



[Matthew 24:36-44](#)

(36) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (37) But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (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 Noe entered into the ark, (39) And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (40) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (42) Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. (43) But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. (44) Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

King James 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 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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