

Tribulation Central

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed...2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

LEFT BEHIND: A Study in Matthew Chapter 24

<http://tribulationcentral.com/pdf/mat24study.pdf>

This study examines a critical part of prophecy in Matthew 24, beginning in verse one:

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Matthew 24:1-2

Jesus told the disciples that the temple will be torn down and not one stone will be left upon another. This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD when Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple!

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? (v.3).

Jesus' disciples came to the mount of olives privately and they asked Jesus when the temple be torn down, the sign of his coming, and the end of world (age). Notice, this is a private discussion between Jesus and His disciples and no one else was involved. Neither the "tribulation saints" nor the "Jews" were in attendance. To further support this, Mark wrote:

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, **Peter and James and John and Andrew** asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

Mark 14:3-4

According to pre-tribbers, the disciples are representatives of the "unsaved Jews" who happen to get saved during the tribulation. Other pre-tribbers claim that Jesus is speaking to the "tribulation saints." As we see in Mark, the disciples are Peter, James, John and Andrew, Jesus' inner circle and closest of His disciples.

It's highly unlikely, if not, impossible the writers of the gospels would consider these four disciples unsaved. This will be covered further in Disciple.¹

As usual, this a point of contention between pre-tribbers and post-tribbers alike. As pre-tribbers hold on to the above claims, they can not give reference from scripture to verify their position. Whereas Jesus instructed His disciples at the end of Matthew 28:

Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to **observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you** (vs. 19-20a)

The disciples were to teach disciples of all nations to observe all things whatsoever He commanded them, which also covers His teachings at Olivet.

The study continues in Matthew chapter 24:

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that **no man deceive you**. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows (vs. 4-8).

Jesus said see to it that no one deceives you for many will call in the name of Jesus and mislead many. This is plain that many will be mislead simply because there will be those who will say that they are the Christ and there will be those (the deceived) who will believe them. (Another example is in second Corinthians 11:3, 4). They will see wars and rumors of wars, but the end is not here yet. Nation will rise against nation, and in various (divers) places earthquakes. All these are *merely* the beginning of sorrows.

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. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (vs. 9-13).

In the above verses, To whom did Jesus say "*they will deliver you to tribulation (afflicted)?*" Please look at the beginning verses. They are Jesus' disciples! Remember, Jesus met with His disciples **PRIVATELY!!!** Jesus said to his disciples: "...They will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you." Could this be any more clearer?

¹ <http://tribulationcentral.com/disciple.html>

Many at that time will fall away betray each other. And false prophets will mislead many and most people's love will wax cold (grow cold). But He who endures to the end will be saved. In Second Thessalonians chapter two, Paul said regarding the day of the Lord:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*(day of the Lord), except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...(vs. 3)

As Paul said, the day of the Lord will not come unless a falling away (apostasy) comes first, *and* the man of lawlessness is revealed. This apostasy happens in latter times, especially during the tribulation!²

Jesus said:

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 (vs. 14).

One thing Jesus said that *this* gospel must be preached in the whole world... Which gospel is Jesus referring to? It is the one that Jesus instructed his disciples to preach. This is the gospel that is preached and then the end shall come.

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:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:...(vs.15-20).

Jesus instructs his disciples further continuing into the Abomination of Desolation they will see written in the Book of Daniel. Daniel was referring to the Anti-christ sitting himself on the throne to be worshiped. According to many, this happens at the mid-point of Daniel's³ seventieth week. Jesus described a time when people will have to quickly gather their belongings and flee for it will be a terrible time.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (vs.21-22).

² The second Thessalonian verse is covered in *He Who Restrains*; <http://tribulationcentral.com/restrainer.html> .

³ <http://tribulationcentral.com/daniel.html> .

Jesus states that during this time, will be "a great tribulation, which had not occurred since the world began". He says for the sake of the elect those *days* will be shortened because no flesh could survive otherwise. According to many pre-tribbers, the "cutting short" of the days means that the church will be raptured out, which is interesting, because in Daniel, this is at the middle of the seventieth week and not at the start of it. Many mid-tribbers and pre-wrathers also use this verse to support their claim.

Let's look closer to what Jesus had said: " Unless those days have been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, those days shall be cut short." Does this necessarily mean the elect will be raptured into heaven? No, the days are cut short because no one could survive otherwise. And why were the days cut short? For the sake of the elect in order for them to survive.

In Mark chapter 13, the Lord Has shortened the days.:

And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he **hath shortened** the days (vs. 20).

The Study continues in Matthew:

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. **Behold, I have told you before** (vs.23-25).

It's hard to explain the elect's rapture into heaven, when in the next verses Jesus mentions the elect: "...so as to mislead, if possible even the elect" and says to *the disciples* "Then, if man shall say unto **you**..." Most pre-tribbers contend that the elect refers to the Jews only and not the church. One note of further interest, How can the pre-tribbers claim the elect in verse 22 is the church and the elect in verse 25 are the Jews? Doesn't this sound confusing? We will further examine this further in *The Elect*.⁴

Jesus continues to *instruct* the **disciples**: "Then, if anyone says to you..." He told *His disciples* during that time, if anyone tells them "here is Christ," **don't believe them**. He also tells them that false christs and false prophets will arise and show signs to mislead even the elect. Not only does Jesus warn about the Anti-christ, He also warns them that false christs will appear as well!

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.

⁴ <http://www.tribulationcentral.com/elect.html>

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For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together (vs.26.28).

What has been seen so far, Jesus has instructed *His disciples* concerning the events that lead up to his coming. He gives them instructions what to look out for, and to be aware of during the tribulation and the Great Tribulation. Does Jesus mention a coming during this time, or He will come before the tribulation? No because Jesus instructs his disciples further if anyone says to them that if they hear Jesus is in the wilderness or in an upper room somewhere **believe it not**. He begins to instruct them what will happen when He comes: "For just as lightning comes forth from the east and flashes to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." Is this indication that *this* sign will be unnoticed? Lightning from the sky can be seen and noticed. And depending of what time of the day it happens, it can briefly light up the sky and parts of the earth. And usually the sound of thunder accommodates lightning.

Notice a key part of what Jesus tells his disciples; "Wherever the corpse is, the vultures are gathered together." When does this happen? It happens at His coming:

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** (vs.29-31).

He said immediately *after the tribulation* of those days:

- the Sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give up its light...
- and then the *sign* of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.
- they will see the Son of Man Coming on the clouds of the sky with power and glory.
- all of the tribes of the earth will mourn.

Jesus described the signs that lead up to His coming. The sun darkened and the moon refusing to give up it's light and then the Son of Man will appear in the sky. They will see the Son of Man Coming on the clouds of the sky with power and glory. And then he will:

- Send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET

And

- **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonian church Wrote:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him... (ch. 2 vs. 1).

Paul requested the Thessalonian church in regard to the Coming of the Lord and their **gathering** to Him. Pre-tribbers support this as the rapture. As seen in Matthew, Jesus said He will **gather** his elect from "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" after the tribulation. If Paul was describing in Second Thessalonians, then what Jesus described should also be supported as the rapture. He **gathers** His elect from the four winds from one end of the sky to another. However, pre-tribbers do not share this opinion. One objection, there is no mention of those who are earth. The other, this happens after the tribulation. Another is, as pre-tribbers claim, the elect Jesus is referring to are the Jews. Is there anywhere else in scripture Jesus describes His coming? In the Gospel of Mark:

But in those days, after that tribulation..., And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and **shall gather together** his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Mark 13:24a,26-27

As we saw in the first two gospels, will gather his elect "from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, and the uttermost part of heaven," and in Matthew "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Therefore this **is** the rapture Paul referred to.

Is this clear that Jesus described the Rapture? Pre and post-tribbers do believe in one rapture. In Matthew, Jesus didn't mention a coming before the tribulation or during that time, He clearly says that His coming is after the tribulation and **then** He will gather His elect.

Since Jesus clearly stated His coming was after the tribulation and did not mention any coming before His coming after the tribulation, would He continue on and explain a pre-trib coming? Remember, He instructed His disciples and warned them what will happen to them during the tribulation. Let's assume that He continued on and mentioned a pre-trib coming. After He tells them they will be delivered into tribulation and then He says "Don't worry, you're outta here!" Does this sound like a contradiction?

The study continues as Jesus said:

Now learn a parable of the fig tree [(and all the trees) Luke 21:29]; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (vs.32-35).

Jesus clearly instructed His disciples concerning the end times. He described the parable of the fig tree (and all the trees). "when its branch has yet tender, and puts fourth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize he is right at the door." Did Jesus talk about an "any moment coming? " No, He spoke previously of the signs that lead up to his coming, i.e. the abomination of desolation, false prophets and christs who appear to deceive the elect. And he compares them to the fig tree (and all the trees), the fact when the fig tree's branches become tender and puts fourth it's leaves, that summer is near. So when they see these signs that Jesus gave, they will recognize that time of His coming is near, which is after the tribulation. This is hardly an "any moment" pre-trib description that pre-tribbers like to give. There is one thing to remember the fig tree cannot produce tender branches during wintertime. They only produce when summer is near. And the Lord's coming will draw close after the Anti-christ sets up the abomination.

But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (v. 36)

Pre-tribbers believe in the above verse pertains to the alleged "pre-trib" coming because the above verse says that no one knows of His coming. So therefore, this is His "pre-trib" coming. But Jesus said his coming is after the tribulation. Are the pre-tribbers correct? Jesus did say that his coming was "immediately after that tribulation..." And in verse 36 he says of that day and hour no one knows. Does anyone know exactly when the tribulation will end, or the exact day or hour other than the Father? This is discussed further in the supplement article *Imminence*⁵

For further thought, Jesus clearly says his coming is "after the tribulation" and He will be seen by everyone. Pre-tribbers, on the other hand insists there is a coming before His post-tribulational appearance and this coming will be secret and that the church will be transferred into heaven. Is there anywhere in scripture that states the above? And since it doesn't, then can they rest in this knowing that there is no biblical basis to support their view?

⁵ tribulationcentral.com/imminence.html .

And another thought, since there is nowhere in scripture that states a "pre-trib" coming and if Jesus is coming "at any moment" to rapture his church, couldn't this happen during or after the tribulation or even during or after the Millennium?

This study will look at one of the centerpieces pre-tribbers have placed on their table:

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *women shall be grinding at the mill*; the one shall be taken, and the other left (vs.40-41)

Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins have written *Left Behind* series of *novels* based on the above verse. Hal Lindsey uses this verse in his book, *There's a New World Coming*. There also has been video enactments describing people who suddenly disappear. And nobody has a clue where they went. In other words, this is one of the verses pre-tribbers use to support the idea of a pre-trib rapture. They claim the man in the field and the woman at the mill are Christians and they are taken and raptured into heaven, while the others in the field and at the mill are unbelievers are left behind which happens before the tribulation.

As has been seen before in Matthew 24 Jesus does not describe a rapture until his coming which is after the tribulation. He instructs his disciples what to look for and warns them about certain things that lead up to his coming.. Now we have this supposed "pre-trib" rapture verse. If this is pre-trib, then we must come to this conclusion: Jesus has just contradicted himself. And most pre-tribbers agree that neither Jesus nor scripture can do that.

Can this be a pre-trib rapture? Or can this be the post- trib rapture in verse 31 in Matthew 24? Let's look at This more closely:

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Does Jesus say who will be taken and who will be left; i.e. the Christian is taken and the non-christian left?

Does Jesus say that the one who is taken will be taken up to heaven, or does He say that this man is taken up?

Does He say where this man is taken?

Since the answer is no to all the above, they conclude that Jesus is describing a pre-trib rapture? Does this verse mean anything other than a rapture? Can there

be something in the previous or next verse to describe what verse 40 means? Let's examine verses 36 through verse 39:

But as the days of Noe 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.**

In the above verse Jesus compares His coming to the days of Noah. Notice, He says His coming will be as the days of Noah and He continues to say "for as in those days which were before the flood." He focuses on those who were eating and drinking, etcetera up until Noah entered the ark. And the flood came and took *them* all away. Is there a clear picture of what happened when the flood came?

Jesus said the flood took *them all* away **and** that's what will happen when Jesus comes. So what happened to those who were taken away?

Was there a rapture during the flood? No. So, then if someone was taken away when the flood came, then who was left? And if someone was left, what happened to those were taken away? Moses gives an account of the flood:

Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. ...and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark.

Genesis 7:20-22, 23b

As Moses wrote, Noah was left, and everyone and everything that was not in the ark died.

In conclusion, just as it happen during the flood, it will happen at Christ's coming: the ones who are unprepared will be the ones who are taken and will die. To further illustrate, Earlier in Jesus' ministry, Luke wrote:

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 Noe 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.**

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Luke 17:26-30

Notice that the ones who were eating and drinking were destroyed? Clearly, at his coming, there will be a time of judgment were the ones who are unaware will be destroyed. Notice, Jesus said "It will be just the same on that day the Son of Man is Revealed." This clearly will happen at His coming after the tribulation.

A Comparison of **Luke 17:26-30** And **Matthew 24:37-41**

Luke 17:26-30

Matthew 24:37-41

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

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

They did eat, they drank,

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying

they married

wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark

and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

and the flood came, and destroyed them all

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;

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

so shall also

when the Son of man is revealed.

the coming of the Son of man be.

Referring back to verses 40 and 41 in Matthew 24, Jesus said in Luke:

...In that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord?

And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Luke 17:34-37.

Jesus gave the same analogy as He did in Matthew: "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken one will be left." And then His disciples asked "where Lord?" Notice in verse 37, Jesus said "where the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered." Where else in the bible does Jesus use the above sentence? Looking back in Matthew 24:

For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. **Immediately after the tribulation of those days...(vs.28-29).**

The above verse is clearly used with Jesus' coming which is after the tribulation. For further study of verses 36 through 39, please read the supplement article *Take to One's self*.⁶ This study concludes with the following verses:

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come (v. 42).

There is one point must be remembered. If Jesus instructed His disciples *privately*, then He gave the above warning to them as well. And it is not just for unbelievers. Jesus warned His disciples to be ready for His coming. Because the ones who are unaware of these signs and not ready for His coming will be destroyed when He comes. And this isn't a warning to believers who aren't ready, they will miss the rapture (which in this case, they will miss the post-trib rapture). Therefore we must watch for the signs given by Jesus and sober minded so we can be alert!

Upcoming articles will be written to conclude the study in Matthew 24 and beyond. Stay tuned...

⁶ <http://tribulationcentral.com/oneself.html>