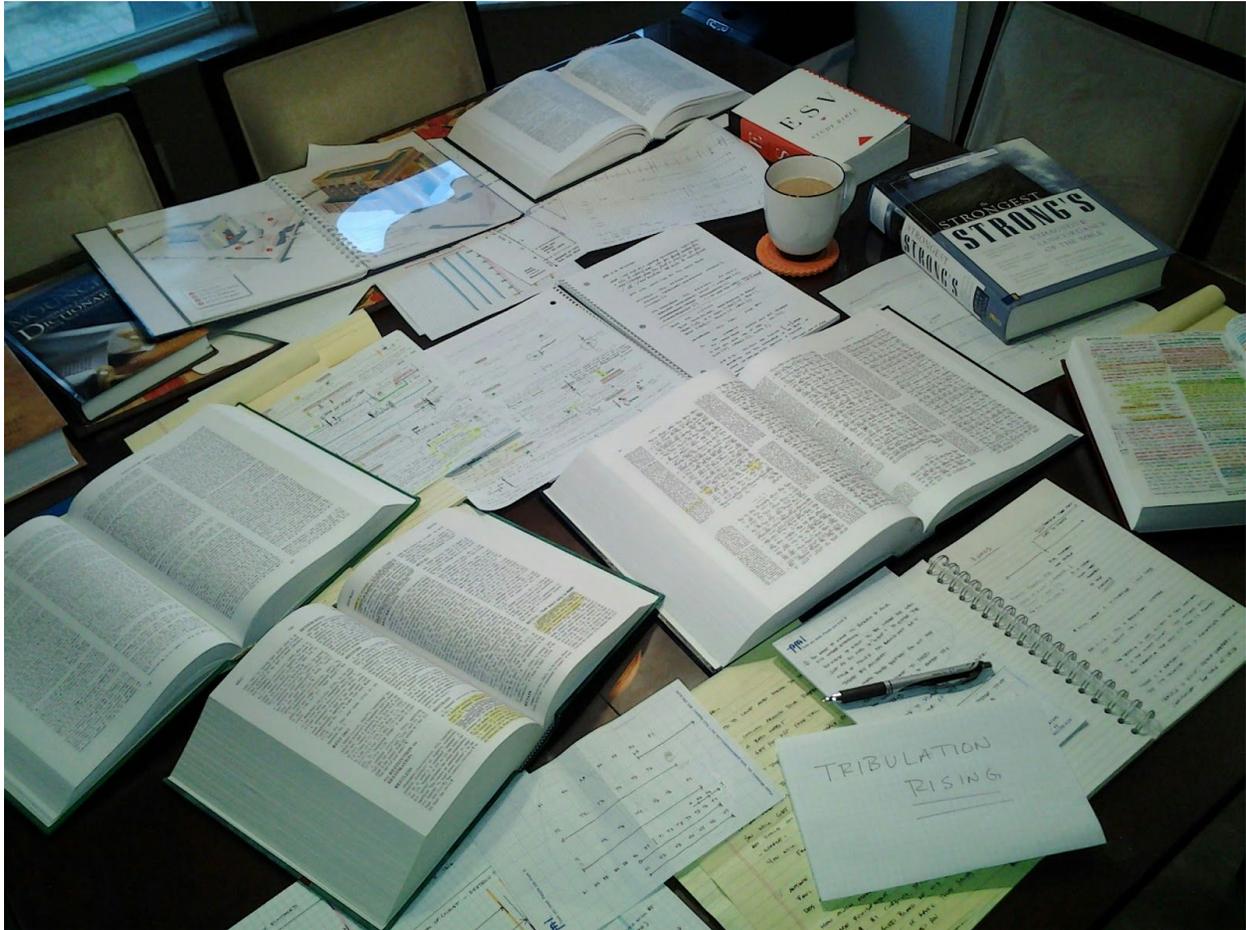


TRIBULATION RISING: THE SERIES



MATTHEW 24 AND THE RAPTURE

RICHARD KENDRICK JR.

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There is a block of scripture that pre-tribulation rapture critics turn to more than any other as proof that the pre-tribulation rapture is a heresy:

Matthew chapter 24.



But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only - Matthew 24:36

I have mounted a defense of the rapture from the text of this chapter on multiple occasions and from different perspectives – depending on the particular conversation. However, when it comes to scripture simplicity always reigns supreme. The next time you question the pre-tribulation rapture with Matthew 24 as your evidence do yourself a favor and answer this question:

Did Jesus lie?

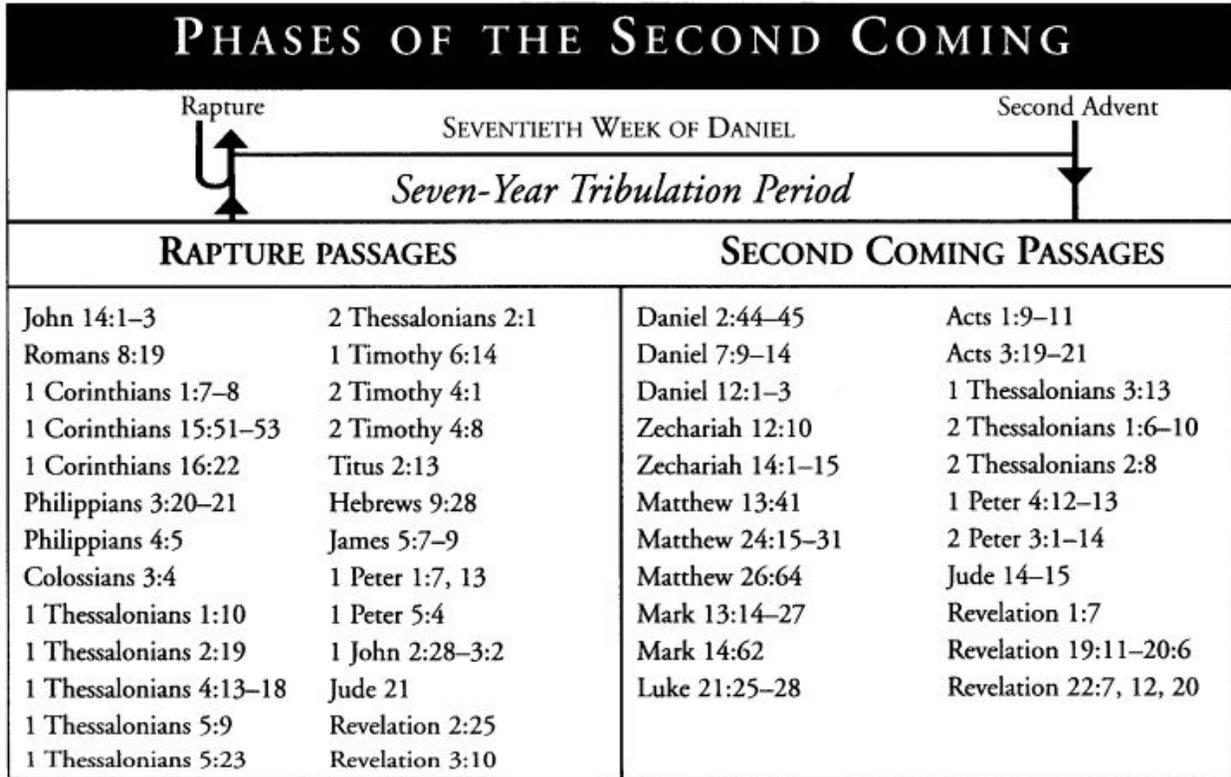
I will be brief – let's examine verse 24:36 - But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Did Jesus lie when he uttered these words?

Here is why I ask. If Matthew 24 is evidence of a post-tribulation rapture then Jesus clearly lied in 24:36. How do we know this? There are no less than 35 verses given prior in this chapter that clearly define the times of the end – including these particular scriptures that are trumpeted by supporters of the post-tribulation rapture more than any other:

Matthew 24:29-31 - Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

To be clear - there are only two events in all of the Bible that Matthew 24:29-31 can be referring to - the rapture or the Second Coming. There are no other possibilities as these are the only two events that involve Christ leaving heaven for the earth. In one He does not step foot on the earth. In the other He does. This is critical to understand as we lay out the evidence. It must be one or the other.



First graphic showing the differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming.

Seems cut and dry, right? Not so fast – verse 36 says that no man knows the day or hour. Proponents of the post-tribulation rapture are quick to exclaim that “we don’t know the exact hour or day, so this is still correct”. Also, we see another problem with 29-31 as proof of a post-tribulation rapture.

Angels are not a part of the rapture in any form aside from a shout and announcement – and that is an archangel only. No great multitudes of angels nor any references to multitudes of angels assisting the Lord in any scriptures directly related to the rapture. It is the Lord alone that descends with a shout:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 - For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 - Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The closest we ever get to an angel is the voice of the archangel. However, in case you're not convinced we can look at a second problem with the logic of a post-tribulation rapture in Matthew 24:29-31.

	The Rapture	The Second Coming
1	Jesus coming for His bride - the Church. (<i>John 14:1-3, 1 Thess. 4:14-17</i>)	Jesus' second coming, returning with His bride - the Church (<i>Col 3:4, Zech 14:5, Jude 14, Rev 19:14</i>)
2	Believers caught up with Jesus in the air. (<i>1 Thess 4:13-18</i>)	Jesus' feet touch the earth, second return. (<i>Zech 14:4, Rev:19:11-21</i>)
3	Christians taken first, unbelievers Left Behind. (<i>1 Thess 4:13-18</i>)	The wicked are taken to judgment, those saved after the rapture, the tribulation saints, are Left Behind. (<i>Matt 13:28-30</i>)
4	Jesus presents the bride to Himself and the Father (<i>2 Cor 11:2, Rev. 19:6-9 40</i>)	To execute God's judgment upon the earth and set up Jesus' millennium Kingdom reign (<i>Jude 14-15, Rev 19:11-21, Zech 14:3-4</i>)
5	Marriage of Lamb in heaven after the Rapture	The marriage supper of Jesus and His bride consummates on earth after the second coming ends Armageddon
6	Happens in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (<i>1 Corinth 15:52</i>)	A slow return, people will witness Jesus' second coming with His saints. (<i>Zech 12:10 Matt 24:30, Rev 1:7</i>)
7	Only Christians can/will see Jesus (<i>1 John 3:2, 1 Corinth 15:52</i>)	Everyone on earth will see Jesus return with His bride (<i>Rev. 1:7</i>)
8	Jesus descends with a shout at the Rapture (<i>1 Thess 4:16</i>)	No shout mentioned (<i>Rev. 19:11-21</i>)
9	A Resurrection event (<i>1 Thess 4:13-18, 1 Cor 15:51-54</i>)	No resurrection mentioned (<i>Rev 1:7, 19:11-21, Zech 12:10, 14:4-5</i>)
10	Rapture can happen at any moment in time - Imminent (<i>Rev 3:3, 1 Thess 5:4-6</i>)	Occurs at the end of the 7 year Tribulation (<i>Dan 9:24-27, Matt 24:29-30, 2 Thess 2:3-8</i>)
11	Angels not sent to gather - resurrected/raptured saints do not need angelic help	Angels sent forth to gather the unsaved for God' judgment (<i>Matt 13:39, 41, 49, 24:31, 25:31, 2 Thess 1:7-10</i>)
12	Spirits of those dead in Christ arise to Jesus and receive their resurrected/raptured body (<i>1 Thess 4:14-16</i>)	Christians return with Jesus in already resurrected bodies on white horses. (<i>Rev 19:11-21</i>)
13	Jesus does not return on a white horse (until Second Coming) Jesus appears in clouds, does not touch ground (until Second Coming)	Jesus returns on a white horse (<i>Rev 19:11</i>)
14	Only for the Church bride - those saved and covered through and by the shed blood of Jesus (<i>1 Thess 4:14-17</i>)	For the redeemed - Israel & Gentiles (<i>Rom 11:25-27, Matt 25:31-46</i>)
15	A message of hope and comfort (<i>1 Thess 4:18, Titus 2:13, 1 John 3:3</i>)	A message of Judgment (<i>Joel 3:12-16, Rev 19:11-21, Mal 4:5</i>)

Second graphic showing the differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming.

We know exactly the day that Second Coming will occur. It occurs exactly 1,260 days after the Abomination of Desolation. It occurs exactly 1,290 days after the Antichrist issues the decree to stop the Jewish sacrifices at the Temple. If the events in Matthew 24:29-31 are the Second Coming then they occur exactly eight 360 day years and ten days after the rapture occurs. However, if they are not the Second Coming - but the rapture then Jesus lied. We know that He must have lied as the events described in 29-31 tie directly to other scriptures in the Bible that we know to be the Second Coming.

Whereas, the verses of 24:36 tie directly to verses that we know relate directly to the rapture.

Stated differently, there are enough additional scriptures for both the Second Coming and the rapture to confirm which is which in Matthew 24. We will address some of these throughout this section. Also, there is more on the timing of the rapture and tribulation in the “Time, Times and a Dividing of Times” section.

What we don’t know is when the rapture occurs. Hence, no man knows the day or hour.

Perhaps we can think of this in slightly different terms. Consider again what we have really spoken, and see if this makes more sense in light of the timing given in the text.

Here is one more thing that many seem to miss - from verse 36 forward - it is a different conversation than the rest of Matthew 24.

Scoffers proclaim that this is a continuation of what we were reading in verses 1 through 35 - it is not. With careful examination you can see the break in the subject and the transitions of the conversation.

Rapture Passages	Second Coming Passages
John 14:1-3	Daniel 2:44-45
Romans 8:19	Daniel 7:9-14
1 Corinthians 1:7-8	Daniel 12:1-3
1 Corinthians 15:51-53	Zechariah 12:10
1 Corinthians 16:22	Zechariah 14:1-15
Philippians 3:20	Matthew 13:41
Philippians 4:5	Matthew 24:15-31
Colossians 3:4	Matthew 26:64
1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19	Mark 13: 14-27
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Mark 14:62 , 23
1 Thessalonians 5:19	Luke 21:25-28
2 Thessalonians 2:1	Acts 1:9-11
1 Timothy 6:14	Acts 3:19-21
2 Timothy 4:1, 8	1 Thessalonians 3:13
Titus 2:13	Jude 14, 15
Hebrews 9:28	Revelation 1:7
1 Peter 1:7, 13; 5:4	Revelation 19:11-20:6
Revelation 2:25; 3:10	Revelation 22:7, 12, 20

Third graphic showing the differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming.

There are many proofs to confirm this - however, I will revert back to what we have said already, as this is my favorite. From verse 1 to 35, Jesus speaks of many events occurring in the end times. This includes the abomination of desolation.

This is critical. Why? Because the Abomination of Desolation tells us the EXACT number of days until the Lord returns with the saints, spoken of in verses 29-31. In Daniel chapter 11 and Revelation chapter 12, we see that there are exactly 1,260 days until the Lord returns.

People attempt to declare that Matthew 24:29-31 is when the rapture occurs.

Question:

If Matthew 24:29-31 is the rapture - **which follows the Abomination of Desolation that gives us exactly 1,260 days till the Lord returns. . .**

What on earth is the Lord talking about when he says this:

Matthew 24:36 - But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

Or this:

Matthew 24:42 - Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Or how about this little gem:

Matthew 24:50-51 - The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Just in case that is not clear, lets look at Mark 13:

Verse 32-37 - "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not

know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning — lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

For good measure, let go to Luke chapter 21, as this will touch on one final point worth noting:

Verse 34 - “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.

For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

For those that try to say that "counted worthy to escape" does not mean the rapture, but preparing to survive the tribulation - here is a link to the project where I put that reasoning out to pasture:

<http://tribulationrisingcom.fatcow.com/does-pray-you-are-counted-worthy-to-escape-show-the-rapture/>

Next question - if the rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation (or even the middle as others believe) - exactly how does it come on the whole world as a trap? Other translations render this as "snare". What exactly is a snare? It is a hidden trap, that springs unexpectedly on the victim, with no hope of escape.

The original Greek render the coming as **αἰφνίδιος**:

Strong's Concordance

aiphnidios: sudden

Original Word: αἰφνίδιος, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: aiphnidios

Phonetic Spelling: (aheef-nid'-ee-os)

Short Definition: unexpected, sudden

Definition: unexpected, sudden.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 160: αἰφνίδιος

αἰφνίδιος, (αἰφνης, ἀφανής, ἄφνω, which see), unexpected, sudden, unforeseen: Luke 21:34 (here WH ἐφνιδ., see their Introductory § 404 and Appendix, p. 151); 1 Thessalonians 5:8. (Wis. 17:14; 2 Macc. 14:17; 3Macc. 3:24; Aeschylus, Thucydides², 61 τό αἰφνίδιον καί ἀπροσδόκητον, Polybius, Josephus, Plutarch, Dionysius Halicarnassus, others.)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

sudden, unawares.

From a compound of a (as a negative particle) and phaino (compare *exaiphnes*) (meaning non-apparent); unexpected, i.e. (adverbially) suddenly -- sudden, unawares.

see GREEK a

see GREEK phaino

see GREEK exaiphnes

The use of the word **aiphnidios** in the original Greek leaves no misunderstanding as to what the scripture is saying.

There is NO warning, NO series of events, NO indications that will remotely warn the world as to the soon return of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is a reason why Jesus declares the Days of Lot and Noah as the pattern for the days just before He returns.

There is a reason He makes a point of warning against Lot's wife, and falling into that same pattern of looking back to your old life at the very end. Remember, Lot's wife was already outside Sodom and on her way to Zoar. Remember also, no judgments could fall on Sodom and the other cities until AFTER Lot was ALREADY in Zoar.

There is one more thing that must be understood. Zoar was also slated to be destroyed with the other cities. However, Lot did not feel that he could make it to the mountains in time to be saved. It is critical that you catch these two points:

The wicked in Zoar were spared the judgment of God BECAUSE the righteous Lot was with them. They were but a stone's throw from annihilation, yet they received mercy because of Lot. As the Bible tells us, it rains on the just and the unjust alike (rain means blessing).

Second, and even more critical - Lot did not think he could make it to the mountains. Here is the point - Lot thought escape was by his hands. He thought it was dependent on his efforts. However, the Lord reveals that the judgment COULD NOT come until

AFTER Lot was in the city. Lot was taken with fear and tried to turn to his own understanding as many believers are doing this very day. Yet, it was the Lord alone that set the timing of the judgment.

If it would have taken Lot 20 years to get to Zoar, then the judgment would have been stayed for the entire 20 years!

Luke 21:34-37 KJV - And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

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.

If Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians are proof that we will have the Antichrist and the Abomination of Desolation as our guides, and the unfolding of the tribulation first - exactly how does the world go about business as usual to the point that the Lord returns unexpectedly?

Don't think that this is what happens? Well, the Lord just happens to address this as well:

Luke 17:26-27 - Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28-30 - Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all — so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Matthew 24:28-30 - Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all — so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Read the judgments that fall in the Book of Revelation. See if just a few of these lend themselves to the world simply going about its business, just eating and drinking, building, marrying and giving in marriage:

6:7-8 - When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

At current population, that would be nearly 2 billion people - including many new believers that we see standing under the altar with the next seal.

6:15-17 - Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

This alone throws that whole "world going about it's business" thing right out the window. By the way - in the Greek, world here means the entire world.

Not the world known in John's day, or the Middle East - or any other excuse that people want to come up with.

It means the entire planet.

8:5 - Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

8:7 - The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

I don't know about you, but going to work might be a bit tricky when these judgments fall - especially if you work outdoors.

Lets finish this off with this revelation:

9:13-19 - Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and

smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.

20-21 - The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

This all occurs during the first three and a half years as part of the Judgments of the Lamb (already listed the verse declaring these the actual judgments of the Lamb earlier).

This does not even touch on the coming Judgments of God.

Notice in all of these scriptures - these are not events isolated to one area of the world, and to select people. They fall everywhere - on everybody.

These are not the kinds of things that occur in a world that simply goes about it's business. To the contrary - that is one of the points to all of this:

The world has reached a point where we worship our own lives as God.

That said, we can also find proof that Matthew 24:29-31 is the Second Coming from the Old Testament as well. This is important in that while pictures of the rapture exist in the Old Testament, they are just that. The prophets such as Daniel, Ezekiel and Isaiah never knew of the rapture. They could see the pictures and speak what was to them an unknown event, yet they had no frame of reference for what they saw and spoke. We

will discuss this more in a moment. For now, let us consider the words of the Prophet Joel:

Joel 2:10-11 - The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Likewise Joel 2:30-32 - ***And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.***

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

And Joel 3:10-17 - Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.

Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about thither; cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.

Let the heathen be wakened, ***and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.***

Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: ***for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.***

The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.

The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, My Holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be Holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. ~

These passages from Joel are interesting. We see multiple references that tie his prophecies to Matthew 24, as well as the Book of Revelation. When Jesus Christ taught He quoted the Old Testament. We can see references in Matthew 24 to the Prophet Joel. In Joel, we see the references to the grape harvest at mid-tribulation as well as the Judgment of Nations and the Second Coming. However, as we stated earlier, no Old Testament saint ever spoke directly of the rapture as it was still a mystery. The words and imagery of Joel directly match the imagery presented in Matthew 24:29-31. They do not match the imagery presented in Matthew 24:36 however.

Lets look again at something I have detailed already, but bears additional examination.

For those that still are not convinced that 29 – 31 are not the rapture I offer you this.

Every word in the Bible is specifically placed and there are no errant words.

Every word in the Bible is correct with no exceptions. We detail this in the section

on the Final Warning as well. This is the biggest problem for post-tribulation rapture supporters that cite Matthew 24. Understand, that even if you wanted to argue the specific hour of the rapture, you cannot argue the day as the Book of Daniel and Revelation give the days for the tribulation – once they start. The issue is in the “day” portion of verse 36. Think of it this way:

Jesus gives 35 verses detailing the events and times of the tribulation, including the timing of verses 29-31. That would include 24:15 - **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)**

With verse 15 Jesus clearly sets the timing of Matthew 24 to the Book of Daniel and the Abomination of Desolation. That would be 1,260 days from the abomination to the Second Coming.

Only after all of these scriptures and references to exact days does He tell us that no man knows the day or hour. For the record, prior to no man knows, Jesus lays out no less than eight specific references to when the tribulation and end times would come - not including the scriptures detailing the times and season just before the tribulation. Yet, "no man knows the day or hour" follows all of these?

Context is key when looking at Matthew 24. This chapter is a conversation that is broken into separate and distinct parts. Verses 4 through 8 are precursors to the tribulation. Verses 9 through 14 tell of a time when believers will begin to suffer prior to the tribulation - continuing throughout as well. Verses 15 through 22 speak directly to the Abomination of Desolation and the flight of Israel from the Antichrist (the third direct reference to the Book of Daniel). Verses 23 through 26 again touch on the conditions

before the tribulation where false doctrines and false teachers are the greatest and most terrible signs of the end.

Understand, wars are indeed terrible. But in the grand scheme of things those that lose their salvation on account of false doctrines are a far greater tragedy. As we will detail later on another page, this becomes the single greatest heartbreak that will befall believers as the world heads into the tribulation.

Now, we come to verses 29 through 31. These are the verses that detail the Second Coming – not the rapture. There are several clues that confirm this. First, the signs in the heavens are a direct indicator that something is soon to occur – in stark contrast to no man knows the day or hour. Second, all the earth will see the Lord return with power and great glory. This is in direct violation of scripture that speaks specifically of the rapture.

1 Corinthians 15:52 - In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 - Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

In these two scriptures we see that the rapture is sudden in its advent, and sudden in its conclusion. Also, we see in Matthew 24 that the nations mourn as the Savior returns in great power, as opposed to the rapture where the Lord does not set foot upon the earth.

Let me ask you a common sense question. If the event detailed in Matthew 24:29-31 is the rapture then why the u-turn? What is the purpose of bringing believers up simply to turn them around? We see that the nations tremble for the power and the army of

saints coming with the Lord (according to 29-31 the saints are already with Christ). Likewise, the nations would have no need to tremble if the Lord indeed was not going to finish the return.

You may be puzzled by the last statement. Here is the thing - you may remember this particular block of scripture:

John 14:1-3 - Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Here is why I asked the last question. Those that quote 29-31 as proof of the rapture run into a problem with these three scriptures. Look at what the Lord promises: **He goes to the Father's house to prepare a place - for us. The Father's house is Mt. Sion (with an "S") denoting heaven.** Also, He will come again and receive us to Himself. He then takes us to the house of His Father as that is precisely the point of the scripture. **He does not prepare a place for us and decide not to take us there.**

This becomes important as post-tribulation rapture supporters have struggled to find a method with which to avoid questions about the U-turn in the sky. I have seen efforts to use the timing of Daniel to justify a week in heaven, 30 days in heaven and even 45 days in heaven (all utilizing 24 hour earth days). However, when you look at the scriptures of Daniel it becomes clear that they do not match the efforts to justify the post-tribulation rapture. That is without word studies. Once you turn to word studies of the original language the argument of the post-tribulation rapture falls apart.

This is why I have never found a serious Biblical scholar use Daniel for the timing of a post-tribulation rapture - not even scholars that actively support a post-tribulation rapture. I cannot show you a single "part-time" Biblical scholar that has attempted it either. There may be one or two, but there is a good reason why nobody has heard of them.

However, of all of the indications given in 29-31, one of the biggest clues reside in the gathering of the elect from the four corners of the earth in verse 31. This is a direct reference to the gleaning, or the four corner harvest commanded in the Law of Moses. It is also a direct reference to Matthew 25:34-46 and confirmed in Revelation 16:15-16 where in the last days of the tribulation those few remaining believers will be called to be the gleaning, or the four corner harvest.

Consider first, the gleaning or the four corner harvest fulfills the Law of Moses.

However, to do so it must be preceded by the rest of the harvest cycle - also commanded in the Law of Moses. That tells us that by the time the gleaning is fulfilled at the end of the tribulation it must - **by direct command of God given in the Law of Moses** - be preceded by the first fruits of the harvest and the main harvest.

While the harvest cycles are covered on another page, it is a good time to list the stages of the harvest cycle here for easy reference.

At Passover we have the Firstfruits of the barley harvest. This feast lasts for seven days. Also, on day two of the Feast of Firstfruits begins the counting of the omer. This starts a 49 day cycle where firstfruits of barley are cut down, harvested and brought as an offering to the Temple. On day 50, or Pentecost we have the Firstfruits of the wheat harvest. These first fruits are presented only once, whereas the firstfruits of barley are presented for 49 days. After Pentecost and the presenting of the firstfruits of wheat we enter the main harvest for the barley and wheat. This also begins the main grape harvest. **The harvest of the fruit of a new tree or vine can only occur after its first fruits offering in the fourth year of its life (corresponding to the fourth year of the**

tribulation when the grape harvest begins). Doubtless, those that are familiar with Revelation 14: 14-20 will understand the significance of the main harvest of barley and wheat - or the grape harvest.

It is only at the end of the ***complete harvest cycle*** that we have the four corner harvest, or the gleaning. The last of the grains left in the four far flung corners of the field are harvested only after all other fruit (the grains are also referred to as the fruit of the field) has been taken.

Here is the required order of the harvest given in the Law of Moses:

The first fruits are harvested first.

The main harvest then follows the first fruits. It is critical to understand that the first fruits are what sanctifies the rest of the harvest. In other words - no first fruits, no main harvest.

Finally, it is ONLY after the first fruits and the main harvest, THAT the gleaning, or the four corner harvest can be taken.

The gleaning ALWAYS comes at the VERY END of the completed harvest cycle, and lasts but mere moments in the totality of the full harvest cycle.

In the Law of Moses, the four corners of the harvest are to be left for the poor, indigent, hungry and homeless that they should find sustenance. **In Matthew 24:31 we have a warning from the Lord – though it will mean certain death, do not turn any away those that hunger in the final 42 months.** Furthermore, tend to them in my name or you shall be lost. It is important that we remember that it is not just about feeding the hungry and tending to the poor. **It is about doing so in the name of Jesus Christ during a time when this will require you to expose yourself to the armies of the**

Antichrist. Likewise, we find that the Book of Daniel tells us that our own blood shall betray us.

Think of Nazi Germany when anything that remotely connected people to anything Jewish meant a certain and horrific death.

This is why, at the height of the great tribulation in the Book of Revelation, Jesus reminds us of this very conversation from Matthew 24 - all the way in Revelation 16:15-16. **This reminder comes seemingly out of the blue. There are no other references or indications to the rapture, Second Coming or judgments here , just this single statement (for the one person that tried to justify this as the time of the rapture, before the battle of Armageddon).** We find the answer in Matthew 25 and the discussion of the Judgment of Nations.

When Christ offers this lone warning it is at the end of the last judgments of God, before the gathering of forces for Armageddon. It is in the following verse that the nations are beginning to gather for the battle of Armageddon. This follows what has been the very worst three years in the history of the planet. Look at the things that have befallen the earth in this time.

1. Sores of unspeakable torment have fallen on those bearing the mark of the beast.
2. Every sea upon the face of the earth has become blood. Likewise the rivers of the earth. All waterborne life has perished.
3. The sun has literally scorched men to within an inch of their lives.
4. Great darkness has fallen upon the earth. There is no light to be found.
5. The river Euphrates has dried up and the world heads to final war.

The misery and suffering upon the earth are beyond compare. Food, water, shelter are now effectively gone or worthless. Mankind has descended into madness for their lot. Any offer by the beast of food or relief will mean destruction for any believer that should dare to show their face. The ransom upon their heads will be untold wealth and sustenance.

All of this is soon to be multiplied by the coming destruction of Rome, the operational capital of the beast system. After the fall of Rome, there will be no effective world government, no infrastructure for distributing food or supplies - nothing.

Yet Christ will expect every last believer that should seek salvation to do exactly that - expose themselves. Whether it is to those that starve and risk exposure to the Antichrist or even to others that hunger with risk that many should come against them. The Lord is warning believers that if they should hide for fear and let another perish they are lost. Likewise, if they should help another, yet hide from the name of Christ they are lost.

We can see this from the words that Christ utters in **Revelation 16:15 - Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.**

Shame will be upon the heads of those that should let another perish, or hide the name of the Lord for fear.

This statement is meant to take the believer back to Matthew 24 and 25. In Revelation 16:15 we see the different elements (highlighted above) that tie directly into and refer us back to Matthew 24 and 25. From Matthew 24:36 through 25:30 we have the detailing of the rapture and the requirements to overcome and the starting point for what Christ is

warning. The Lord then takes those requirements into Matthew 25:31-46 in order to make his point.

Remember, all scripture has a primary, secondary and level of mysteries meaning. There are far too many scriptures detailing the return of the Lord before the tribulation (including several bombshells that we will discuss in a moment) to discount the event due to one scripture, placed without obvious context. That means the scripture will have a secondary meaning that it is alluding too, and the level of mysteries. That is the case with Revelation 16:15. This scripture speaks to the secondary and mysteries levels of Matthew 25:31 forward.

It is the Judgment of the nations that Christ is speaking to in Revelation 16:15. When he delivers this verse it is just before the the fall of Rome (Babylon, the Great) and the preparation for Armageddon when things are at their worst. He is giving us a reminder from Matthew 25. **He is telling us that if our robes are to be found clean and kept clean we must become the four corner harvest.** Look at the examples given in the detailing of the Judgment of Nations. Look at what we are expected to do if we should endeavor to find ourselves to the right hand of Christ.

Matthew 25:41-46 KJV - Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The message is simple and straightforward - sacrifice yourself to the harvest in My name lest you be lost forever! The requirements given for surviving the Judgment of Nations are point for point from the Law of Moses and the Gleaning, or the four corner harvest.

Let's continue examining the subject of the various blocks of scripture in Matthew. Verses 32 through 35 are the closing words on everything discussed so far – including another timing reference to the generation that is alive when these things begin.

It is only after all of this that we get to the rapture – or the illusion of the rapture. It is an allusion to, or illustration of the rapture, but yet still a mystery. This is a good time to discuss a little understood premise about the rapture and the mysteries of God.

The mysteries of God are those things that we see illustrated in the Old Testament, yet to the Israelites there would be no clear reason as to why. Typically, the mysteries are revealed in three pieces. They are shown as a picture. Secondly, they are given a context, or a frame from which we can see that something is emerging. They are still mysteries at this point, but now we can see them surfacing and can glean knowledge from them. Third, the final piece of the puzzle, or the “key” is given. We will discuss the

mysteries of God and Revelation 10:6-7 more in the section on scriptural evidences for the rapture.

We see this demonstrated in the Exodus chapter 19 where the Lord gives the first picture of the rapture when Israel is camped at Mt. Sinai. We also see the picture of the rapture of both the church and the righteous Jews in the imagery of the Book of Ruth through the story of the Kinsmen Redeemer, the gentile bride and the re-grafting of Israel into covenant with God. It is again pictured in the appointed feasts, the harvest cycles, the Law of First Fruits, Noah and the flood just to name a few.

There is another interesting piece that comes into play also. Consider these scriptures detailing the start of the same conversation between Jesus and the disciples:

Luke 21:7 KJV - And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Mark 13:4 KJV - Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

Matthew 24:3 KJV - And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

You may have noticed a difference between the three. Specifically, a difference in Matthew 24:3 and the way it speaks to the subject. The passages in Mark and Luke are nearly identical, yet Matthew reveals something critical to the discussion - the order of events and the key as to why there seems to be a complete difference between the first part of Matthew 24 and the second.

As we laid out earlier in this presentation, the first part of Matthew 24 is very time specific. With the introduction of Daniel into the text, it sets the timing of the events of

the tribulation to the exact day after the Abomination of Desolation. This is in stark contrast to the back half of Matthew 24 and Matthew 25, which clearly indicate there is no such known timing to the return of the Lord. Not only does this eliminate the possibility of a post-tribulation rapture, but it takes every other possibility off the table as well. We know this as Daniel and Revelation taken together reveal the exact timing of both halves of the tribulation, and declare a multitude of signs and events which run clearly counter to the parables offered in the back half of Matthew 24, chapter 25, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

There is another piece that will be covered in just a few minutes detailing additional scriptural evidence of the pre-tribulation rapture - Luke chapter 17. Most read through this chapter without really considering what it says. They simply assume that it is an extension of Matthew 24. It is not. It is, in fact, ironclad proof of the pre-tribulation rapture.

So, the question is how we know that the order given in Matthew 24:3 is specific, and not a random writing.

As we said earlier, there are no errant words in the Bible, nor are there arbitrary statements. We have detailed in the Final Warning that every last word spoken on earth must be accounted before heaven. So it is with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Every statement he spoke is profitable for instruction. We also see this in the back half of Matthew 24 and chapter 25. Each of the parables spoken by the Lord are done so in a specific order.

For example, there are those that tell us that Matthew 24:39-42 indicates that those which are taken are the wicked, removed from the earth by the Lord. At first glance, and taken by themselves, these scriptures look as though they can indeed indicate such a thing. However, when taken with all of the parables the Lord spoke on the subject,

and in the order they are given - a full picture emerges with each parable defining the prior parable.

We see the same principle revealed in the Revelation chapters two and three. When we take all of the things that are given to those that “overcome” and read them in the order they are given, we see the complete picture emerge of what comes in the rapture and the fulfillment of the initiation of the priesthood. Each of the rewards to the overcomer are specific, they are rooted in the priesthood, and as Paul tells us in Hebrews - they are the actual fulfillment of the things that occur on earth. To paraphrase the Apostle Paul - the rewards to the overcomers are the things in which the earthly order of priests are copied from. Also, each of the rewards given in Revelation cannot be given on earth. They can only be given in heaven, as this is where the final fulfillment of the calling of the Kingdom of Priests will occur. Likewise, a listing of the offenses found in Revelation chapters two and three reveal the severity and order of those things to which we are declared as not overcoming.

We will cover the rewards of the overcomers more in just a moment.

What makes Matthew 24:3 so interesting is that it sets the context for the differences in Matthew 24 as a whole. When the disciples ask the Lord about his comments on the destruction of the Temple, they ask a critical question:

“What is the sign of your coming?”

Let's look again at the verse in question:

Matthew 24:3 KJV - And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

What I am about to share is a prime example of how circular reasoning based on man's assumptions truly fails us when it comes to the things of the Lord. It is akin to saying that the last trumpet judgment in Revelation is the last trump of God declaring the rapture - yet never willing to ask the obvious question:

Is this the only "last trump" that the Bible attaches to end times prophecy?

The answer is of course "no". Yet, so many seek to justify their own positions at the expense of academic integrity. We cover the difference between the Last Trump and the trumpet of the seventh angel in great detail on another page. The differences are stunning to say the least.

Here is why circular reasoning fails. In Matthew 24:3, the word "coming" is parousia in the original Greek (Textus Receptus, Codex Sinaiticus, various additional manuscripts). Parousia is Strong's number 3952, and generally defined as "presence, coming or advent". Indeed, the interlinear has "presence" as the given translation. So, why is this critical?

Here are the critical excerpts on "parousia" taken from Vine's:

~3. parousia (παρουσία, 3952), lit., "a presence," para, "with," and ousia, "being" (from eimi, "to be"), denotes both an "arrival" and a consequent "presence with."

When used of the return of Christ, at the Rapture of the Church, it signifies, not merely His momentary "coming" for His saints, but His presence with them from that moment until His revelation and manifestation to the world. In some passages the word gives prominence to the beginning of that period, the course of the period being implied, 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1; Jas. 5:7,8; 2 Pet. 3:4. In some, the course is prominent, Matt. 24:3,37; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 John 2:28; in others the conclusion of the period, Matt. 24:27; 2 Thess. 2:8.~

Did you catch that? Here is the takeaway from the original Greek:

"When used of the return of Christ, at the Rapture of the Church, it signifies, not merely His momentary "coming" for His saints, but His presence with them from that moment until His revelation and manifestation to the world.

In some, the course is prominent, Matt. 24:3,37; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 John 2:28;"

This is an absolute bombshell! It reveals the truth of what the disciples were asking. They were not asking a general question as to the return of the Lord, or of the Second Coming.

They were asking of the rapture!

How did the disciples know that the rapture would even occur? **A moment ago, I stated the Luke 17 was absolute proof of the rapture.**

Here is how we know this - **the things spoken in Luke 17 point back to specific Old Testament pictures and prophecies of the Day of the Lord. Two such examples would be Zephaniah 1:14 - 2:3, and also Joel chapter 2, where the imagery of the ancient Jewish wedding is used to frame the Day of the Lord.** By course, this example introduces the necessity of the Lord **returning for His bride in secret, stealing her away for seven days to the house of His Father. This would be followed by a very public return with the bride.** We covered some additional Old Testament examples of the rapture earlier in this writing also.

We will see these allusions to the ancient Jewish wedding more in a moment. They are an absolutely amazing revelation prophetically concealed in both Matthew 24 and Luke 17.

When Jesus spoke the words recorded in Luke 17, it was the first time that he provided direct context for the many pictures of the rapture in the Old Testament. Recall, context is part two of the revealing of the mysteries of God.

So that there is NO misunderstanding - the disciples already had a partial knowledge of the return of the Lord and what it would entail. When they speak to Jesus in Matthew 24 they are looking for additional details to something He had already started to reveal!

Now, the question becomes why Jesus spoke of the Second Coming at the end of the tribulation if the disciples were asking of the rapture. **The reason is simple - the disciples actually asked three questions here:**

When shall these things be (Jesus had just recounted the destruction of the Temple)?

What shall be the sign of your coming (presence)?

And of the end of the world, or age (aoen)?

That is exactly what the Lord answered. That is why there seems to be three separate conversations or subjects in Matthew 24 - and why verse 36 forward seems to be a completely different conversation from the rest of what was just spoken.

Verses four through eight are when these things will be.

Verses nine through 14 are the sign of His coming

Verses 15 through 35 are the end of the world, or the age - of which the Second Coming is a critical and prophesied piece in the Old Testament, as is the rapture at the beginning of the end.

We will address another critical point in a moment - who was Matthew 24 and 25 actually written to? There are many debates back and forth on this, and this is something that must be understood to unlock the full mysteries revealed in Matthew. It is also critical to understanding why the Second Coming is revealed that way that it is in verses 29 through 31.

At this point, we need to address one of the biggest errors when it comes to the timing of the rapture and Matthew chapter 24. Let's take a look at this block of scripture:

Matthew 24:23-28 ESV - Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

See, I have told you beforehand.

So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

The first thing that needs pointed out is verse 25, where the Lord tells us that He has spoken on this subject before. This comes as a tremendous surprise, as most assume that this is the first real conversation that Christ has on the end times. It is not. As we

stated earlier, the very first recorded conversation on the rapture occurs in Luke chapter 17.

When you look at Matthew 24, you can see that the scriptures above are actually part of the same point that Jesus is making. In other words, verses 23 through 28 are the same subject. This becomes critical to understand what I will say next.

"One taken and one left" does **NOT** tell us that the one taken is the one that is judged and punished. Here is why. When I read defenses of a post-tribulation rapture, I see Matthew 24:28 quoted as an incidental evidence of the wicked "being taken" as they are simply being killed. Here is the problem - the actual Greek reveals that "taken" literally means "taken" - as in "gone". Not killed and left to rot, not spiritually "taken" nor any other meaning save one:

Gone, as in disappeared. vanished - no more to be found in any form. In other words, there is nothing left. There remains no evidence of the existence of the taken person in ANY form.

It is the same understanding that is applied to Noah and his family on the Ark, and to Lot and his wife and two daughters escaping Sodom.

There is an additional understanding that comes from the primary meaning found for "taken" in Luke 17 and here in Matthew. It is this primary definition that really opens up the discussion. We will cover this more in just a few moments.

Here is why this is important to point out. There has been a great deal of confusion with regards to verse 28. I have seen all sorts of explanations, and have been confused myself. Yet the Lord will always provide insight if we are seeking His answers for His purposes, and not for our own. Let's look again at verse 28:

Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

The one interpretation that seems to have gained the most traction - mostly because it is the only way to twist the words of Christ into a post-trib endorsement is that verse 28 means something to this effect:

"Think of it in these terms - where would you take the garbage? That is what Christ is saying here."

Yes - these folks are serious with this explanation. Never mind that these are the same people that like to scream "the Bible interprets itself" and "sola scriptura, sola scriptura" at every turn.

The indication from their side of scripture is that those who are "taken" are actually wiped out and their bodies litter the ground. They evidence this with the KJV rendering of Luke 17 that appears to say just that. Yet, with further study and the original Greek, it becomes clear that this is not what the Lord is saying.

No, verse 28 does not tell us that the vultures will be eating the bodies of the dead. That does indeed happen, but in different scriptures found elsewhere. Ironically, it is actually many of those that miss the rapture that find this fate.

What the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is telling us here is something much less cryptic. First, look at the full context of the conversation:

Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes

from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

What is it that Christ is telling us here? He is telling us that false christs will arise and prey on all of us, even unto the very elect.

so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

This is the context of the vulture remark. Jesus is not saying that the bodies will be consumed. He is saying that predators will prey on the weak during the end times, and especially believers that are prone to deception and false doctrines.

Depending on the translation, we get either "body" or "corpse" as the typical rendering. However, the original Greek used here is " ἢ τὸ πτώμα ἐκεῖ συναχθήσονται", where we see **ptóma - πτώμα**, which gives a different understanding than the English rendering would appear to denote:

Strong's Concordance

ptóma: a fall, hence a misfortune, ruin

Thayer's Greek Lexicon:

STRONGS NT 4430: πτώμα

πτώμα, πτώματος, τό (πίπτω, perfect πέπτωκα);1. in Greek writings from Aeschylus down, a fall, downfall; metaphorically, a failure, defeat, calamity; an error lapse, sin.

2. that which is fallen

There are additional forms that can translate this into an additional meaning for "corpse" or "dead body". Likewise, given the conversation in Luke 17, it is an accurate rendering to denote an actual dead body in Matthew 24:28. However, it is the root of **ptóma** that we actually find used verse 28, rather than the more accurate Greek word of **sóma** in Luke 17 - which has a literal primary meaning of dead body, yet a secondary meaning of Body of Christ.

Stated differently, Luke 17 has a literal meaning of "dead body" first, with a strong allusion to the Body of Christ second. However, Matthew 24 has a literal meaning "a fallen state" or "that which is fallen" first, with a strong allusion to actual dead bodies second. In other words, Luke 17 is a prophetic revelation that Christ opens fully in Matthew 24.

The reference to bodies in Luke 17 reveals something critical. Remember, this is speaking to even the elect being deceived by false doctrines. The reference to bodies speaks to Revelation, and things that Christ has not yet revealed. It also speaks to something we see in 2 Peter chapter 3, and to something Paul reveals in the Book of Hebrews after his time on Mt. Sinai. Those that fall victim to these predators are dead already. This is a warning that we see solidified in Hebrews chapter 10.

Those that have no faith in, or are deceived into rejecting the promise of the soon return of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are destroyed for such a folly.

This is further demonstrated by another clue in the conversation:

For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

This is a direct reference back to Luke 17. It is the lightning reference that clears up the confusion for the disciples - if there was any in the first place. The

relevance of the lightning reference will become clear in a moment. As we go further into this discussion, we will show that the disciples understand from Luke 17 the lightning was directly tied to His return for the Body.

Luke 17:24-26 KJV - For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

The imagery of the weak being led astray by predators that claimed to be the "Messiah" was common place. It was that same concept to them as the "ambulance chasing lawyer" and the "honest politician" is to us. There was a new "Messiah" popping up around every corner. When you go through the four Gospels, it is remarkable to see just how many times this occurs in the ministry and times of Jesus.

Recall what we spoke just a moment ago:

However, Matthew 24 has a literal meaning "a fallen state" or "that which is fallen" first, with a strong allusion to actual dead bodies second.

When I say that there was no confusion on the part of the disciples, I say this as we have ample evidence that they would ask the meanings of the things that were strange to them. Yet, we have no such inquiries in either Luke 17 or Matthew 24. That leaves only one possibility - they knew exactly what the Lord was saying, and it was not strange to them.

This is yet another evidence of the meaning behind "one taken and one left". Here is what I mean. The Bible defines itself, and it tells us that there is nothing new under the

sun. In fact, we know that the Old Testament provides the pictures and context for the things found in the New Testament. I have shared these scriptures more times than I can count. Long story short - the Lord does not change. If He did something in one manner in the beginning, that is how He will do it in the end.

"OK - what does that have to do with one taken and one left?"

As we said a moment ago, the disciples had no questions about what the Lord revealed in Luke 17 and Matthew 24. There is no confusion recorded anywhere in the Bible. Clearly they were not shy about asking of things they did not understand - they did it with most of the parables. The closest they get to any questions is when Jesus revealed that "not one stone shall be left on top of another" when it came to the Temple. That was something that confused them. Yet, when Jesus starts to reveal the truth the questions ceased.

Why?

Why would the disciples not ask about verse 28 if it means that the righteous remain and the wicked are taken?

The answer is simple.

Every single example in the Bible of the wrath and judgment of God follows the exact same pattern.

The world is warned.

The righteous are removed BEFORE the ENTIRE TIME OF JUDGMENT begins.

The wicked are destroyed.

Never once in the Bible does the Lord EVER leave the righteous and remove the wicked. This is especially true of Lot and Noah. For those that try to justify the Noah was "left behind" to "ride out the storm" - you would do well to go back to the story of Noah, and then study the Old Testament scriptures that reveal how the righteous are **"hidden away until the wrath be passed"**. Besides, that misses a point in and of itself. If you wanted to look at it as Noah being left behind, then you need to realize that so was everybody else, and they were still all destroyed! They were not taken. Rather, a place was prepared for Noah and he was saved. Also, for those that are unaware of this - Noah's Ark is a picture of Christ and His redemption and saving of His saints.

Hebrews 11:6-7 KJV - But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Noah's Ark is yet another picture of the rapture of the saints!

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.

Isaiah 13:9 KJV - Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Romans 1:17-19 KJV - For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 KJV - For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Matthew 3:7 KJV - But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

There is an immutable law of God that makes anything other than the pre-trib rapture a literal impossibility. It is the understanding that everything that comes in the New Testament must have an Old Testament equivalent. In other words, if it is not shown in the Old Testament, it cannot happen in the New Testament.

We have covered this a number of times on this site. The Jews understand something that is difficult for western mindsets to grasp. Rabbinic scholars teach that history is cyclical, rather than linear as things are in the western mindset. In other words, if you want to know the ending you can look at the beginning. Prophecy is cyclical, and always happens again.

Where does this leave us on the rapture? As we have detailed already, the rapture can only be a pre-trib occurrence, as every last picture in the Bible - especially the Old Testament pictures - reveal only ONE pattern for the total judgment of God.

The righteous are ALWAYS removed BEFORE the judgment falls.

The unrighteous are ALWAYS left behind to perish.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10, 3:15 KJV - The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

The disciples did not question what they already understood. In fact, every Jew growing up in Israel would have understood what Christ was alluding to. The disciples never once questioned this "strange and unknown doctrine" that Christ was revealing. They never question it because there was nothing to question.

We need to address another aspect of "one taken, one left" before we move on. It deals with 1 Thessalonians 4:15.

For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord,^[d] that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

I never thought I would see the day that this was used in a serious attempt to justify "one taken, one left". However, that changed when Newsmax threw down the gauntlet, and ventured outside of politics and decided to declare a major segment of their readers as wrong. Here is the link to the Newsmax article:

<http://www.newsmax.com/US/Left-Behind-book-series-the-Rapture-Bible/2015/05/05/id/642759/#CommentSection>

Normally, I would not include a newer false doctrine. However, when an organization such as Newsmax comes out swinging with something like this, it tells me that it is not new, and it has enough traction to go the distance. Not only that, but the author makes a statement regarding the "Protestant interpretation" of the rapture, which speaks to a whole new level of bias.

We will keep this short. I am going to paste in the response I wrote for Newsmax. As of this writing (these additional comments), I have not been able to access the thread to leave what you are about to read. They may have shut down the comments, as it became a fairly heated discussion. I will continue to try and submit my response.

Here is my response to the Newsmax article:

"You know, I got to thinking about this today. I absolutely shake my head at this nonsense.

Let's start with this:

"There are two problems with the Protestant "Left Behind" interpretation"

The Protestant interpretation? As opposed to what - the Catholic interpretation? That would be my assumption, as I don't think you would make a comparison between the Protestant interpretation as opposed to, let's say, the Hindu interpretation?

This brings up a glaring question about bias. If this was an op ed piece, then so be it. However, it is not. It is an attempt to set something as fact against a dominant view on the subject in question. It is not an article that gives the author's opinion.

It is an article that declares that the author alone is correct, and the multiplied millions that hold the opposing view are wrong.

Let's move forward.

"But notice, in verse 15, Paul says that "...we who are alive, who are left," shall be caught up. This is a very important point to stress to rapture enthusiasts. Those who are "left" get caught up to meet the Lord. Keep that in mind as we look at these next couple of Scripture passages."

"The second problem with the "Left Behind" interpretation has to do with what I mentioned above: 1 Thessalonians 4 says that those who are "left" get to meet Jesus in the air. You want to be left behind. Why? Because those who are left behind get to meet Jesus on His return to earth. Again, when you put 1 Thessalonians 4 together with Matthew 24 and Luke 17, it becomes quite apparent that the good guys are the ones left behind to meet Jesus."

This was the smoking gun. Really?

There is a reason why the author "tells" you what is in verse 15, yet does not bother to actually GIVE the verse. If he had, it would become clear that he was outright lying in

what he was trying to offer. For that matter, if he was concerned with the truth he would have given the entire verse, plus the context verses in the chapter.

It's a grand total of five verses.

This verse has nothing to do with "one taken, one left". It speaks to those that alive when the Lord comes - as opposed to those that have already died in the years prior. That's it - nothing more.

Here it is in the ESV:

For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord,^[d] that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

New American Standard Bible:

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

King James Bible:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Holman Christian Standard Bible:

For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep.

International Standard Version:

For we declare to you what the Lord has told us to say: We who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who have died.

NET Bible:

For we tell you this by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not go ahead of those who have fallen asleep.

Aramaic Bible in Plain English:

But this we say to you by the word of Our Lord, that we, those who remain at the coming of Our Lord, we who have life, shall not overtake those who are asleep;

GOD'S WORD® Translation:

We are telling you what the Lord taught. We who are still alive when the Lord comes will not go [into his kingdom] ahead of those who have already died.

King James 2000 Bible:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them who are asleep.

Direct translation from the Interlinear:

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord will not proceed those who have fallen asleep,

And for good measure, the Mounce Reverse Interlinear:

For (gar), this (houtos), we say (legō), to you (hymeis), by (en), the word (logos), of the Lord (kyrios), that (hoti), we (hēmeis), who (ho), are alive (zaō), , who (ho), remain behind (perileipomai), until (eis), the (ho), coming (parousia), of the (ho), Lord (kyrios), will by no means (ou), precede (phthanō), those (ho), who have fallen asleep (koimaō)

OK - anybody care to guess what all of these have in common?

Give up? I can help with that. . .

It's tense. What all of these have in common is that those who are "left" are actually "left" BEFORE the Lord returns. It is a condition that exists prior to the rapture.

How is it that "left" can exist before the return of the Lord? Simple - if the folks at Newsmax would actually read the entire chapter, they would have seen that "left" refers to those that are still alive in Christ.

When the rapture comes, 99% of those that go are the dead in Christ. That would be 2,000 years of dead saints. Those that are alive and remain are but a small piece of the puzzle. One generation of the living are nothing compared to the massive amount of those that have passed on.

Here is the FULL context of what this chapter reveals on the subject:

The Coming of the Lord

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord,[d] that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words. ~~~

One more thing - the attempt to “evidence” the authors claim through “one taken, one left” shows further the utter lack of integrity evident in this article. Here is why.

The subject of “one taken, one left” is always the time of the falling judgment. It’s a judgment - there are two groups in every instance in the Bible. “Left” is never a condition after the fact - it is a condition BEFORE the actual judgment.

In Sodom, the judgment fell on the four cities. It was supposed to be five, but Lot was removed from Sodom and allowed refuge in Zoar. Zoar was to be destroyed also, but Lot asked to go there. As a result of righteous Lot remaining in Zoar, that city was SPARED!

The other four cities were destroyed AFTER Lot was IN Zoar.

In the great flood, judgment fell to the Earth. Just as Lot was not “the one that was left” in the cities that were destroyed, Noah was not “left” upon the earth that was destroyed.

It would do Newsmax well to read a bit more carefully, and check the original Hebrew on this.

Judgment fell ON the earth. There is a reason why Noah was removed via a big boat. Those that remained on the earth were the ones destroyed.

The full context of both events bears this out. I will add in something I wrote on my website concerning the same poor attempt to offer this same “explanation” regarding “one taken, one left” using Luke 17:

“Every single example in the Bible of the wrath and judgment of God follows the exact same pattern.

The world is warned.

The righteous are removed BEFORE the ENTIRE TIME OF JUDGMENT begins.

The wicked are destroyed.

Never once in the Bible does the Lord EVER leave the righteous and remove the wicked. This is especially true of Lot and Noah. For those that try to justify the Noah was “left behind” to “ride out the storm” – you would do well to go back to the story of Noah, and then study the Old Testament scriptures that reveal how the righteous are “hidden away until the wrath be passed”. Besides, that misses a point in and of itself. If you wanted to look at it as Noah being left behind, then you need to realize that so was everybody else, and they were still all destroyed! They were not taken. Rather, a place was prepared for Noah and he was saved. Also, for those that are unaware of this – Noah’s Ark is a picture of Christ and His redemption and saving of His saints.

Hebrews 11:6-7 KJV – But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. ~~~

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Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

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That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past. ~~~

It is very disappointing that Newsmax decided to wade into this discussion in this manner. There were a number of ways that this could have been broached. However, this makes clear EXACTLY where you stand, and on who you DON'T value in your readers.

There are many of us out there, and you just trashed an entire segment of your readers.

This nonsense makes my head hurt. ~~~

That was the conclusion of my response. That should just about cover any attempts to bring in 1 Thessalonians as a defense of this errant view of "one taken, one left". With that, let's continue forward.

Now, there are those that want to reject the idea that the Jews would have understood such things. However, take some time and study the different confrontations that Christ had with the Pharisees, Sadducees and the priests. Almost without exception, every one of these exchanges stemmed from Christ speaking on something buried deep within the Old Testament that today's believers miss - but the Jews of Jesus day knew exactly what He was saying.

Why do you think that they were involved in so many disagreements that seem to have most of us scratching our heads? "Why did they say that?" "What does that mean?" "What does that have to do with this?"

How many times have you asked the same question over something you were reading?

However, there is something else that needs mentioned. When Jesus utters the words "Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather" for the first time in Luke 17, **He was revealing a mystery to the disciples. It is a mystery that gets answered in the conversation in Matthew 24.**

When you read these words in Luke 17, it does appear that the Lord is saying that those who are taken are indeed dumped in the garbage. **There is one problem with this interpretation - it does not match the rest of the conversation in Luke 17.** In fact, it seems to run completely opposite to what the rest of Luke 17 is saying. However, there is something that most miss here.

When the disciples ask "where Lord?" in Luke 17:37, Jesus doesn't actually answer them with where. He is not saying "they are taken to the city dump". **Instead of giving them a direct answer, He does the same thing He has done so often - He speaks a mystery.** A mystery that finds its context in the next chapter of Luke, and a full revealing in a later conversation found in Matthew 24.

It was the equivalent of the Lord simply turning and walking away when the disciples ask "where"? How many parents have done the same with their children?

"Mom, how long do I have to be grounded?"

"I hear they are raising the age for Social Security."

The answer will be completely over the head of the child. Yet, how many of us would know precisely what mom was trying to convey?

That is EXACTLY what Jesus was doing in Luke 17:37!

There is something that we must remember when studying the Bible. It was not written in chapter and verse form. Each book was written as a long continuing narrative. Just because we transition from one chapter to the next does not mean that we transition to the next conversation. The conversation in Matthew 24 is continued in Matthew 25. Likewise, the conversation in Luke 17 is continued in Luke 18.

In fact, when Luke 18:1-8 are taken with Luke 17:20-37, we see the heart of what is required to be saved during these days - faith:

And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

When Christ answers the disciples, He gives them something that seems completely unrelated to the question asked. Yet, He immediately rolls into another parable that speaks to faith and the coming of the Lord. Then, Jesus says something that connects the entire conversation in Luke 17 and 18 to this unrelated mystery statement on "vultures".

Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

Question? Exactly why would faith be an issue after seven years of tribulation, when you have already seen the words of the Bible proven beyond doubt? **Why would faith be required when seven years of tribulation - or even three and a half years for**

those that are under the mid-trib deception - have already proven the truth of the Bible?

Why would faith be needed when the Bible gives the exact day of the Second Coming, after the Abomination of Desolation?

Remember, the context of the Days of Lot and Noah is that there will be no heeded warning, nor will the world be in fear. It is a world going about it's daily business as though it has all the time in the world. Literally, the world is asleep at the switch and oblivious to the things around them.

To those that follow the many admonishments to "watch" and "stay awake" it will be a far different story.

Faith is only an issue when there is nothing else BUT faith. When you have iron clad supernatural signs of the tribulation, there is no need of faith. **However, in the days before the tribulation, when all things seem to be as they always were - that is when faith is needed the most.** In the days before the tribulation, when "no man knows the day, nor hour" is when faith is an absolute necessity!

Why would Jesus wonder how many of His believers will have faith when He returns? As we would see later in Matthew 24, and further into the New Testament and Revelation - it is a lack of faith in the promised return of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that will cause most that call His name to perish.

Hebrews 11:1 KJV - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

This is precisely the point of the question we just covered. "Hoped" and "not seen" tells us why faith is needed. The rapture does not come with any direct signs. Unlike the tribulation that starts with the signing of the seven year treaty, or has 1,260 days with

two witnesses in Jerusalem that call down supernatural judgments, or an Abomination of Desolation after these witnesses are killed, raised from the dead - and raptured back to heaven - and kicks of the last 1,260 days. . .

Which then brings the Second Coming of Christ;

The Bible gives no direct signs for the timing of the rapture. We can only know that it is close, even at the door. Yet, no man knows the day nor hour - a statement which cannot be made about the Second Coming once the seven year accord is signed, and especially after the Abomination of Desolation.

Furthermore, we know that the world is not buying or selling before the Second Coming, as Revelation tells us specifically that the global economic system is annihilated when Mystery Babylon comes up before God as a remembrance. In fact, given what we discussed early regarding the warning that Christ gives in Revelation when He utters the words "behold I come as a thief" and its connection to the gleaning (the four corner harvest), we know that before the Second Coming, all of the things found in the Days of Lot and Noah have ceased.

There is no buying or selling as the global economy has been destroyed.

There is no building as the last of the global government has also been destroyed.

There is no eating and drinking as the gleaning tells us that you must be willing to face certain death to feed the starving in the name of Christ.

There is no marrying and giving in marriage as this same conversation in Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21 tells us that all semblance of family has given away to vile perversions and hatred - and that Islam allows for fornication outside of marriage in the most vile terms possible. This includes the rape and sodomy of children.

These are not situations that describe hope and faith. Rather, the utter terror and suffering that the Bible reveals in these days tells us that those who accept the mark of the beast are given over to depravity and are already lost. Also, the few that may yet be refusing the mark will be unable to see beyond even a few minutes into the future as evidenced by the warning given in "I come as a thief". It is an existence that is nothing but desolation and hopelessness, as there is no Holy Spirit to strengthen and comfort those that remain.

The only place on earth where this is not the case will be the place of refuge for the remnant Jews that fled Jerusalem. However, even that is not a situation that calls for hope and faith - as the remnant is supernaturally protected and provided for. They already live the results of that hope and faith, in the form of promises kept.

No my friends, faith is only an issue in the days before the tribulation, when the world is growing darker by the day - yet only those in Christ can see it. In those days, when the world is absolutely oblivious to the things occurring around them. Those that call on the name of Christ will either have the faith and hope of the soon return of the Lord, or they will be left when the Lord returns.

If they survive, that is.

Remember, we covered this in detail just a few moments ago:

"What is it that Christ is telling us here? He is telling us that false christs will arise and prey on all of us, even unto the very elect.

so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

This is the context of the vulture remark. Jesus is not saying that the bodies will be consumed. He is saying that predators will prey on the weak during the end times, and especially believers that are prone to deception and false doctrines."

Indeed, that is the single greatest danger facing the Body of Christ in the final moments before the rapture. As 2 Peter tells us, the very promise of His coming shall be scoffed at. What we see starting in Luke 17, continued in Matthew 24 - opened wide in Matthew 25 - and completed in Revelation chapters 2-5 is the brutal truth of the Great Falling Away spoken of in 2 Thessalonians.

However, the most damning warning against what we see in Matthew 24 and Luke 17 actually comes in Hebrews chapter 10. It is beyond the scope of this discussion, and is covered extensively in "The Devil's Body Count".

We need to look once again at the word "taken", both in Luke 17 and Matthew 24. We alluded to this earlier, and it is no exaggeration to say that what you are going to read next will blow this entire issue wide open. "Taken" does indeed indicate a condition of complete vanishing - as opposed to a temporary or partial condition. "My paper was taken by the teacher to be graded. It will be returned tomorrow." How about this - "half the shipment was taken to the post office, yet the other half will go tomorrow". Let's go with one more for good measure. "She was taken to dinner last night, then she went down the street".

All of these examples use "taken" to indicate an absence from the situation, yet not a permanent, abiding or forced absence. That is the first difference between "taken" as found in Luke 17 and Matthew 24. It is a state of complete and total absence from the earth, and it is not something that those taken have any power to effect. In other words, one minute you are here - and the next you are gone. That's it, end of story. Your remains are not found strewn about the ground where you fell.

However, "taken" in Luke 17 and Matthew 24 has another meaning which is its primary definition. Let's take a closer look at "taken":

Strong's Concordance

paralambanó: to receive from

Original Word: παραλαμβάνω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: paralambanó

Phonetic Spelling: (par-al-am-ban'-o)

Short Definition: I take, receive

Definition: I take from, receive from, or: I take to, receive (apparently not used of money), admit, acknowledge; I take with me.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from **para** and **lambanó**

Definition

to receive from

NASB Translation

receive (3), received (12), take (5), taken (5), takes (1), takes along (1), taking (1), took (16), took...along (1), took...aside (2), took along (3).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 3880: παραλαμβάνω

παραλαμβάνω; future παραλήψομαι, in L T Tr WH παραλήμψομαι (John 14:3; see Mu); 2 aorist παρέλαβον, 3 person plural παρελάβοσαν (2 Thessalonians 3:6 G T L marginal reading Tr marginal reading WH marginal reading; cf. δολιόω (yet see WH's Appendix, p. 165)); passive, present παραλαμβάνομαι; 1 future παραληφθήσομαι, in L T Tr WH παραλημφθήσομαι (see Mu; Luke 17:34-36); from Herodotus down; the Sept. for ηϛη;

1. **to take to (cf. παρά, IV. 1), to take with oneself, to join to oneself: τινά, an associate, a companion, Matthew 17:1; Matthew 26:37; Mark 4:36; Mark 5:40; Mark 9:2; Mark 10:32; Luke 9:10, 28; Luke 11:26; Luke 18:31; Acts 15:39; in the passive, Matthew 24:40, 41; Luke 17:34-36;**

Did you catch that!

“To take to, to take with oneself, to join to oneself, an associate, a companion!”

This is a bombshell. This alone allows for only one meaning to “one taken, one left”. However, it gets even more amazing when you examine the additional forms of the primary meaning for “taken”:

to take with one in order to carry away, Matthew 2:13f, 20f; τινά μεθ’ ἑαυτοῦ, Matthew 12:45; Matthew 18:16; Mark 14:33;

παραλαμβάνειν γυναῖκα, to take one’s betrothed to his home, Matthew 1:20, 24;

τινα followed by εἰς *with an accusative of place, to take (and bring, cf. Winer's Grammar, § 66, 2 d.) one with one into a place, Matthew 4:5, 8; Matthew 27:27;*

τινα κατ' ἰδίαν, *Matthew 20:17;* middle with πρὸς ἑμαυτόν, *to my companionship, where I myself dwell, John 14:3.*

The participle is prefixed to other active verbs to describe the action more in detail, *Acts 16:33; Acts 21:24, 26, 32* (here LWH marginal reading λαβών)

In both Luke 17 and Matthew 24, Jesus did not say that the wicked would be taken and destroyed. He actually tells the disciples the **HE Himself would return and take the righteous BEFORE the wrath begins.**

This is exactly what is seen in Noah and Lot – with one notable exception. **It is the Lord HIMSELF that comes for the righteous!** This is why the disciples ask “where”? Where exactly would the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be taking the righteous? It is in Luke 17 that Jesus reveals a mystery by not answering where, but revealing the condition whereby you will get left behind! It was not completely clear to the disciples yet, but it soon would be.

Not only this, but the Lord reveals He will be coming for His Bride! This is tremendous. The Jews understood the connection between the Bride and Bridegroom, as Israel is the Bride of God the Father. Yet, in the very first conversation Jesus has on His soon return He reveals that He will be coming for His Bride in the Days of Lot and Noah. He reveals that He will be sweeping His Away before the wrath falls on the wicked. This is why the disciples asked Jesus of His coming here in Matthew 24. They already had the foundation for the conversation, and they received it back in Luke 17.

By now, it should be fairly obvious what the context was for the parables that Jesus spoke in Matthew 24 and 25.

However, the study of the word “taken” reveals something even more amazing! I know I keep saying this, but it is the only way to truly describe the nature of what the Lord has revealed. It is where the conversation shifts from verse 36 forward that really brings hope to the overcomer!

Now, with all of this said, there have been many that have scratched their heads at what Jesus reveals from verse 36 forward. As I said earlier, the unknown and sudden nature of the events found after verse 35 do not match the timed and specific nature of events in the first 34 verses. There has been every conceivable attempt to justify that 24:35 through 25:30 must somehow be tied to the Second Coming. I have seen everything from “we won’t know the minute of the Second Coming” (actually, yes we will know the exact minute of the Second Coming once the tribulation actually begins – this is covered in detail on the “Time, Times, and a Dividing of Times” page), to **“the Lord declared that unless the days were shortened no flesh would be saved – so it won’t be an actual 1,260 days”**.

Never mind that such a statement actually declares God a liar. It never occurs to them that there are other ways that the days can be shortened and scripture remain completely accurate. For the record, the hours of the days are not shortened, nor will the 1,260 days be shortened. Just as it is with declaring the 70th week as Daniel as less than a full week, so it is with the 1,260 days. **1,260 days means exactly what the Lord said - 1,260 days.** The Hebrew word for "days" is *yom*. Literally, that means a 24 hour day. Daniel declares 1,260 of these periods. We cover this as well in the section on the timing of the tribulation.

There is another proof that the disciples asked regarding the rapture, and that Jesus did indeed center the conversation on this topic. As most of you already know, the Bible defines itself. The same is the case here. We know the the primary conversation in

Matthew 24 and 25 revolves around the rapture, as Luke 17 defines the conversation and sets the meaning of the coming of the kingdom of God.

It is at the very heart of where we are "taken", why we are "taken" - and what you are about to see will reveal the full weight of the mystery that Jesus was alluding to the first time He spoke of "vultures" in Luke 17, rather than outright answer the question the disciples were asking.

Luke 17:20 KJV - And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

What we see here is a singular question from the Pharisees.

"When is the Kingdom of God coming?"

It is the same question the disciples are asking in Matthew 24:3 when they ask for the sign of the Lord's return! Luke 17 is where the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ sets the definition and reveals something critical:

The coming of the Kingdom of God is defined by God's standards - not mans.

Pre-tribulation rapture critics look at Matthew 24 and declare that it is calling the Second Coming as the coming of the Kingdom. However, that is man's reasoning.

It fails to account for the fact that the coming of the kingdom is a seven day process where the kingdom of priests are called to the Great Assembly, commissioned into service, set to their ranks and responsibilities (ever wonder why the Judgment Seat of Christ occurs in Heaven, before the 1,000 year reign of Christ - as opposed to after when the saints that live during those 1,000 years can join in?) This is a seven day process, and it is a continuous one.

Remember, the tribulation may be seven years on earth, but before the throne of God it is seven days, with eight days being the total time in heaven. The Second Coming detailed in Matthew 24:30 is not the start of the Kingdom. As it is one earth, so is it in heaven. As Paul later reveals, the things on earth are the copies of the real things in heaven. In other words, what was a seven day process on earth is a seven day process in heaven. This also reveals a key to the timing to the tribulation. Events that have at least a partial fulfillment of earth - such as the rapture and Second Coming - count as a single day in the fulfillment of the Ten Days of Awe. However, when those events shift to a complete heavenly event they stay at one day intervals.

The rapture is one day. The Second Coming is one day. This leaves eight days to be completed to fulfill the Ten Days of Awe. These eight days will be eight actual days. Yet, they will be eight days in heaven as this is where these fulfillments actually transpire. They will be eight years on earth however.

All of the aspects of the Law of Moses that have appointed days see this same process. The seven days of the Jewish wedding are seven actual days in heaven, but seven years on earth. The seven days (Sabbath to Sabbath) of the course of the priests are seven days in heaven, yet seven years on earth. The concealing of the High Priest before Atonement and the initiation of the order of the priests likewise require the same timing.

The Second Coming is the completion of the commissioning process - a process that began with the rapture eight years earlier. It is the event that follows the sealing of the books. It is the announcement that everything is set, the government of Christ has been called and prepared - and that there is no more reprieve. In other words, the eight days that have passed since the rapture are done and everything is prepared. **The Kingdom did not come at Matthew 24:30 - it came at Luke 17. It was simply completed and finished at Matthew 24:30!**

This is very similar to the process that a new employee goes through for a new job. The employee applied for the job. After the interview process, they were offered the job. So, on the first day they head to work. Their first day does not find them in the thick of production - it finds them in orientation and training. It is only after the training process is complete that they are ready to be deployed to the lines to serve. Yet, they were called into the service of the company at the very start. They still went to work that first day, even though they were not yet ready to do the job.

It is the same as the "8th day" principle we talk about elsewhere. The 8th day is the first day of the new week. Yet, the new week had to have the start of the process in the week prior. Christ arose on First Fruits, yet the process started four days earlier. The conquest of sin involved the ENTIRE process, not just the completion at the end. SO it is with the coming of the Kingdom. Matthew 24:30 is the end result of the seven day process in heaven. It is the **ENTIRE** process that is the coming of the Kingdom.

If one piece of this process is missing - there IS NO COMING KINGDOM!

Let's bring this full circle, and tie all of this together with "taken" and all of its implications. What you are about to see will absolutely blow your mind!

Exodus 19:5-6 ESV - Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

2 Peter 2:9 ESV - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Revelation 1:6 ESV - John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 11:15 ESV - Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

Most of you that are reading this are familiar, or have at least heard the Greek word "ekklésia". To the common conversation it is the Greek word for "church". Many of you know that it is a feminine word, and it speaks to the attribute of the church as the Bride of Christ.

When translating the Bible into another language, such as English, you go to the transcripts containing the original language that the Bible was written in. That would be Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament, and Greek for the New Testament. You would then take the word or idea (in the case of much of the Hebrew translation) and you look to find an equivalent word in the English - or whatever language you are translating the Bible into.

In the case of the word "ekklésia", the translators used the word "church" in the English.

Let me ask you a question. Do you watch any historical documentaries? Do you spend any time studying ancient cultures, especially cultures that are part of the Biblical landscape? Personally, I am fascinated with the history of the Roman Empire. However, I do enjoy studying the other cultures as well. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon,

Persia, Greece - it's all fair game for me. I am also a fan of the exploits of these cultures in war, conquest, government, society, laws and engineering.

I once had an abridged copy of Gibbon as "light" reading material!

Here is why I asked the question in the first place. In my studies, whether from books, websites and documentaries, I have noticed something curious. I was thinking about this today in fact. I don't recall ever hearing about the function of the church in ancient Greece.

"Well of course you haven't - the church did not exist yet. It did not exist until Christ came".

This is true. However, that is not what I was talking about. Here is what I mean. The original Greek uses the word "ekklésia" where we now have the word church. The translators of the Bible clearly saw the link and determined that church was the proper translation for "ekklésia". Yet, never once have I heard any mention of the word "church" - the English for "ekklésia", a word that obviously existed in the days of ancient Greece, as it was there for use in the writing of the Bible.

Here is why this matters. So much of our modern culture derives its roots from ancient Greece and Rome. Everything from trade unions and medical Doctors to royal titles and ranks (the ranks of Duke, Knight and Count all originated with the Imperial Roman Army and Roman Government). So many of the western names for various groups, organizations, bodies of assembly, legal procedure, artistic endeavors, gatherings, purposes and unions have active Greek and Latin equivalents. It is common to hear modern terms used in "new and exotic ways" when it comes to describing aspects of life in these ancient cultures.

Yet, I have never heard the modern word "church" used in such a fashion. "Church" has but a single use in the ancient world - the description of the Body of Christ after it was born. Again, the problem is that the original Greek uses a word that already existed.

So, this tells us that "ekklésia" must have been a rarely used word that had no real equivalent, right?

No, it does not. It's not that we have never heard the modern translation of "ekklésia" used in the study of ancient Greece. It's that we have, and simply never realized it. How is that possible? Simple - "ekklésia" did not mean what we attribute it to now.

It had a far different meaning - one that denotes the true nature of what the Body of Christ actually is, and what it's prophetic purpose is as well. When the ancient Christians used "ekklésia" to describe the church, they were revealing an understanding that remained lost for nearly 1,850 years. Remember, "ekklésia" existed as a word and understanding LONG before the birth of Jesus Christ. It was something that the everyday Greek, Jew and Roman would have understood - as all three lived under Greek law, even after the death of Alexander and the rise of Rome.

Here is the common understanding that we hold today:

Strong's Concordance:

ekklésia: an assembly, a (religious) congregation

Original Word: ἐκκλησία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: ekklésia

Phonetic Spelling: (ek-klay-see'-ah)

Short Definition: an assembly, congregation, church

Definition: an assembly, congregation, church; the Church, the whole body of Christian believers.

HELPS Word-studies:

1577 *ekklēsia* (from 1537 /*ek*, "out from and to" and 2564 /*kalēō*, "to call") – properly, people *called out from* the world and to God, the *outcome* being the *Church* (the mystical *body of Christ*) – i.e. the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls *out* from the world and *into* His eternal kingdom.

[The *English* word "*church*" comes from the Greek word *kyriakos*, "belonging to the Lord" (*kyrios*). 1577 /*ekklēsia* ("church") is the root of the terms "ecclesiology" and "ecclesiastical."]

Truly, we are the "called out" ones as the Body of Christ. However, there is a word that we need to key up on in the definition above. It is the word "assembly". Here is why:

Thayer's Greek Lexicon:

STRONGS NT 1577: ἐκκλησία

ἐκκλησία, ἐκκλησιας, ἡ (from ἐκκλητος called out or forth, and this from ἐκκαλέω); **properly, a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly; so used**

1. among the Greeks from Thucydides (cf. Herodotus 3, 142) down, an assembly of the people convened at the public place of council for the purpose of deliberating: Acts 19:39.

2. in the Sept. often equivalent to לְקָהָל, the assembly of the Israelites, Judges 21:8; 1 Chronicles 29:1, etc., especially when gathered for sacred purposes, Deuteronomy 31:30 (Deuteronomy 32:1); Joshua 8:35 (Joshua 9:8), etc.; in the N. T. thus in Acts 7:38; Hebrews 2:12.

3. any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance or tumultuously: Acts 19:32, 41.

Did you catch that?

"among the Greeks from Thucydides (cf. Herodotus 3, 142) down, an assembly of the people convened at the public place of council for the purpose of deliberating: Acts 19:39."

"in the Sept. often equivalent to לְקָהָל, the assembly of the Israelites, Judges 21:8; 1 Chronicles 29:1, etc., especially when gathered for sacred purposes, Deuteronomy 31:30 (Deuteronomy 32:1); Joshua 8:35 (Joshua 9:8), etc.; in the N. T. thus in Acts 7:38; Hebrews 2:12."

Even more so, how about this:

properly, a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly; so used

This will doubtless make a bit more sense :

Hebrews 12:22-24 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,

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,

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

"Ekklesia" was much more than a collection of religious worshipers, or a body of organized religious practice. It was the convening of a full council of all the citizens for the express purpose of deliberating on important legal matters. A further study of the ancient ekklesia, or commission of the citizens shows that they held the full governmental authority to legislate matters of the state. It was not simply the gathering of the citizens for the purpose of voting in an election. They had the weight and authority to set the course of the state.

In other words, the modern equivalent of the ekklesia is not the church as we know it:

It would be a full Constitutional Convention of the United States!

Some of you already see where this is headed.

The single most solemn power that the ekklesia held in Greek governance was the authority to overthrow the current government any time it was convened! It had the power to install a new government any time the old government grew corrupt!

Remember, it was Paul that established the connection of the Body of Christ to the Great Assembly in Israel - also the supreme legislative and judicial authority in the land,

as well as the revealing that the Great Assembly on earth was the copy of the Real Great Assembly in Heaven.

It was John the Revelator that completed the picture of the fulfillment of the Great Assembly when he penned chapters two through six in the Book of Revelation. For those that do not already know this, chapters two and three reveal the commissioning process of the new order of the priests in the Temple. All of the rewards for the overcomers are the actual requirements for being initiated into the Kingdom of Priests, as well as the order in which they are given. This initiation process required seven days to complete at the Temple. Everything seen in chapters two and three can only be given in heaven, and they are given only to overcomers - and only to those initiated into the Kingdom of Priests.

They are required to be given before the start of the process in chapters four and five - the literal fulfillment of the convening of the actual Great Assembly. Before the first seal is ever broken, there must be a course of priests on duty in the heavenly Temple (the entire process that plays out in heaven is the fulfillment of the daily Temple services - one in the morning (first 42 months of the tribulation), one in the evening (last 42 months of the tribulation)). Not only that, but the Great Assembly must be called to order first. Chapter six shows us the actual first moments of the Great Assembly - is it also occurred on earth! The High Priest handing the scroll to the King, who alone was worthy to open it - all copies of the actual fulfillment that will soon occur in heaven.

The Great Assembly was convened every seven years, and will have to be convened twice in the end times to complete the fulfillment. The first time it is convened before the Temple in Heaven before the start of the tribulation. The second time it is convened before the Temple in earth after the tribulation - in the Valley of Decision at the Judgment of Nations. Here is the kicker - in order to fulfill the appointed days in the Law of Moses, there must be a separation of - you guessed it - seven years!

One more thing about the Great Assembly - it is not just the Kingdom of Priests that requires every man, woman and child that overcomes to be called. The Great Assembly was the only assembly that required every last man, woman and child to be called - as opposed to every other assembly which called only the men over a certain age! Not only that, but the Great Assembly was the only assembly that the King was involved in. It was the King Himself that - wait for it - blew two gold trumpets to call the congregation. The first trumpet "waked the dead", and the last trumpet called the entire congregation to the Holy Temple!

Let's bring this full circle. Why then would we see the initiation of the Kingdom of Priests in chapters two and three, the start of the Great Assembly in chapters four and five - both from a group of believers called *ekklésia* on earth?

Remember what we discussed a moment ago:

"The single most solemn power that the *ekklésia* held in Greek governance was the authority to overthrow the current government any time it was convened! It had the power to install a new government any time the old government grew corrupt!"

Let's put it together with scripture:

Exodus 19:5-6 ESV - Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

2 Peter 2:9 ESV - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Revelation 1:6 ESV - John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 11:15 ESV - Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

As Paul Harvey would say - "Now you know the rest of the story!"

Now, let's look again at the three scriptures from that we spoke of earlier:

Luke 21:7 KJV - And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

Mark 13:4 KJV - Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

Matthew 24:3 KJV - And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

We spoke of how Matthew 24:3 gives the order of the events to come as well. When we look at the scriptures from Mark and Luke, we see this confirmed. Both of those

scriptures ask the exact same question - **what will be the start of these events, and how will we know that they are here?**

It is Matthew 24:3 that gives the key:

The return of the Lord is the event, and when it comes you will know that the end is here.

Now, here is another interesting piece of evidence, coming from the Old Testament also. If you start at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and work “backwards” through to chapter one, verse one – “In the beginning. . .” you can see the end times, tribulation, 1,000 year reign of Christ, new heaven and new earth and the pre-tribulation rapture. You can literally chart the end times from the attack on September 11th, 2001 through the invasion of Iraq, the rebuilding of the soon to rise Babylonian Empire, the rise of the waters, massive earthquakes, the days of Noah, the pre-tribulation rapture with Enoch, the seven year tribulation, the mark of the beast and death, the return of Christ to rule the earth and finally the new heavens and the new earth. We go into detail on reversing through Genesis - the reverse Genesis timeline - in the page that discusses how much time is left.

With all of these examples the ancient Israelites would not have understood the grand picture they present, only that they were ordered of God for reasons unknown to them. The prophets would have spoken the scriptures but not understood the greater context. It is only in the New Testament the rapture is revealed to the point that we can discuss it as a doctrine in its own right. The Old Testament saints could discuss the scriptures, but would have done so absent the same understanding.

Now, in the four Gospels Christ provides the second piece of these mysteries of God – the context. That is what we see in Matthew chapter 24 concerning the end times and the rapture. Specifically, Matthew 24 is both context and key for several prophetic

mysteries. It is the key to unlocking the Book of Daniel, specifically in regards to the Abomination of Desolation, the timing of “Jacob’s trouble” and the judgments that befall Israel when the tribulation comes., as well as the Old Testament pictures of the return of the Lord.

This is the reason why the Disciples never question the Lord on the differences between the rapture and the Second Coming in Matthew 24 and 25. He was providing the key to scriptures concerning Israel and the Old Testament that they all knew yet held questions on. They were receiving a direct revelation from God on mysteries that they had grown up studying. He started to give this revelation in Luke 17, and continued to open up the mystery.

Matthew 24 and 25 was the context for the rapture also. As we discussed earlier, the context is the first “tool” that allows us to learn and apply previously hidden pictures. When Christ begins to address the rapture in verse 36 (after Luke 17) he is providing additional context to understand pictures that are throughout the Old Testament – yet never made sense. It would not be until the church itself had come, that the final piece of the puzzle – the key – would be given by Christ to the Apostle Paul after his conversion, at Mt. Sinai of all places!

The context of the rapture given in Matthew 24 is evident in the scriptures that follow verse 36. We see verses 37 – 39 as a perfect example of the context that Jesus is providing:

But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

We touched on this quite a bit in the previous discussions on faith. Nowhere in the scriptures are the days of the tribulation ever likened to days where mankind is moving along, concerned only with the cares of normal life. In the tribulation we are not eating, drinking and merrymaking. In the tribulation we are not marrying and giving in marriage – at least not as a condition of society.

No – in the tribulation people are being annihilated, either through judgments from God or for the witness of Christ. However, the single biggest clue is something that Jesus would specifically address with John the Revelator in the second and third chapters of Revelation when he addresses the church – the overcomer and specifically faith. That is, we can only overcome if we have faith in the Lord that he shall deliver us from the judgments to come.

This is a point we see driven home again in Luke 17:26-27:

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In these scriptures we get the added bonus of the days of Lot as well – who also had the faith to trust the Lord when faith was all that you could have. We see the confirmation of what the Lord was saying and the faith required in other scriptures as

well. Let's take a look at faith in the scriptures, starting with the scripture we covered earlier:

Hebrews 11:1-7 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Let us stop and examine this verse for just a moment.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

There is something here that few notice or think about. **The lower case “he” in “he condemned the world” is not God - it's Noah. This is another quiet reference to what happens with the rapture.**

In verse 7, we have the Greek rendering for "he condemned" as **κατέκρινεν**, which adds "he" (lowercase) to **κατακρίνω**:

Strong's Concordance

katakrinó: to give judgment against

Original Word: κατακρίνω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: katakrinó

Phonetic Spelling: (kat-ak-ree'-no)

Short Definition: I condemn

Definition: I condemn, judge worthy of punishment.

Try this – **“by which Noah condemned the world when he got on the boat and left.”**

That is the secret of the verse. Just as the world was condemned when Noah left, it will be condemned by our leaving. It is a prophetic reference in a chapter discussing the faith required to secure that reference. It is another example of the mysteries of God concealed in the Old Testament, yet revealed in the New Testament.

Here is the complete scripture, with the ending revealing the proof of Noah as the one in which "he" refers to:

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

It all ties back to the removing of the great restrainer 2 Thessalonians as well.

This is also a double reference. It refers to both the rapture at the beginning of the tribulation and the rapture of the 144,000 Jews at the middle of the tribulation. With the first removal of the restrainer the tribulation comes (remember, the 144,000 Jews are not sealed as believers just yet). With the final removal the true Antichrist comes.

With the first removal the Antichrist is revealed with the signing of the treaty with Israel. With the second removal, the Antichrist is revealed in his final terrifying form at the Abomination of Desolation.

We cover in great detail the meaning of the revealing in 2 Thessalonians, and how this actually speaks to the seven year treaty with Israel, and not the Abomination of Desolation in the page on additional scriptural evidences of the pre-tribulation rapture and the rapture bombshell in 2 Thessalonians.

Once we go there is nothing left to hold back the end times and the tribulation. Those that remain will have to repent and find Christ again, as they have given up their first love. The 144,000 Jews are the only reason that the Holy Spirit is still here. Those that turn to Christ in the first 42 months simply "benefit" from their presence and receives the Holy Spirit because of them.

Indeed, the entire 11th chapter is riddled with the same exact phrase – “by faith”. The very last verse – verse 11:40 – is an entire lesson on the rapture itself:

"God having provided some better thing for us, *that they without us should not be made perfect.*"

Paul wasn't speaking of long dead saints when he said "without us". He was talking about the living saints of Christ. In other words, the Old Testament saints such as Noah, Abraham and Daniel will not be perfect until they are joined by those that have come to know Christ.

At this point we must ask ourselves a question. What would have happened if any one of these had not the faith required to overcome?

What if Noah had not built the ark? Where would we be if he did not have faith to believe though everyone scoffed at him?

Likewise, we see faith confirmed in 2 Peter 2:4-7 - ***For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;***

And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.

And likewise in 2 Peter 2:3-7 - ***Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of***

His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

It should be noted that "promise" here is **ἐπαγγελία**:

Strong's Concordance

epaggelia: a summons, a promise

Original Word: ἐπαγγελία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: epaggelia

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-ang-el-ee'-ah)

Short Definition: a promise

Definition: a promise.

HELPS Word-studies

1860 *epaggelía* (a feminine noun comprised of 1909 *epí*, "appropriately on" and *aggellō*, "announce") – a *promise* which literally "announces what is fitting" (apt, appropriate).

1860/epaggelia ("an appropriate *promise*") is nearly always used of God's promises in the NT – and hence *guaranteed by His own eternal Law (Being)*.

[In the NT (and throughout antiquity), 1860 (*epaggelia*) is a *legal term* that refers to an *officially sanctioned* promise. "Almost every NT use of the word *promise* (*epaggelia*) points back to the OT" (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Back Toward the Future, Hints for Interpreting Bible Prophecy*, 102).]

This tells us that those who scoff aren't just denying the rapture, or even the promise of the rapture. They are literally spitting in the face of Jesus Christ Himself, by denying the very existence of **a *legal term* that refers to an *officially sanctioned* promise.**

Not only that, but this officially sanctioned promise reveals the truth of the origins of this promise:

"Almost every NT use of the word *promise* (*epaggelia*) points back to the OT", and "is nearly always used of *God's promises* in the NT – and hence *guaranteed by His own eternal Law (Being)*."

What a statement that Peter made! That is the very heart of what the rapture is. It never has been about the Lord simply returning for the saints. It is the fulfillment of the most powerful and abiding promise that Christ makes outside of salvation itself. It is not simply a doctrinal difference that has no real impact.

It is quite literally proof that Jesus Christ IS God!

That is why nearly EVERY book in the New Testament features the rapture as a primary or secondary subject. It is either a direct subject, or a prophetic mystery in the level of mysteries of the scriptures.

By now you get the point. There is no faith in Christ unless there is full faith in Christ. If you believe in the salvation of Christ, yet possess no faith in His power as God then there can be no salvation. Either Christ is God or he is not. Either He has the power to keep His promises or He does not. It cannot be both. You cannot say “Jesus Christ can save me from death, hell and the grave – yet He cannot keep the promise of his coming”. Likewise, if a risen Christ claims the power to save yet you should not believe then you shall not be saved anyway.

Now, the declaration of the days of Noah and Lot are likewise followed by examples that would also provide the context needed to understand the rapture when it is fully revealed to Paul. We notice that examples are given of those that are taken and those that are left. We are told of two men in the field and two women grinding at the mill. Jesus then follows these examples with warnings about those that do not watch for the coming of the Lord and fall into the cares of this life. Again, the descriptions given in 45-51 are not examples of those that find themselves in the tribulation and surrounded by destruction. They are examples of those in the cares of normal life yet again. It goes without saying, though I will say it regardless. By now, we have covered the truth of "one taken, one left" to the point that there simply is no doubt as to what they mean.

It should be noted that verse 51 is a double reference to both hell and the tribulation. This is covered in the section detailing the resurrections, martyrdom and judgments of the tribulation as well as the Final Warning. It is the most dire warning offered to those that should reject the promise of the coming of the Lord.

I have often wondered if those that deny the pre-tribulation rapture on the basis of Matthew 24 have the entire book of Matthew or if their Bibles have been ripped apart and pages stolen. It seems that rapture critics never make it to Matthew chapter 25.

Chapter 25 is irrefutable proof of the pre-tribulation rapture. There is a reason why no conversation with the rapture critic ever goes into chapter 25 – no position other than a pre-tribulation rapture can be sustained when it is understood.

Let's put one final nail in the coffin, and close the book on Luke 17, and the notion that "one taken, one left" means that the wicked are taken and the righteous are left. It is hardly even debatable at this point. Yet, there is always room for one more proof.

Luke 17:26-33 KJV - And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

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

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Remember Lot's wife.

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

This block of scripture alone should have been enough for those that are convinced that the wicked are the ones that are taken. On its face value as we see it written, it makes several undeniable points that cannot be ignored. Likewise, it is de facto proof of something else the scriptures reveal:

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 KJV - And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

It is no accident that Paul gives us these scriptures in the same conversation where he addresses attempts to deny and destroy the doctrine of the pre-trib rapture. It reveals a hard truth about the soon return of the Lord.

Those that reject the coming of Christ are blinded by the Lord. They have turned from the promise of the soon return of the Lord because they follow after their own flesh. In other words, they reject the rapture because they are carnal, and do not wish to see the return of the Lord! This evidenced even further by the very parables in Matthew 24 and 25.

Let's look at this scripture from above:

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

This can be confusing if you read it a little too quickly. When the Lord speaks of those that seek to save their own life, He is speaking something profound. First, it means those that refuse to give up their old lives. Whether it is family, job, wealth, etc - this speaks to this that cannot let the past go.

We need to realize what has happened here. The Lord speaks this with regards to Lot's wife. First off, what needs understood is that it was not just her old life that she looked back on. It was family. We see from the story of Lot that not all of his family took serious his warnings about the judgment of God. This reveals a critical point for all of us. While we all desire that our families should find the Lord, we need to remember that salvation is a personal issue. In the final analysis there comes a point where we must let those closest to us go, and make the choice for the Lord:

Even if it means to do so alone.

That said, there is a profound truth here. It is not just giving up our old life. Think of what the Bible is truly saying when it says "whoever will save his own life". We have a choice. We can choose our life, or we can choose the life of Christ. When we do that, we gain the second point of this scripture.

Whoever loses their life shall save it.

Ironic, isn't it? We go through so much of our life on this earth trying to build something. Yet, it is only when we stop and surrender that life to the Lord that we finally preserve our life and it becomes something real.

There is yet another truth here. Remember, all scripture has four levels of interpretation. There is the obvious interpretation of the plain reading. There is the

spiritual interpretation which we have just covered. Then there is the prophetic layer, or the level of mysteries. Let's look again at this scripture:

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

This is a prophetic scripture, and the Lord is revealing a critical piece to the prophetic puzzle. In the days just before the rapture, all of us will have a simple choice to make. We can trust in the Lord and His promises, turning our full attention to the task at hand. We can seek first the Kingdom of God and do those things He has appointed to us to do - and do so without worry or concern for the things to come.

Or, we can lean to our own understanding and seek our own means to save our life and stave off the soon coming times of trouble.

One choice will get us the promised return of the Lord.

The other will ensure our destruction.

I have mentioned "The Devil's Body Count" already. In that project is a grave warning in the Book of Hebrews that confirms the terrible truth of what will come to those that claim Christ, yet lack the faith in His power as God. What's more, there is a reason why Lot's wife is the warning that Christ gives in the conversations where He reveals the basis for the rapture. Stated differently - if you fall into the same trap as Lot's wife - if you turn back to your old understanding and to your old devices to save your own neck. . .

You will be destroyed!

Why do you think the Lord uttered the following words?

In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

Typically, we jump to the same general conclusion regarding this scripture. The Lord is saying to drop everything and run as fast as we can. He is saying that "stuff" will weigh us down and slow our retreat. However, there is one small problem:

That is not at all what the Lord is saying.

Remember, the coming wrath of God is just that - the wrath of God. There is no escape for those that must remain to endure it. With the common understanding that most fall into, it leaves a terrible assumption that will cost many their eternity. It says that we can actually escape - and by our hands no less!

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

These words speak something critical - the person is trying to save their own life by their OWN hands, and their OWN understanding.

There is nothing further from the truth.

So, what then is the Lord actually saying? It goes back to Lot's wife, and the prophetic warning that the Lord issued.

let him not come down to take it away

let him likewise not return back.

Rifles. Ammunition. Gold. Silver. Emergency food. Emergency medicine. Stored gasoline. There is a reason why the Lord addresses going back for your "stuff" when you see the destruction coming. The Lord is not talking about your TV here. He is not talking about your baseball card collection, prized though it may be.

He is talking about those things that are worth risking your very life for. Remember, the premise here is that the Day of the Lord has now come. He is talking about a last minute choice, when minutes are all that is left. Will you fall away into your own understanding, and seek salvation by your own hands?

Will you be broken by a lack of faith and fear at the very last moment? Will you fall away from faith in the power of the Lord to save, and turn to your own efforts and understanding to save yourself?

Or will you realize that the only chance any of us have is to turn to the Lord and trust completely in Him? In other words, the Lord is saying that only those that are willing to stake their life on Christ in the days of decision just before His return are the only ones that are worthy to escape the things that must soon come to pass.

There is a saying that sounds so good to the flesh, but the way thereof is death:

"I would rather be prepared for the tribulation and surprised by the rapture, then prepare for the rapture and be surprised by the tribulation."

That is exactly how Satan works. It is the old adage that everybody attributes to the Bible - yet is not found ANYWHERE within it's pages:

"God helps those that help themselves".

Ben Franklin will be surprised to find out he has been promoted!

For the record, nothing shows trust in Jesus more than saying **"I trust the Lord, but just in case He can't deliver I will have a plan B. If He can't get the job done then I will."**

Now, the following words that Jesus speaks in Matthew 25 should be making a great deal of sense:

Matthew 25:6-13 KJV - And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

"But wait - this talks about not being filled with the Holy Spirit, and coming up short in your relationship with Christ!"

Exactly. Now you are getting the point. Now you are making the connection. I have said it before and I will say it again. . .

(Take a minute, and put two and two together)

Those that think that the rapture is nothing more than a minor event, and that it does not matter what you believe - those are the believers that will be locked out.

Is it really that hard to understand? Think about what the Bible says about the rapture. The dead in Christ are raised from the dead, rebuilt to perfection and taken to heaven.

Then those that are alive and remain are literally taken alive into heaven, also rebuilt to perfection in the process.

Let me ask you this - how exactly is such an event ANYTHING other than the most pivotal, world changing moment in human history after the death and resurrection of Christ? How is it that so many that claim to have a relationship with the risen Savior think so little of His promise to do the exact same thing for them. . .

And literally raise them from the dead? What's more , to keep the promise that not every human being will actually have to physically die?

How is it conceivable that anybody can see this as nothing more than a minor event before the much more prominent tribulation? It absolutely staggers the mind when you think about it.

To them, the tribulation is actually more than this promise of the Lord!

Now, let's glean truth from the plain reading of the scripture. and finish off the notion that it is the wicked that are taken. Let's look at several statements contain in the conversation in Luke 17:

until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Given that this is the subject of the entire conversation where "one taken, one left" is spoken - how exactly did not not enter the minds of those that claim the wicked are taken that these two points make that a literal impossibility? **What's more, how is it that when these folks keep going back to Luke 17 to make their point that they never notice that the same words in Matthew 24 actually spell out the exact opposite of what they want to believe?**

Literally, these two points set a singular premise in the plain reading of the scripture - even without further study or looking at the original Greek.

Lot is taken from the city. Those that are left are destroyed.

Noah is taken from the earth. Those that are left are destroyed.

Given that the Days of Lot and Noah ARE the standard set by the Lord just prior to His return, it removes ANY possibility that there are any other conflict pictures with which we can look to.

Still think that "one taken, one left" means the wicked are removed?

Remember, the mystery that the Lord spoke in Luke 17:37 finds it's full revealing in Matthew 24:24-28:

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

If it is not completely clear by this time, then you are truly in danger of being cast into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

That should put Luke chapter 17 to rest.

Moving forward, for those that are familiar with the Jewish origins of our faith there can be few things that bring greater joy (and sense of dread when they think of those believers that fail) than chapter 25. Likewise, those with a solid command of the symbolism in the Bible. When terms such as oil, lamps, bridegroom, bride, virgins and marriage feast are utilized there can be no mistaking the meaning.

Likewise, as the chapter progresses we see phrases such as “and the door was shut”, “watch therefore, for you know not the day nor the hour”, “like a man going on a journey”, “enter into the joy of your master”, “you wicked and slothful servant” and the

ever revealing “cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”.

It should be noted that Matthew chapter 25 also questions the validity of those that hold the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” in the most frightening terms imaginable. We will detail in a later page that those who deny the pre-trib rapture are actually in danger of perishing - and this can be proven in Hebrews chapter 10.

Every example offered in verses 1 through 30 are rooted in the Old Testament prophecies concerning the promise of the coming of the Messiah. Not just the redemptive work upon the cross, but prophecies that cannot be completely understood without the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture. The Book of Psalms (various chapters), the Song of Solomon, Joel 2:12-32 (complete picture of the tribulation from the rapture to the Second Coming), the vision of Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah chapter 3 (from 3:1 through to 6:8 are also a picture of the tribulation from the rapture to the fall of Babylon the Great) and Malachi 3:13-18 are just some of the Old Testament scriptures referenced in Matthew chapter 25 requiring an understanding of the pre-tribulation rapture.

As Christ draws the conversation in Matthew to a close He transitions to the Judgment of Nations and provides both key and context – key to the Jews regarding scriptures on the Day of the Lord such as those spoken by Enoch – and to context for the believer regarding the gleaning and a stark warning:

Deny me in the tribulation and I shall deny you.

Again, this references back to Revelation 16:15 as we discussed in detail earlier. If you have ever wondered what Jesus was trying to get across in this verse you have but to read Matthew 25:34-46. The meaning here is quite unmistakable.

There is one last thing that we must examine in our study. Who was Matthew 24 and 25 (Mark 13 and Luke 21 also) addressed to? In other words, who was Christ addressing in this conversation? Those that fight against the pre-trib rapture hold that it addresses everybody, and all believers. Those that hold pre-trib view say that it was written and addressed to Israel. Rather, it is more accurate to describe their position in these terms:

It was spoken by a Jew, to Jews, addressing Jewish things.

Who is right in this? Does Matthew 24 address everybody, or just the Jews? The answer is simple and straightforward. It addresses both. That said, it is primarily a case of "a Jew, addressing Jews, speaking on Jewish things".

"Now wait a minute - you have spent an entire article showing us how this affects believers. You even address where Jesus says "in my name". You have proven that it is simply not possible that this was a case of a Jew simply speaking to the Jews. Your own words bear out that this is not correct!"

So many believers out there love to tout "the meat of the word", yet when you really examine the content of what they believe, it becomes clear that they never truly moved past the milk stage. In fact, they have been on milk so long that it has spoiled, curdled, become cottage cheese - and the more solid consistency has fooled them into thinking that they have meat.

Of course they don't have meat. They simply have spoiled milk masquerading as solid food! Here is what I mean.

False understanding of the scripture always resides in one level of interpretation of the scriptures - the literal or "written" level. In this level we have the literal written words studied as written. This is the level where we all start, and where anybody can read

anything they want. It is also the only level where no real revelation from the Lord comes by itself. This is important to understand.

Any believer that thinks they have a massive revelation from the Lord on the plain text of the scripture ALONE is in false doctrine. All revelation in the first level comes ONLY AFTER revelation in the other three levels - the spiritual layers and the prophetic layer, or the level of mysteries. Revelation in the first level is always given to confirm the greater mystery that God has revealed!

Here is where this comes into effect in Matthew 24 and 25.

When you read through the scriptures, it clearly states in the plain text that there will be persecution of those in Christ, "for my name's sake". Clearly this refers to those that have the salvation of Christ during those days. On the first level of interpretation, or the plain text level, it is obvious that this occurs. Yet, those that seek only their own understanding, and answers to justify their flesh will stop there. "See, this is proof that Jesus is addressing all of us! Matthew 24 cannot be talking about a pre-trib rapture".

Ultimately, that is why this is critical to understand. Without the second, third and fourth levels of interpretation it becomes impossible to see the big picture, and thus, you become deceived. That is why all false doctrine is found in the first level of interpretation alone. Once the Lord opens your eyes to the second and third levels, you can never go back to the first level alone.

Now, I don't want to give the impression that believers are not being addressed in Matthew 24. To the contrary, it is as the pre-trib critics claim:

It is clearly believers that are being persecuted for the sake of the name of Christ.

Case closed, right? Wrong. To the contrary, if this is where you stop you will miss the most remarkable revelations hidden in Matthew 24 and 25. If you seek the Lord for His

answers He will eventually open up additional mysteries to you. Each level of interpretation reveals the "next piece" to what you have just read in the plain text. In other words, the plain text gives you the basic foundation. It is the next three levels of interpretation where that base is applied and the real learning begins.

Here is an example of this. We spoke of "one taken, one left" quite a bit. However, one of the things we did not get into is the order of the parables in Matthew 24 and 25. This is a study in its own right. Here is the nickel tour of my point. One of the things that gets missed by "one taken, one left - the wicked are taken" proponents is that the order of the parables are specific. In other words, Jesus did not simply rattle off some parables in no particular order. He gave them in a specific order to teach a specific point. When you study the parables in the order they are given, you find that each parable define the one before it.

You start out with one taken and one left. You then add a layer of understanding with the next parable, and so on until you reach the end. When you are finished you will be left with the actual picture that Jesus was trying to convey. None of the parables by themselves reveal the entire truth.

The same thing happens in Revelation chapters two and three. We have the letters to the seven churches. Yet, these seven letters also address our personal relationship with Christ as well as seven church ages that were to come (we are in the final church age by the way, or Laodicea). Yet, there is something else there that is literally "hidden in plain sight".

The order of the things given "to him that overcomes" reveals the actual order of events for the end times and the calling of the Great Assembly! It is the key to understanding the different groups found in Revelation, and the rituals that we see occur throughout the time of the tribulation. Also, when the things that are given to the overcomers are separated and listed, you see the bigger picture in that all of those things can only be

given in heaven. In other words, we must take a trip to receive those things awarded to the overcomer. Not only that, but the additional study that these things mandate is undertaken, you find that these are not things that are simply awarded as each of us dies. There is a specific time of awarding coming, it comes for all of us at the same time - and it is NOT the Judgment Seat of Christ.

As I was saying to the Jews that Matthew 24 and 25 was written for and spoken to. I know that there will be some that are ready to shout "THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE. I CAN SEE WITH MY OWN EYES THAT IT IS ADDRESSING BELIEVERS!"

OK - let's go through this by the numbers. It won't take long to do. First, let's look at several scriptures:

24:5 - For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

24:9 - Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

24:14 - And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

24:23-24 - Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

These are the scriptures the most clearly indicate that it is those that believe in Christ that are persecuted. Also, the subject of the parables seems to indicate this as well,

though you could argue that these do not expressly require that Matthew 24 and 25 is not speaking to Jews.

At first glance it seems that these are blanket statements to the believer. However, we must ask ourselves who Jesus is actually speaking to at this point. For the record, this conversation is occurring in Jerusalem. It is being spoken to the Jewish disciples of Christ. These disciples were called to Christ during His ministry to Israel.

John 4:22 KJV - Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

Romans 1:16 KJV - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Matthew 15:22-24 KJV - And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

For the record, Jesus came that all would have salvation, both Jew and Gentile alike. However, Jesus came FIRST to the Jews. After this, salvation went to the Gentile. Peter was dispatched to convert Cornelius the Centurion, and Paul was raised up to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. Here is the operative part - the Gentile did not receive the Gospel of Christ until AFTER the church had been born. This is the only way that it

could have happened, as this was part of the dynamic of showing the inability of the Law to save absent salvation.

Only when the fulfillment of the Law was rejected by those that had the perfection of the Law, was it possible to give the fulfillment of the Law to those that had not the Law.

In other words, salvation HAD to go to Israel first. It is only from Israel that the church could have been born. Understand that there is a second dynamic here. While Israel would reject Jesus, it would be the Jews that would first turn to Jesus. It would be the Jewish converts that would have the necessary understanding to take the salvation of Christ to the Gentiles. Only the Jew had the Law, and only the Jew could understand how Christ fulfilled the Law.

Here is where it gets interesting.

There are four levels of interpretation in scriptures. We have spoken on this more than a few times. It is the second, third and fourth level that opens the understanding of the Lord to be revealed. With that, let's take a look at one of the verses we have already mentioned:

24:9 - Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

This is the scripture that holds the key to understanding who Jesus is actually addressing, and the prophetic understanding that He was imparting. In this verse we have something different. In each of the other verses that speak directly to persecution for believing in Christ, we have the name of Christ actually used. However, this time it says "for My name's sake". Here is the question.

Why?

Jesus could have said "you will be hated of all nations because of me."

He could have said "you will be hated because you believe in Me."

He could have said "you will be hated because you serve me."

We even have "my sake" recorded in Mark 13:9.

Yet, the same premise of "My name's sake" recorded just once in all three renderings of the same conversation. What's more is what is attached to all three renderings:

Hated of all nations;

Hated of all men;

Being brought before King's and Rulers.

We can add in a critical piece of the equation as well - delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons.

Let me ask you a question. Why synagogues? Turns out, it is part and parcel to what we are discussing here.

Understand that as we have moved into these last days, we can see that no group of people are as despised as the Jews. Israel is alone in the world as even the United States has abandoned Her. Christians are rapidly moving into competition for most hated, yet the church still occupies a place of prominence in the world - even if that place is diminishing.

However, it is "synagogue" that provides the remaining context for understanding the second level of interpretation for Matthew 24 and 25.

Strong's Concordance

sunagógé: a bringing together, by ext. an assembling, hence a synagogue

Original Word: συναγωγή, ἡς, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: sunagógé

Phonetic Spelling: (soon-ag-o-gay')

Short Definition: an assembly, congregation, synagogue

Definition: an assembly, congregation, synagogue, either the place or the people gathered together in the place.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4864: συναγωγή

συναγωγή, συναγωγής, ἡ (συνάγω), the Sept. for לְהִקָּוֶה and very often for עֲדָה. In Greek writings a bringing together, gathering (as of fruits), a contracting; an assembling together of men. In the N. T.

2. a synagogue, i. e., a. "an assembly of Jews formally gathered together to offer prayer and listen to the reading and exposition of the Holy Scriptures"; assemblies of the sort were held every sabbath and feast-day, afterward also on the second and fifth days of every week (see references below): Luke 12:11; Acts

9:2; Acts 13:43; Acts 26:11; the name is transferred to an assembly of Christians formally gathered for religious purposes, James 2:2 (Epiphanius haer. 30, 18 says of the Jewish Christians συναγωγὴν οὗτοι καλοῦσι τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ οὐχὶ ἐκκλησίαν (cf. Lightfoot on Philippians, p. 192)); (cf. Trench, Synonyms, § 1, and especially Harnack's elaborate note on Hermas, mand. 11, 9 [ET] (less fully and accurately in Hilgenfeld's Zeitschr. f. wiss. Theol. for 1876, p. 102ff) respecting the use of the word by the church Fathers of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries; cf. Hilgenfeld's comments on the same in his 'Hermae Pastor', edition alt., p. 183f).

b. the building where those solemn Jewish assemblies are held(Hebrew בֵּית מוֹדָעוּת , i. e. 'the house of assembly'). Synagogues seem to date their origin from the Babylonian exile. In the time of Jesus and the apostles every town, not only in Palestine but also among the Gentiles if it contained a considerable number of Jewish inhabitants, had at least one synagogue, the larger towns several or even many. That the Jews held trials and even inflicted punishments in them, is evident from such passages as Matthew 10:17; Matthew 23:34; Mark 13:9; Luke 12:11; Luke 21:12;

I have underlined the critical pieces for our study. When Luke uses synagogue in Luke 21, he is speaking of a specifically Jewish building for a specifically Jewish purpose. Let's combine several scriptures and see what they reveal on the second level of understanding:

Matthew 24:3 KJV - And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Matthew 24:9 KJV - Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Luke 21:12 KJV - But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

In the literal reading, or the first level of understanding, we see that those that believe on Christ are persecuted. It is no stretch to say that this is starting to happen, especially places like Syria and Iraq at the hands of Islam. **However, the deeper meaning of the scripture is not talking about the Body of Christ in general. If it were, we would see the same persecutions worldwide that we now see in the Middle East.**

The first thing that we can glean from the second and third level of interpretation - and the more minor point - is the blood relationship between Islam and the Jews. If you study Islam side by side with Judaism, you see that one is the bastardization of the other. Even the layout of the mosque takes it's cue from the synagogue. The services, the reading of the scriptures - all of it is a Satanic counterfeit of the true faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. A study of the Old Testament reveals that there are now Muslim lands that sit under God's judgment for turning against Israel when the Babylonians came. The Lord punished them because as family, they should have helped Israel in their time of need. Even alternate definitions of synagogue support this understanding.

The bastardization of Judaism now persecutes the church!

As I said, this is the minor point.

What the Lord is revealing here is a prophetic revelation that we are now seeing proven out. In the last days, the Jews would come to Christ in droves. A recent as 15 years ago, a single new Jewish convert to Christ in Israel was seen as something to celebrate. However, now the rate of conversation is measured in thousands per year. Even

though the Jews as a whole are still in spiritual blindness (a condition that has grown so bad that even practicing Orthodox Jews are becoming less and less prevalent in Israel).

Likewise, we are seeing a growing hostility towards Messianic Jews in Israel. There is a growing movement to stop the spread of Christianity in Israel that mirrors the explosion of new Messianic Jews. Israel isn't openly hostile to Gentile believers (not to any real extent anyways). It is only their own that face growing persecution.

When we read the conversation recounted in Matthew 24 and 25 (Mark 13 and Luke 21) also, we see a transition directly from those things that seem to speak of a time before the tribulation, straight into the Abomination of Desolation at mid-trib. We have covered this elsewhere in this project. This is yet another second level evidence of who this conversation is ultimately directed at. The first half of the tribulation will be a different animal for Israel than for the rest of the world. It is not until mid-trib that the wrath against Israel comes full circle. That is why Christ never addresses the many scriptures that detail what the Antichrist does before mid-trib. All of the scriptures in Daniel that speak to His exploits speak of events that do not directly affect Israel. They are given for the rest of the world - not Israel.

However, it is in the words "My name's sake" that we get what we need here. Remember, all other references speak directly to Christ and service to Him. However, "My name's sake" introduces another dynamic. It speaks not to believing in Christ.

It speaks to His prophesied coming as the Messiah!

This is why Messianic believers will be persecuted in the run up to mid-trib. They are hated not just because they serve Christ -they are hated because they serve this usurper, this "false Messiah". They serve what the orthodox Jews views as nothing less as an abomination and the literal death of the Jewish faith!

It won't help that 144,000 sealed Jews are preaching Christ, invincible and unstoppable - under the command of the Two Witnesses that are building their Temple, and doing so in the name of Jesus Christ!

We have prophetic reference to two different Jewish believers in Matthew 24 and 25 - those that find Christ before the rapture, and those that find Him after under the witness of the 144,000 sealed Jews. It will be a literal fulfillment of the first fruits of the barley harvest, followed by the first fruits of the wheat harvest - all in Israel itself!

In the second level of understanding, we see the emphasis on the first fruits of the barley harvest, or those that come to Christ before the rapture, and during the first three and a half years. Understand that not every Jewish convert will be in Israel. Many will learn of the witnesses and hear them from abroad. It is in the wheat harvest that we see the stubbornness of the Jews that led so many to deny Christ until after the rapture.

Now comes the bombshell - the level of mysteries!

"In My name's sake" reveals the deepest level of truth that Christ was speaking here. It goes back to the oldest prophecy in the Bible:

Genesis 3:14-15 KJV - And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

We find additional keys in the following block of scripture:

Revelation 12:1-6, 13-17 KJV - And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

"In My name's sake" is not just about serving Jesus Christ. It's about Israel, and Her part in God's plan of redemption. Understand, it does not matter to Satan that a Jew does not serve Christ - they are still a Jew. Even those that have no religious leanings are still enmity to Satan.

Although, the second level of understanding reveals that Messianic Jews will be a two for one in the tribulation!

The deepest revelation in Matthew 24 and 25 is that the Jews will be hated and hunted, and not because some will call on the name of Jesus Christ. . .

But because the Jew is the very reason the name of Jesus Christ is even uttered by any man!

This is why the Abomination of Desolation is the watershed moment in history. It is the moment when Satan takes his shot down field, and nearly succeeds. Because the child came into the world;

Because Noah had faith to build a boat. . .

Because Abraham left his home for an unknown God. . .

Because Joseph dared to dream. . .

Because Moses faced a Pharaoh. . .

Because Sampson gave his own life in faith. . .

Because David was a man after God's own heart. . .

Because three Hebrews would not bow in Babylon. . .

Because Daniel would not give up prayer. . .

Because Esther loved her Lord and her people. . .

Because Ezra and Nehemiah called an Assembly of 120. . .

Because John was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. . .

Because. . .

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

This is why pre-trib believers have always understood that Matthew 24 and 25 was about more than just generic believers. We have known at the deepest level that there

was something more to what seemed to be in front of our eyes - even if we did not always realize what it was. Just as the rapture was about more than the Lord returning for the Church, Matthew 24 and 25 was about much more than just generic believers.

It was about the very promise of salvation, and who it was that brought forth that promise.

At this point, I think we have covered enough ground. There are any number of additional evidences that we can address from Matthew chapter 24 such as the sounding of trumpets when the Second Coming occurs. However, the arguments that the last trump of the rapture is the same of the seventh trumpet in Revelation has been refuted to the point that the only people that still cling to this erroneous doctrine are those that simply refuse to accept the pre-tribulation rapture on any basis. Likewise, most other evidences for the pre-tribulation rapture are well documented and some of them are addressed in another section of this site.

May the peace of the Lord be upon you all! Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.

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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