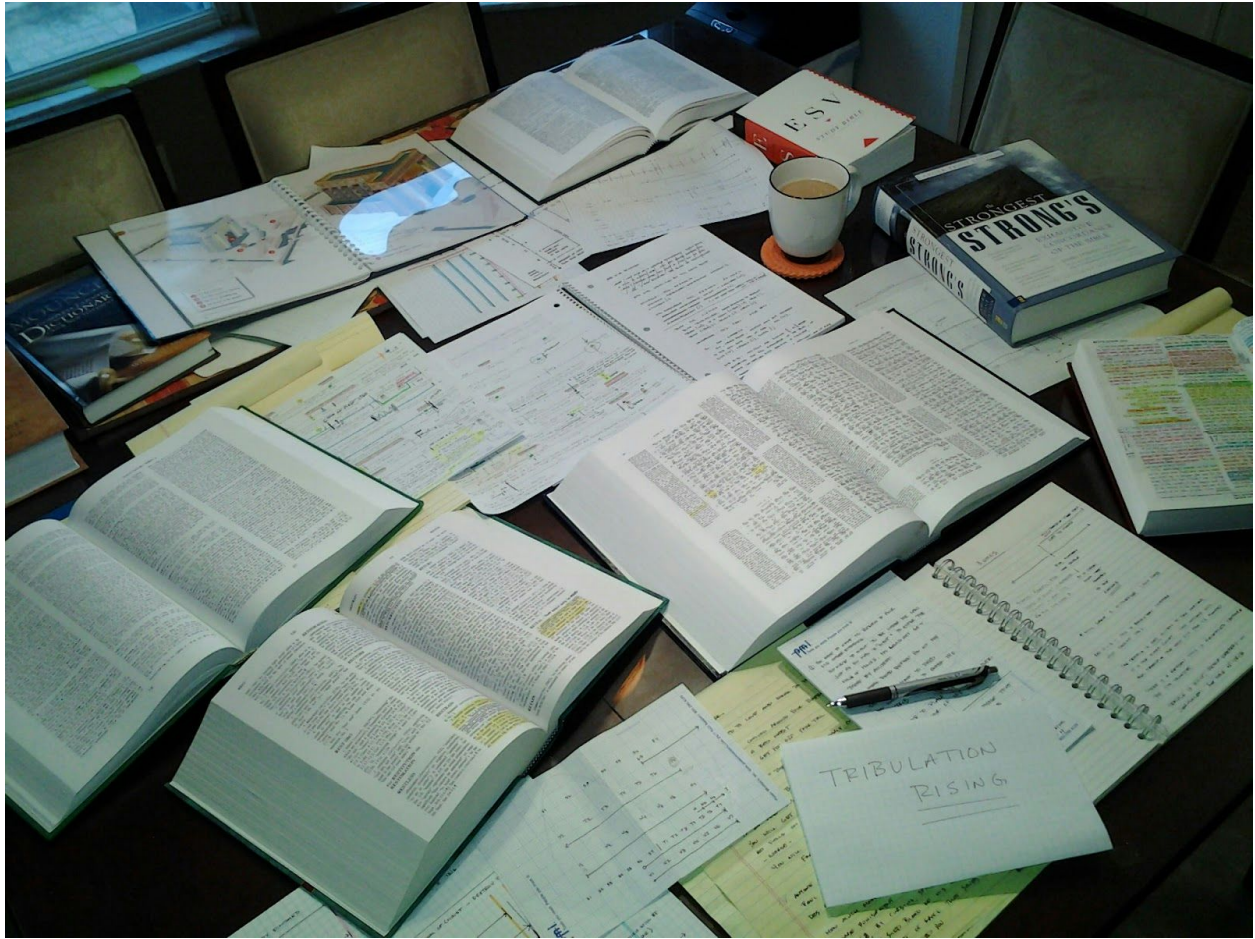


# **TRIBULATION RISING: THE SERIES**



**DOES "COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE"**  
**PROVE THE RAPTURE?**

**RICHARD KENDRICK JR.**

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One of the more creative defenses I have seen against the pre-trib rapture (or the rapture in general) is that Luke 21:36 does not mean “escape” as we would think of it:



***Luke 21:36 KJV - Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.***

The argument revolves around declaring that the word for escape is the Greek word “*ekpheugo*”, and that it is a verb in the active voice - meaning that escape is something that we do, as opposed to something we participate in.

The first time I encountered this defense I was floored. I was on a mobile device, and I did not have my resource materials at hand. The argument was incredibly effective,

especially given that most run from the words “in the Greek” as though somebody were trying to set them on fire.

I don't blame them.

Here was the original argument that was given to me:

*“As for your interpretation of “worthy to escape”, you recommended an “original word study”. Okay, here's one for you:*

*Luke 21:36- “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”*

*This is where the Greek helps.*

*“escape” is the Greek “ekpheugō”. It is an active verb, meaning that the subject of the verse (believers) are actively performing the action (escaping). It is unlike “harpazo”, which is a passive verb, meaning it's out of our control. We will be just standing there one day, and we'll be “caught up” passively.*

*So the Lord is telling us to pray that we will be counted worthy to actively escape persecution. Remember that in an earlier verse, the Lord told us to “flee” (“pheugō”), which is also an active verb:*

*Luke 21:21- “Then let them which are in Judaea FLEE (“pheugō”) to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.”*

*This is also recorded in Matthew:*

*Matthew 24:16- "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:"*

*So again, the Lord is telling us to flee, and thru prayer, we may even be able to live until His coming.*

*Additionally, keep in mind that Luke 21 is also the Olivet Discourse, which is why both sets of verses are telling us to "flee". So dispensational pretrib insists that Matt. 24 and 25, are to "Israel", although it has no qualms about shamelessly hijacking Matt. 24:42-44 for itself. What's more, it also hijacks Luke 21:36 for itself, even though it does it without even knowing the meaning of "escape" as an active verb, as I've shown.*

*One last point about that verse. Why would the Lord tell "Israel" to pray to "escape all these things"? That flies in the face of dispensationalists teaching that God "deals with Israel again" after a "Gentile church" is raptured, as the Lord would have had no need to instruct "Israel" to "pray to escape all these things" if they are destined to remain and be "dealt with", as pretrib insists.*

*Do you see the points?"*

Here was a second response:

*As for Luke 21:36, I would peacefully challenge you to find where "ekpheugō" ever is used as a passive verb, either Scripturally, or in any other Greek writing. I stand by my assertion. Anything in the life of a believer is CENTERED on prayer. So there is nothing mysterious about the instruction of Luke 21:36 for us to "pray", even in the context of us doing something actively. One only needs to see it used a multitude of times in Scripture to understand that. We're told to "pray" that we're accounted "worthy" to ACTIVELY "escape".*

If you are not one that does word studies, or you read this absent the material to verify the assertion, this is an argument that will give you pause.

However, the Lord has a way of guarding us from such tactics and deceptions. He sends the Holy Spirit to quicken us to the truth, and give us discernment when things are false. That was the case with this particular argument. During the course of the discussion, this individual had failed to acknowledge several other things that I had offered. This is always a warning flag. I am not talking about missing something once in the flurry of comments that roll back and forth. That happens to all of us. However, I will make a point of mentioning something two or three times to confirm if they missed it by accident, or if it was an intentional oversight designed to avoid the point being made.

It was intentional in this case. The scripture I was adding was this:

***Nahum 1:2 KJV - God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.***

This is another scripture that gets missed by those that fight the rapture, or at least the pre-tribulation rapture.

At any rate, the Lord began to impress something on me. This individual keep centering his arguments back on this one point - the word **escape**. Then it hit me - that was his singular pillar. That was the one column by which he was resisting the truth. Not only that, but he was so effective at presenting his point that nobody had ever effectively countered what he offered.

That was about to change.



This individual had grown tired of having Luke 21:36 used against himself and others that believe as he does. Given that no scripture lies, Luke 21:36 is unavoidable.

For the record, people will be saved in the tribulation. All of the martyrs that we see in Revelation - those are not the Body of Christ that has been tossed into the tribulation. The Body of Christ is gone.

**Those that die for the witness of Christ are those that were not right with the Lord prior to the calling of the Great Assembly.**

Why is that important to understand? Because, I still cannot think of a single debate I have ever had with a pre-tribulation rapture critic where they acknowledged the possibility that what they were attributing to the martyred church was in fact those that came to Christ after the tribulation began.

Do not forget - there will be two witnesses, 144,000 sealed Jews and global TV to spread the Gospel. There are many people alive right now that know the truth of the moment, yet deny what it means for them. These are many of those that will find Christ in the tribulation, and die for the witness of His name.

So, I went home and went to prayer - then I hit the books so to speak. Within 30 seconds the Lord began to direct my efforts. Within five minutes I knew this individual was undone.

At any rate, experience tells me that his defense will catch fire and spread. Just as there are still people that cling to Margaret MacDonald and 1830. To be fair, many of these folks have adjusted their position from "the rapture was invented in 1830" to "it wasn't widely taught until the 1830's".

**I appreciate the correction, yet I question the integrity of persisting with the claim in an altered form.**

As I was saying, this is an effective argument to use against anybody that does not have the time to dig into original word studies, or those newer to the faith.



So, I was directed to add the response the Lord gave me as a page. This way, you will have an answer when this argument is leveled against you in the future.

Here was my response:

I have to offer a sincere thanks. It has been awhile since somebody has made me think quite this much. Your defense based on “*ekpheugo*” was well thought out, and gave me

pause for a moment. That is a hard thing to do these days, as the Lord has given me an understanding and defense for nearly every position that gets offered on the rapture.

I say “nearly” as there is always something that we hear for the first time. That was the case with your take on the word *escape*.

At first reading, it seemed that your defense was a hard position to counter. However, the Lord always gives me guidance in this area, and today would turn out to be no different.

As with any study of words, phrases and statements, full context and use of the word in question is required to understand the meaning behind something that we are reading. Luke 21:36 is no different.

While *ekpheugo* is indeed a verb, a review of Vine’s does not attribute the word to an active or passive tense. This is important as it does denote this for other forms of the word “escape”.

**UPDATE:** I have since searched additional sources online for the tense and voice of *ekpheugo* . Here are the online sources that I have reviewed:

**[Englishman's Greek Concordance](#)**

**[Strong's Concordance](#)** (hardcover examination also)

**[NAS Exhaustive Concordance](#)**

**[Thayer's Greek Lexicon](#)**

For the record, The **[Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament](#)** is the only source listed above that declared *ekpheugo* a verb in the active voice. Yet, an

examination from the perspective of EGC also reveals the same premise on **escape** that the Lord brought forward in the study of Vine's - long held as the gold standard in Biblical Expository studies. This premise on "escape" is covered in depth in the following study on this page.

We detail the iron clad credibility of Vine's in the study of the differences between the last trump and the 7th trumpet of judgment in the Book of Revelation.

Furthermore, when viewed with the examples of scripture I have provided, it will become clear that it is indeed used in a passive tense, as opposed to active.

**In other words, *ekpheugo* is not "escaping by your own efforts" - it is "participating in an escape by the efforts of another".**

Understand, even if "*ekpheugo*" was considered a verb in the active voice in every resource, the argument by this individual was still faulty. Here is why. To escape by walking through an open door is the same as walking through a door that you must open first. The escape is not the opening of the door. It is the actual walking through the door.

In the case of the rapture, worthiness is not a determination of whether or not you can walk through the door.

It's whether or not Christ deems you worthy to even have the door opened in the first place. Remember, heaven is a locked door in which Christ alone can open. If He accounts you worthy, then He opens the door! Once that door is open, then there is no choice - you WILL walk through the door. Whether in death or rapture it makes no difference.

When you finish reading this commentary, I think you will see that the challenge to find **ekpheugo** used in the passive voice was not only met - but surpassed. In fact, passive is the only tense that can be ascribed to the word.

Here is a critical piece of the puzzle. If **ekpheugo** had been used just once in the Bible - in Luke 21:36 - the meaning could be reinterpreted to suit any desired meaning. However, each form of the word **escape** was used at least two or three different times in the New Testament (all but one is used at least three times - it was used twice). This was no accident, as three is the number of the Lord's witness. In using each form of escape at least three times, it sets the definition and meaning of each form and leaves no wiggle room to alter what the Bible is telling us.

To the contrary it's meaning here is quite interesting given the current conversation.

**<A-4,Verb,1628,ekpheugo>**

***"to flee out of a place" (ek, "out of," and No. 1), is said of the "escape" of prisoners, Acts 16:27; of Sceva's sons, "fleeing" from the demoniac, Acts 19:16; of Paul's escape from Damascus, 2 Cor. 11:33; elsewhere with reference to the judgments of God, Luke 21:36; Rom. 2:3; Heb. 2:3; 12:25; 1 Thess. 5:3. See FLEE.***

So, why is this interesting? Simple.

When taken with the other examples of scripture given, we see that **escape** is not something which is actively accomplished by the persons involved. Stated differently, there is nothing indicated that can be done to effect and escape. **You cannot make the escape happen - you can only partake of something outside of your abilities.**

**~ 1 Thess. 5:3 KJV - For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**

**Heb. 2:3 KJV - How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;**

**Heb. 12:25 KJV - See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: ~**

Adding in the scripture in question:

**~ Luke 21:36 KJV - Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. ~**

Each of these four scriptures use the exact same verb - **ekpheugo**. While there is no indication in Vine's of active or passive form, the definition does indeed show that we **"to flee out of a place"** - while each and every scripture where **ekpheugo** is used explicitly shows that our escape is not predicated on any actions of our own, save one - trusting in the Lord. **In doing so, we will be able to flee "out of", as opposed to "away from" or "through" - as I will demonstrate below.**

Not only that, but the supporting context of each of the above scriptures provides yet another piece of the puzzle. Hebrews 12 is particularly interesting in light of the current conversation.

*~ Heb. 12:22-26 KJV - But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, [the heavenly Jerusalem](#), and to an innumerable company of angels,*

*23 To the [general assembly and church of the firstborn](#), which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

*24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

*25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*

*26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. ~*

Here are a few points that jump out in the above scriptures - each worth a study in their own right (each of which also prove a pre-trib rapture when studied **COMPLETELY AND THOROUGHLY** with ALL scriptures involved):

*mount Sion*

*the city of the living God,*

*the heavenly Jerusalem,*

*general assembly and church of the firstborn,*

*and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

***much more shall not we escape,***

Now, can we evidence further that **escape** in Luke 21:36 is not talking of our own efforts, that it is not telling us to prepare to escape through the things to come - as opposed to escape out of the things to come?

Indeed we can. It just so happens that there is a form of **escape** that means this very thing.

**<A-3, Verb, 1309, diapheugo>**

***lit., "to flee through," is used of the "escaping" of prisoners from a ship, Acts 27:42. For the word in Acts 27:44, see No. 5.***

***~ Acts 27:42 KJV - And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.***

***Acts 27:44 KJV - And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. ~***

In both verses, we can see that escape is by the individual effort of those that are seeking escape. However, this is not the verb that was used in Luke 21:36.

However, if this is not enough, we can go yet just a bit further:

**<A-5, Verb, 1295, diasozo>**

***in the Active Voice, "to bring safely through a danger" (dia, "through," intensive, sozo, "to save"), to make completely whole, to heal, Luke 7:3; to bring "safe," Acts 23:24; "to save," 27:43; in the Passive Voice, Matt. 14:36, "were made***



*whole;" 1 Pet. 3:20. It is also used in the Passive Voice, signifying "to escape," said of shipwrecked mariners, Acts 27:44; 28:1,4. See HEAL, SAFE, SAVE.*

We see clear references to active and passive voice - yet Vine's ascribes no such voice to *ekpheugo*.

*~ Acts 23:24 KJV - And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.*

*Acts 27:44 - 28:1 KJV - And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.*

*28 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.*

~

I left off the scriptures that use the active form of **diasozo** (except for Acts 23:24) and the scriptures that were already quoted. The active form shows escape, safety and healing as a matter of **restoration resulting from being carried through the danger**.

The passive form of **diasozo** shows again the definition of "bringing safely through", with the emphasis being on the word "through" as opposed to "flee out of".

**For the record, this would be the verb in the active voice that would have proven the assertion that "escape" was something that would be accomplished by our own hands. Diasozo is the word that would have confirmed that there is no pre-tribulation rapture.**

Yet, it is not the word used in Luke 21:36.

We can take this a step further still.

<A-2, Verb, 668, apopheugo>

*"to flee away from" (apo, "from," and No. 1), is used in 2 Pet. 1:4; 2:18,20.*

I included this form of the word **escape** as it settles another potential argument:

We are escaping **"away from"** the judgments of God.

**We know that this is also not the intended message of Luke 21:36, as there is a form of escape which denotes that very premise - yet it was never used in 21:36.**

*2 Peter 1:4 KJV - Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

*2 Peter 2:18 KJV - For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.*

*2 Peter 2:20 KJV - For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

All three of these scriptures illustrate the use of **escape** as a verb to mean **"away from"**. If we were to prepare to endure the tribulation to **escape**, this would be used in the following context:

**"You shall escape the wrath to come by preparing a shelter that you shall keep in secret from others, that you shall not be found until the trouble is past".**

No, that was not an actual scripture - just an example of what such a scripture might say. **That said, we can see that each form of the word "escape" was clearly understood by the writers of the Bible as they used each form at different places in the Bible.** They illustrated the differences in the concepts for us in doing so. They left little room for misunderstanding on what they were trying to convey. So, it was no accident that *ekpheugo* was the chosen word for Luke 21:36 - **it was, in fact, the only word or form of "escape" that could be used.** It was the only form that conveyed the premise in the verse - **"you seek and trust the Lord, praying that you are worthy - and you will escape when He returns!"**

I will offer one more piece to this puzzle tonight. For the sake of a thorough inquiry, I took the liberty going back to the original Greek for the entire reading of Luke 21:36. I decided to open the interlinear to the actual text, skip the English translation to the side, and lay out the unfiltered translation without changing the order of words for "ease of reading".

Talk about eye opening:

***Luke 21:36 Direct Reading - Then at every time, begging that you be counted worthy to escape these all things being about to occur, and to stand before the Son of Man.***

Notice how the scripture speaks to escaping **"these all things being about to occur"**. This is a bombshell! This alone settles the argument on the issue. In the original Greek, with no rearranging of the words, we see what was actually written by Luke, and what he actually wanted to say.

**The escape comes BEFORE the things that are ABOUT to occur.**

Now, let's take a minute and address your equivocating **escape** to **fleeing**. You did so under the premise that both are active verbs, and therefore indicate that escape is an action solely in the hands of the person involved. As I have shown already, your assertion on **ekpheugo** is incorrect. However, what about the word **flee**? Does it in anyway support your claims.

Sadly for you - the answer is no.

**<1,,5343,pheugo>**

***"to flee from or away" (Lat., fugio; Eng., "fugitive," etc.), besides its literal significance, is used metaphorically, (a) transitively, of "fleeing" fornication, 1 Cor. 6:18; idolatry, 1 Cor. 10:14; evil doctrine, questionings, disputes of words, envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings, and the love of money, 1 Tim. 6:11; youthful lusts, 2 Tim. 2:22; (b) intransitively, of the "flight" of physical matter, Rev. 16:20; 20:11; of death, Rev. 9:6. See ESCAPE.***

**<2,,1628,ekpheugo>**

***"to flee away, escape" (ek, "from," and No. 1), is translated "fled" in Acts 16:27 (AV only); 19:16. In Heb. 12:25 the best mss. have this verb instead of No. 1. See ESCAPE.***

**<3,,2703,katapheugo>**

***"to flee for refuge" (kata, used intensively, and No. 1), is used (a) literally in Acts 14:6; (b) metaphorically in Heb. 6:18, of "fleeing" for refuge to lay hold upon hope.***

***Note: For apopheugo and diapheugo, see ESCAPE.***

All of these words are forms of the word “**flee**” or “**fled**”. The most common use is the word **pheugo**, which indicates fleeing of your own accord, or by your own hands. How do we know this, besides the definition given above? **Well, pheugo is used at 15 different times in the New Testament - with each use indicating flight under power and efforts on our own hands:**

**Matthew 2:3, 3:7, 10:23, 24:16**

**Mark 13:14**

**Luke 3:7, 21:21** (Luke 21:36 is not one of these scriptures)

**John 10:5**

**Acts 27:30**

**1 Cor. 6:18, 10:14**

**1 Tim. 6:11**

**2 Tim. 2:22**

**Jas. 4:7**

**Rev. 9:6**

However, **ekpheugo** is used to denote flee in several scriptures worth noting:

**Heb. 12:25 KJV - See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:**

***Acts 16:27 KJV - And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.***

***Acts 19:16 KJV - And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.***

Ask yourself what these three scriptures have in common. Here is a hint - it is the opposite of the 15 scriptures listed above that fit what you asserted as a defense.

**In the 15 listed scriptures above, it is clear that to flee is something that is done by our own hands and efforts - much the same as you assert must come in the tribulation, and what you assert Luke 21:36 is telling us. However, given that *ekpheugo* is actually used to denote “flee”, we need not try to define what it is saying, as it defines itself through its use.**

So, the three scriptures above? Their common link is simple to understand. Just as *ekpheugo* is passive in its description in Luke 21:36 - so it is here in these three scriptures. **In all three, we see that fleeing or flight is based on the efforts of another to open the door or clear the way. We simply have to avail ourselves of the efforts made by another.**

***In the case of Luke 21:36 - it is the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that actually makes the way of escape, or the way of flight.***

Not us.

We can add one more piece to the puzzle. Below is the entry for Thayer's Greek Lexicon regarding **escape**:

*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*

**STRONGS NT 1628: ἐκφεύγω**

*ἐκφεύγω: future ἐκφεύξομαι; perfect ἐκπεφευγα; 2 aorist ἐξέφυγον; (from Homer down); to flee out of, flee away;*

**a. to seek safety in flight; absolutely Acts 16:27; ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου, Acts 19:16.**

**b. to escape: 1 Thessalonians 5:3; Hebrews 2:3; τί, Luke 21:36; Romans 2:3; τινα, Hebrews 12:25 L T Tr WH; (τάς χειρας τίνος, 2 Corinthians 11:33. Cf. Winers Grammar, § 52, 4, 4; Buttmann, 146f (128f)).**

I highlighted the two differences in the definition to drive home the point. Luke 21:36 really does indicate an actual **"escape"**, which has never been a term misunderstood in the Bible. There is a dramatic difference between **"escaping"** and **"seeking safety in flight"**.

One cannot truly be achieved by us in the context of Luke chapter 21. The other is based solely on our efforts, and was **NOT** chosen as the wording for Luke 21:36.

With this, I think it is abundantly clear that the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was indeed saying exactly what the plain text and sense of the scripture declares in Luke 21:36.

***"Pray that you be counted worthy to escape the things that must come soon, and to stand before the Son of Man".***

In the name of our most Blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Every effort has been made to document each source that was reviewed, consulted and quoted in the production of Tribulation Rising. However, the research for this project extends back for more than 20 years.**

**It is simply not possible to document every source that contributed to this material.**

**The bibliographical information presented here represents our best effort to compile as many of the sources as possible. This was an effort that began in earnest once the direction for this project was made known by the Lord.**

**There are more contributors represented in this material than we have the ability to thank individually. To that end, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all of the faithful scholars that have heard the voice of the Lord, and completed the task He placed before them.**



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