



[Matthew 24:36-44](#)

(36) But concerning that day, and the hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. (37) Now as *it was in* the days of Noah, so shall *it* also be *at* the coming of the Son of man. (38) For as in the days that *were* before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark; (39) And they were not aware until the Flood came and took *them* all away; so shall *it* also be *at* the coming of the Son of man. (40) Then two shall be in the field; one shall be taken, and one shall be left; (41) Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; one shall be taken, and one shall be left. (42) Watch, therefore, because you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming. (43) But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have been watching, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. (44) Therefore, you also be ready. For the Son of man is coming at a time that you do not think.

A Faithful Version

This passage provides a concrete description of the circumstances surrounding Christ's return, emphasizing that His return will be at an unexpected hour. We can tie this to His warnings about becoming caught up in the cares of [the world](#), so that end-time events commence when we are spiritually unprepared ([Matthew 25:13](#); [Mark 13:35](#); [Luke 12:39-40](#); [21:34](#)).

Verses 40-41 describe two men working in a field and two women grinding at a mill. In each case, one is taken and the other is left. Subscribers to the theory of a secret [rapture](#) use these verses as support, though the only “secret” part of Christ's return will be the timing—the event itself will be visible to all. Rapture advocates also assume that *taken* here means “snatched up to heaven.” However, in the 49 New Testament usages of this Greek word (*paralambano*), nowhere does it contain that idea.

The only verse that even approaches that sense is [John 14:3](#), but even it does not actually support the idea of being taken off to heaven: “And if I go and prepare a place

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for you, I will come again and receive [*paralambano*] you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” Notice that He says He will come again—to earth—and receive His followers to Himself there, not in heaven. Earth is where His Kingdom will be established.

Thus, [Matthew 24:40-41](#) speaks of a divine distinction between peoples in the future: Some will be received near to [Christ](#) and associated with Him in a familiar or intimate way. The word can even imply they assume an office.

Those under judgment, however, will be left and not allowed to accompany Christ. This “being left” may be what happens to the foolish virgins who are left outside the wedding feast ([Matthew 25:10-12](#)); to the “sons of the kingdom” who will be “cast out into outer darkness” instead of entering into the Kingdom ([Matthew 8:11-12](#)); and to others who are found to be unworthy to enter the Kingdom (see [Matthew 24:48-51](#); [25:30](#); [25:31-46](#)).

— David C. Grabbe

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