



[Matthew 24:36-44](#)

(36) "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (37) As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (38) For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; (39) and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (40) Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. (41) Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. (42) "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. (43) But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. (44) So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

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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

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Matthew 24:36-44 (<http://www.theberean.org>) 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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