



[Luke 17:34-37](#)

(34) I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. (35) Two women shall be grinding together; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. (36) Two men shall be in the field; one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." (37) And they answered, saying to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

A Faithful Version

The disciples' question, "Where, Lord?" appears to be about *where* all of this would be taking place—including His return, which would initiate the judgment—rather than about where His followers would be taken. In Matthew's account, their original question was about the signs of Christ's coming and the end of the age (see [Matthew 24:3](#), 28), so what appears to have been on their minds were the specifics of His return rather than the location of those "taken."

As is His pattern, He does not answer their question directly. Instead, His answer applies on multiple levels. Looking at Matthew's and Luke's accounts together, the disciples ask about *when* and *where*, since we humans want a specific date and location so we can gauge how these things will affect us personally. [God](#), however, gives principles.

In Scripture, a wake (gathering) of vultures is an indicator of *God's judgment for rebellion*. In the blessings and curses given to Israel, God warns them, "Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away" ([Deuteronomy 28:26](#)). It is a judgment of great shame, one that has been fulfilled in type in the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem ([Psalm 79:1-3](#)).

Under this curse, the Israelites would have no dignity in their deaths; they would have no one to bury them. It symbolizes the height of defeat, disgrace, and personal insignificance, when no defenders are left to keep the scavengers from tearing a human body apart just as they would a dead animal. When God cleans His creation in this way, a person becomes nothing more than a meal for one of the most despised creatures.

But Israelites are not the only ones to receive this shameful judgment. The same fate is prophesied for those fighting against Christ at His return:

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. . . . And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. ([Revelation 19:17-19](#), 21; see also the prophecy against Gog in [Ezekiel 39:17-20](#))

The followers of the Beast and [False Prophet](#) will be killed, and God will specifically call the carrion birds for this gruesome feast. Any alleged return of the Messiah that does not involve this judgment on God's enemies is a lie. These are grisly descriptions but necessary reminders of His view of [sin](#), disobedience, and rebellion against Him. [Christ will return](#) at a time when the opposition to Him will have reached a peak and to a place where human governments will have assembled against Him. Moreover, there will be a gathering of scavengers as a sign of God's judgment of shame.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:
[Where the Eagles Are Gathered](#)

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