

*Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*  
*January 31, 2021*  
*“Are You Ready?”*

*Sunday school at 8:30, Service at 9:15, Service at 10:45 with King’s Kids.*

*NEWS*

Wednesday Night Activities at 6:30 PM

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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The way you tell if what you believe is the Truth from God, or an opinion from man, is how \_\_\_\_\_ you take it when someone disagrees.

It’s never our job to convince anyone to accept Jesus, or to change their doctrine...

The Message from God concerning the future was never to get us to work out intricate details, but to get the big picture right... Trust Him - be ready.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

It’s about being \_\_\_\_\_ ready (Matthew 16:26, Luke 14:26, John 12:25).

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

**MATTHEW 24:37-39 ~**

“No one knows.” Here, Jesus elaborated with an example. People who push for a deeper allegorical meaning to find something that supports their dogma, twist Jesus’ words to make them mean the opposite of what He intended.

Why take Jesus’ plain statements in this chapter figuratively, in order to take the apocalyptic prophecies literally? Revelation 1:1 ~ Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ... (Äpö-kä-lü-psēs Ē-ā-sü Īrēs-tü)... The Apocalypse, or Revelation, of Jesus Christ

What prophecy was ever correctly deciphered in detail before it happened?

**MATTHEW 24:40&41 ~**

Finally, proof of a sudden Rapture! Really?

We believe in the Bible as it was written, and all these schemes/models have their Biblical problems, so let’s at least jettison our devotion to them.

The two examples represent all of humanity. The one taken is either taken to Jesus, or more likely, taken away to judgment. Jesus point was not which one went where, it was all people, regardless of personal ties, would either be saved or condemned.

**MATTHEW 24:42 ~**

Easy, right?

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon/Elder

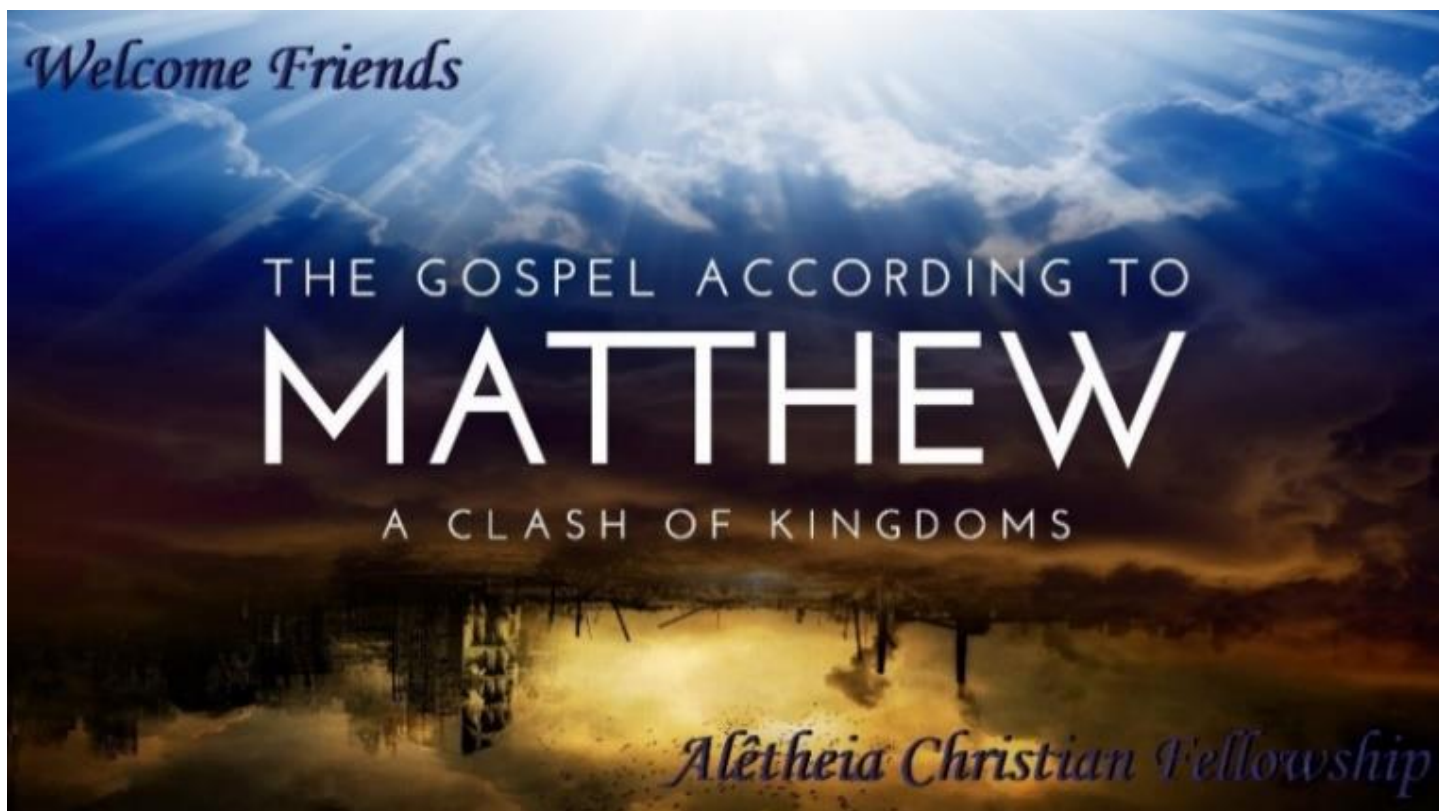
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Quick review... Back in chapter 21, Jesus made what is called His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. It is what

we celebrate as Palm Sunday and was one week before His Resurrection from the dead in bodily form.

Later, during His last week on the planet as a human, Jesus entered the Temple, did some outlandish things, including the complete disruption of the Sacrificial system during Passover, the busiest time of the year for the Jews. Well, the Jewish leadership confronted Him about it back in Matthew 21:23, 23When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?”

Very unexpectedly for that day and age, Jesus turned the tables on the elite of Judaism and put them on the defensive. Over the next several passages Jesus told parables, answered questions with more profound questions, and ended up pronouncing woe after woe upon them. All of chapter 23 was Jesus hammering away at the leadership of Judaism.

Then He left the Temple and His disciples tried to make sense of what had happened.



They had reasonably expected the entire nation including its leaders would bow down, worship and give their full and unquestioning allegiance to the Messiah God had sent. They were all looking for what will happen in His Second Coming at His First. Why? Because no one has ever fully understood a prophecy before it was fulfilled. Those Jews who were convinced in their own minds about how the Messiah's Arrival would go - were lost. Those who were open to things unfolding in a way they had not previously considered - were Saved.

So, His Disciples, by this point, had fully expected to be generals in the Lord's army chasing down the

retreating Romans, but instead they were sitting on a mountain looking at the city Jesus said would soon be leveled.

Their question was really, “How can we wrap our minds around this Jesus? Please help us understand what’s going on. This is nothing like what any of us ever anticipated.” That was their question. When will it happen and what will be the sign of Your Return and the End of the Age?

They, no doubt, thought of that as a single question. Jesus answered it as two separate questions. 1) First, the “Tribulation of those days” (Matthew 24:29) will come before this present “Generation” (Matthew 24:34) dies out. 2) “Immediately after the tribulation” the “Son of Man will appear” and “His elect” will join Him in the “Sky” (Matthew 24:29-31).

There’s really only one way to take all of chapter 24 with a plain, contextual meaning... The Tribulation mentioned had to have happened, at least in part, to the Jews 1,950 years ago as Jesus said it would. His Return, and so, the Sign of His Return, the end of the Tribulation, and the gathering of His elect, must still be future on our calendars.



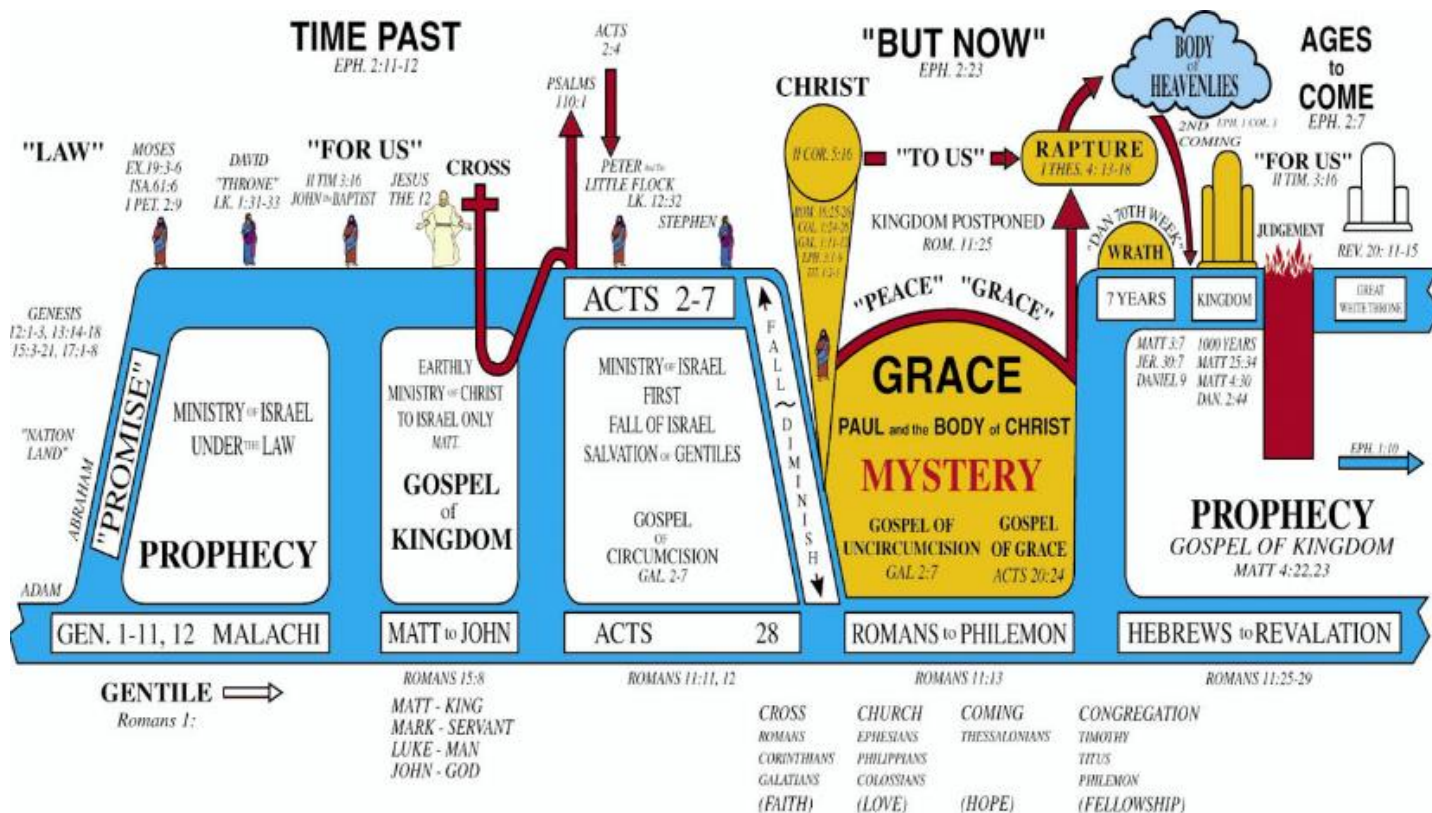
That can only mean that the Tribulation has been going ever since. Every Christian throughout time has endured the Tribulation in one form or another, to one degree or another. Despite how some people react, you cannot be more dead, if you die in a plane crash, or from Covid, or from the “Great Tribulation.”

As I mentioned the word “Tribulation” is our old friend  $\theta\lambda\acute{\iota}\psi\iota\varsigma$  (thlē-psēs), literally meaning pressure. It is to use pressure to crush, push down, compress, or squeeze. Figuratively, it is the pressures of life beating you down and is usually translated as trouble, affliction, or tribulation. The word is used 45 times in the New

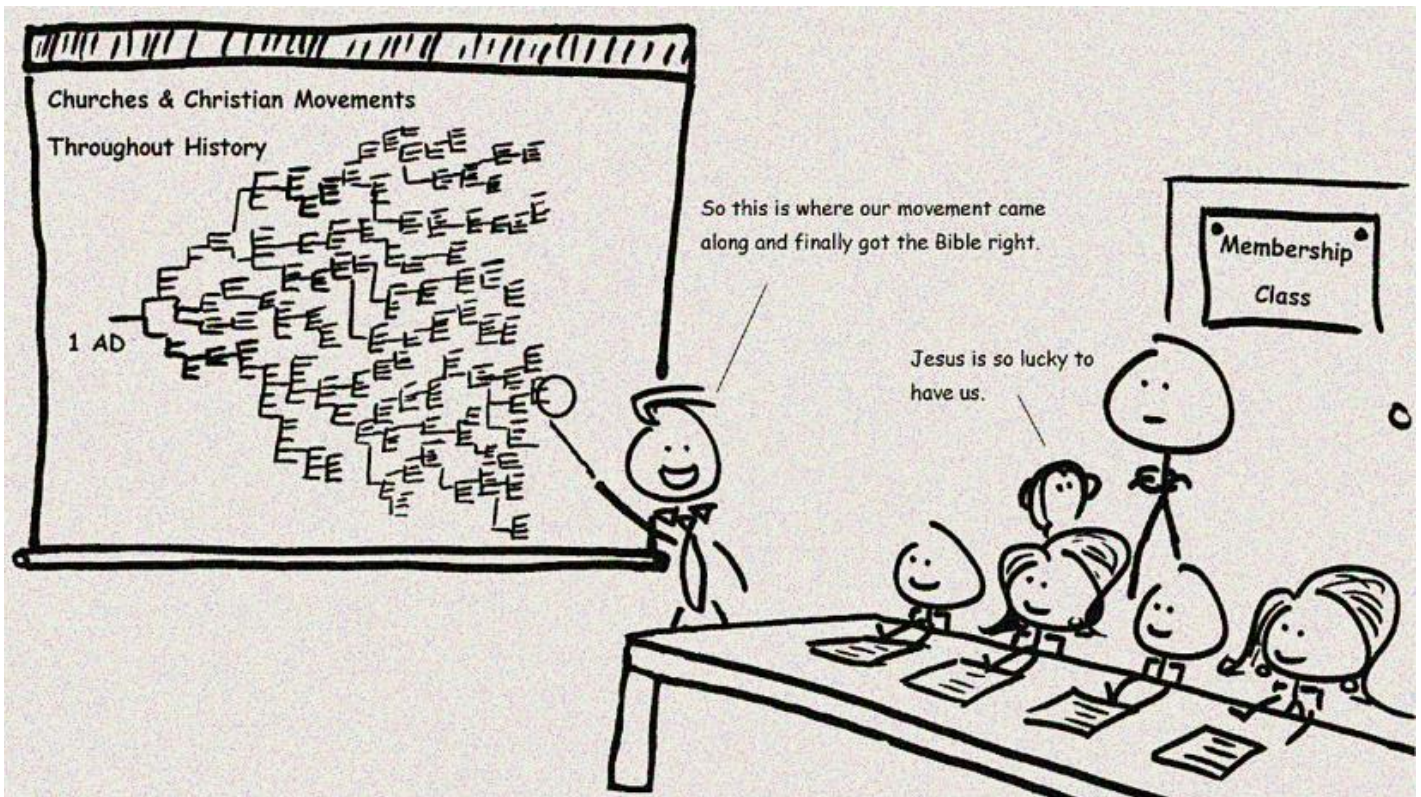
Testament and 104 in the Old Testament Septuagint. Almost every time it is the distress of God's people. King David crying out to God in many of his Psalms to relieve him of his distress or to thank Him for doing so. It is Jesus and His Apostles warning Christians to endure the tribulations they encounter. To stand firm under the pressure. The intensity will get worse and then, suddenly, the end ushered in by Jesus at His Return when He calls all His Own, to gather together with Him.

As I said before, there is nothing at all in any of this that talks about a pretribulation Rapture or a Millennial Reign on earth. That doesn't mean that those things are not possible, it means that they are not alluded to here. Now, there are many people who twist the plain, contextual meaning that I just gave in order to make this chapter fit their scheme. More power to them - I guess.





Some say, none of it has happened yet, others say, it all happened long ago. Please recognize that we humans try to figure out what God declined to reveal to us, and then, to make our scheme work, we twist His Words elsewhere to fit our agenda.



The craziest part is then we fight with other Christians who come up with a different scheme by doing exactly the same thing we did. Have your ideas, but don't be pig-headed.

The way you tell whether what you believe is the Truth from God, or an opinion from man, is how personally you take it when someone disagrees.

If I'm sharing God's Truth, I never get defensive, because it is simply the Truth, and more importantly, it is His Truth, not mine. The disagreement is between the other person and Almighty God.

It's not my job to convince anyone... Never is that my job, or yours. Even if you could convince someone to accept Jesus - it would be a form of coercion.

“A person convinced against their will, is of the same opinion still.” As soon as another convincing person comes along, they'll be Buddhists. A legitimate transaction can only be between them and God. Never get worked up in that situation. When someone disagrees with my strongly held opinion? The fight is on.

You can either take the Bible the way it comes, or you can dogmatically hold to elaborate schemes. You cannot do both.

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”



Then Jesus gave us His Thesis Statement in Matthew 24:36, 36“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

With this statement, Jesus was trying to tell his people then, and throughout time, that the setting of dates, or getting worried about events as signs and worked up over people as potential antichrists, the whole coming up with elaborate schemes about the end times and how everything will unfold is not, I repeat is not, what any of this is about.

The Message from God concerning the future was never to get us to work out intricate details, but to get the big picture right... Talk about swallowing camels, while straining out gnats. I'm not the one telling you that - your Lord is the One telling you that. Timing, events, people, schemes, none of that is the point... Stop worrying about all that nonsense. Instead focus on what I, what Jesus, wants you to focus on... be ready.

So again, let me summarize a few of the reasons why Jesus doesn't want us working out all the details like so many, including Darby, have done. Among them...

1) *There is not enough information in the Bible to get a clear picture.*



1) the reason that there is not enough specific information in the entire Bible combined to get a clear picture. God did not give us enough information to know. That leads to another two reasons.

1) There is not enough information in the Bible to get a clear picture.

2) We cannot agree on the scheme and so it ends up dividing the church.



2) We cannot agree on the scheme and so it ends up dividing Christ's Holy and Anointed Body on earth called the church. We sacrifice Christian unity for human opinions.

1) There is not enough information in the Bible to get a clear picture.

2) We cannot agree on the scheme and so it ends up dividing the church.

3) God wants us to focus on trusting Him, rather than our own resources... *Be Ready*



3) God intentionally gave us some information, but not enough to know the details as I said, but why? Reason number three, He wants us to focus on trusting Him, rather than our own schemes, cleverness, and resources... Be ready.

Be ready seems simple enough, but it turns out that I need to define that a bit...



It has nothing to do with getting physically ready for the Zombie Apocalypse, building bunkers, investing in gold, or in stockpiling ammunition and toilet paper. It's about being ready to endure persecution as a Christian and it is about being ready to face Jesus and give an accounting for what you did on earth with the resources that He entrusted to you.

Jesus may call you home today and He will ask how you spent your time, your energy, your income, and your wealth to further His agenda, to build His Kingdom. "Well, Jesus I devoted most of it to providing physical protection for myself and my family, in the event of a catastrophic event."



Remember Jesus rhetorically asked back in Matthew 16:26, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” My dear friends, please, please, please, understand that gaining the world means being dedicated to the things of this world, the things of this life, including this life itself, more than to the things of God... Even if you gained everything pertaining to the world, is that worth you soul? Live underground like a rat for 20 extra years and miss Jesus’ mission, or put Him first and go home.

The things of this world are clearly delineated in all four Gospels and repeatedly in the rest of the Bible... It is “Your own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sister, yes and even your own life” (Luke 14:26). Jesus said in John 12:25, “He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.”

What is an obsession with politics and personal defense, other than, loving this life? Again, you can be engaged in this world, but you cannot be a part of it, to the detriment of what actually matters.



This world is not our home! Put God first, means putting the Lord's agenda for your life ahead of your own agenda for your life. What does Jesus want you to do?

I already alluded to it... When you're doing God's bidding, you don't have a dog in the fight. You're just the messenger. Any disagreement is between the other person and God. If you think that you're doing God's bidding and you're experiencing frustration, defensiveness, anger, argument, fighting, war... You have confirmation that you are mistaken. You are doing your own bidding in disguise. You have allowed your own ego to get in the way.



Be ready means to be spiritually prepared to answer to Jesus today and every day as well as being spiritually prepared to be a Christian martyr. I know you can suffer inconvenience for the Lord. I think many of you can suffer disappointment for the Lord. Can you suffer indignity for Him? Can you suffer confinement, or torture, or not fighting back even though you could, or brutal execution for the Lord? How much do you love your life? How much pride do you have? Many of us could die in battle, but could we go as a lamb to slaughter instead? Many of us could meekly go along with Christian oppression by the government, but could we stand firm and preach the Gospel instead?

Far better to figure that out before your confronted with the situation. Be ready... That's what Jesus wants from you.



Matthew 24:37-39, 37“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38“For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Again, people go astray from the Truth of God's perfect Word when they make a mountain out of a molehill. Jesus just gave His Thesis Statement... "No one knows." Here, He elaborates with examples. That's all that this is, an elaboration, on His previous statement... On His thesis statement.

37 **FOR** THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN  
**WILL BE JUST LIKE** THE DAYS OF NOAH.

38 **FOR AS IN** THOSE DAYS BEFORE THE FLOOD  
 THEY WERE EATING AND DRINKING, MARRYING  
 AND GIVING IN MARRIAGE, UNTIL THE DAY THAT  
 NOAH ENTERED THE ARK, <sup>39</sup> AND THEY DID NOT  
 UNDERSTAND UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME AND  
 TOOK THEM ALL AWAY;

**SO WILL** THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.

It starts with a connecting word, here translated as "For." So, we know, that He was continuing His thought. I mentioned before that in Greek, they can put the connector word later in the sentence. It allows them to make sure the listener recognizes the connection, and also allows them to emphasize a different word by putting it first in the sentence. I was going to go through

a whole long lengthy tedious Greek grammar lesson, but nobody signed up for that, so just let me say that in the Greek language this entire passage is structured quite differently than our English translation.

Just know that in the original language it is impossible to do what we so easily do with the English translation. Namely, take the example too far. In Greek it is strongly emphasized that this is just an example with a single point of comparison. What we are missing is the emphasis and the grammatical structure and some of the nuance, which would help keep us from misinterpreting Jesus' intention. So, sign up for advanced Greek, or trust me, or don't, I guess.

Without getting technical this passage declares boldly that Jesus is making a comparison. It is a flashing neon sign in Greek that this is merely an example, an analogy, if you will. Jesus used something familiar as an illustration that is comparable to the thing that He wants us to better grasp.

He's only using Noah as an example to help us understand, not to introduce anything new, or to have every point of His example correspond. I do it every Sunday. I use something familiar as an example to help

you see what I want you to see, but I never intend the example, analogy, illustration, story, whatever, to go beyond the single point I want you to get. This is the same. Like I said last week, we torture the Bible and disrespect Jesus when we try to find meaning beyond that which He intended and that which the original grammar can support.

This passage of Scripture has nothing to do with Noah, the Ark, his family, the Flood, or the people drowned. It doesn't have some secret meaning that must be decoded. Jesus was simply making a comparison.

What is Jesus' single point of comparison? No one knows when He will return. And what's the implication of that? What is the application - how do we apply His point to ourselves? Be ready.

People who push for a deeper meaning to find something that supports their dogma, twist Jesus' words to make them mean the opposite of what He meant and so entirely miss His point and His application.

Oftentimes, those holding to a pre-tribulation Rapture, turn this into an allegory where everything has a

meaning. They will say Noah knew when to get into the Ark and Noah was saved through the Flood by his Lord and did not suffer as the evildoers did. Therefore, they claim that Christians can know the time, and that Christians will be taken home before the bad stuff happens to the evildoers - just like Noah.

Please read the example carefully. I so wish I could show you in Greek how obvious it is that such an idea is impossible from this passage. But even in English, if we look at what was actually said, rather than running away with our own ideas it is obvious. We can see that this example has nothing to do with the Flood account per se. Nothing to do with that at all. Jesus merely sets the stage with all of that to talk about people caught unready. Their surprise is the point. The part about them being swept away is not part of the point, but is there to dramatizes the importance of the application... Be ready - it's important!

Those people back then, didn't know when the Flood was going to come. They were going about life as they always had and then all at once the Flood was upon them. That was Jesus' point. You cannot know and so you must always be ready. He wasn't talking about a distinction between the Godly and ungodly, or the



prepared and unprepared as such, just that they didn't know when... Leading of course to the application that it's wise to be ready when the unexpected happens.

Now, when we create an elaborate and detailed scheme, or model, of how everything will meticulously unfold during a literal 7-year-long Tribulation, then it is impossible for Christ's Return to be a surprise to anyone really. With all the books and movies, especially the Left Behind series. Therefore, there must be a pretribulation rapture that will catch people off-guard. The first position requires the second.

According to Jesus, the world will be clicking along and suddenly, not the Rapture, but the "Coming of the Son of Man... With power and great glory." We just saw in verse 29-31, that the "Coming of the Son of Man," happens "Immediately after the Tribulation." Further, that after everyone on earth, sees the "Son of Man Coming on the clouds," then He will "Gather all His Elect to Himself."

Dispensationalists have to get extremely creative here, so that they can be less creative in the Book of Revelation. That doesn't make sense. Here Jesus is speaking plainly. Here we should take His point literally.

The Book of Revelation is an Apocalypse by its own admission - that's the opening statement of the Book.



Revelation 1:1 ~ Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ... (Äpö-kä-lü-psēs Ē-ā-sü Xrēs-tü)... The Apocalypse, or we translate, Revelation, of Jesus Christ... It is an extremely well-known genre that was specifically designed to evoke a dramatic and emotional response. Dispensationalists make that literal and then have to make Jesus' words here figurative. Again. I'm not saying it's impossible; I'm just asking why anyone would hold dogmatically to any scheme given the difficulties of knowing the future.

No prophecy has ever been correctly deciphered in detail before it happened. Have your ideas, have your opinions, but please be wise enough to hold them very lightly in this area. Never let your opinions hinder unity. The Truth of God hinders unity all by itself - it does not need any help from us.

As an example, taking what I mentioned earlier... Complete surrender to the Salvation found in Jesus Christ is the one and only way anyone will ever get to Heaven. That single Truth hinders unity. Let God be the One to do that, He doesn't need our help.

According to the Thesis verse (36) and now according to this example, no one can know... Be ready.

I said before, Almighty God, our Lord and Savior, wants to pound that into our heads and so, we will be hearing it a lot over the next few weeks.



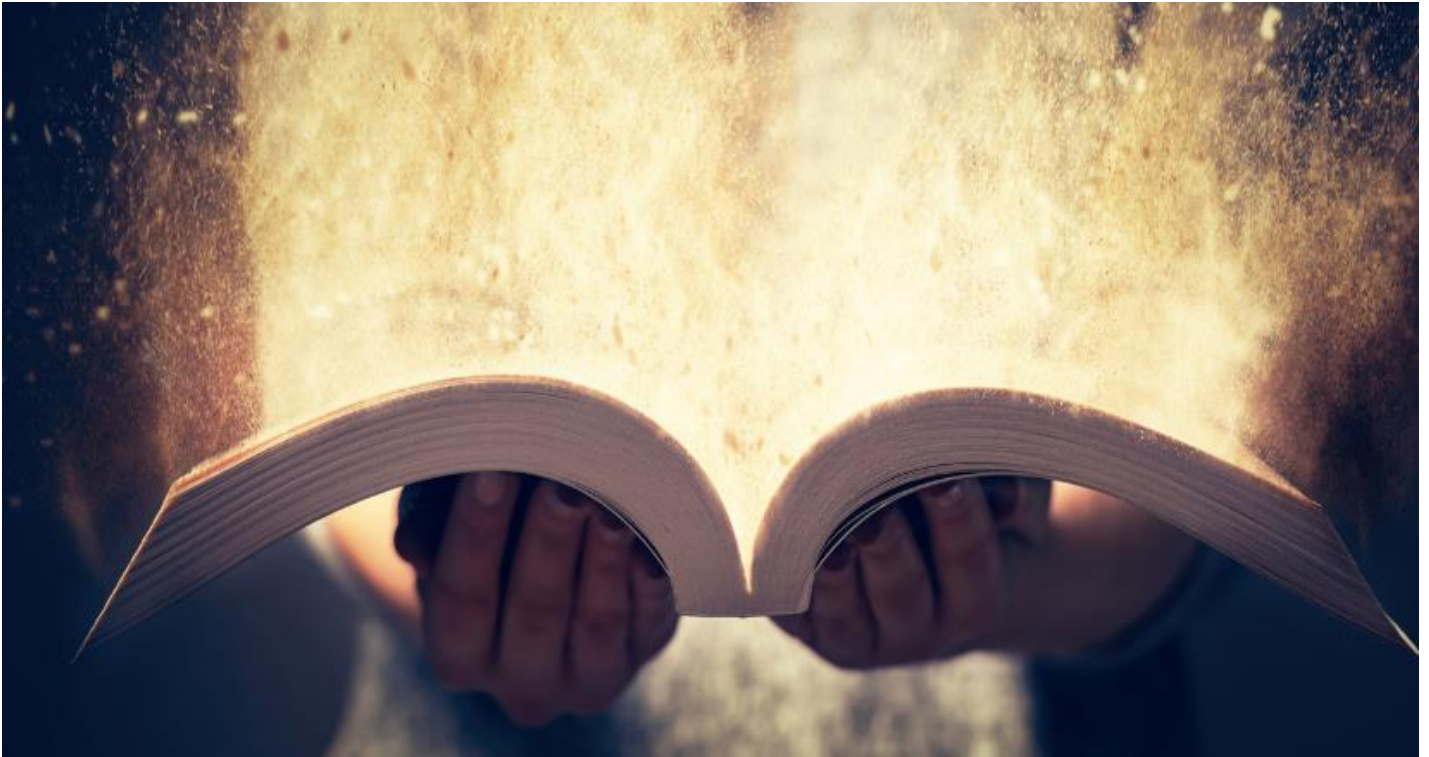
Matthew 24:40&41, 40“Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41“Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.”

And the Dispensational crowd goes wild! Finally, proof of a sudden Rapture of only the good folks like me.

There is not a legitimate, reasonable Biblical scholar from any camp or background who sees this as having anything to do with the pretribulation Rapture. If that's your bias, it gets confirmed here, but erroneously.

Contextually, grammatically, it is impossible. What I'm saying is even the scholars who hold to a pretribulation Rapture agree that that is not what Jesus is talking about here. The subject here is clearly His Glorious Return at the End of the Age after the Tribulation is over. Again, that does not mean that a pretribulation Rapture is impossible, it just means that Jesus didn't mention it to His Disciples in talking about the end times.

That should speak volumes to us. Now, let me clarify something for all of you. Please listen very carefully to what I'm going to say... I'm not a Dispensationalist, but I'm not a Covenantalist either. I'm not a Pretribber, a Mid-tribber, or a Post-tribber. I'm not a Premillennialist, nor a Postmillennialist, nor an Amillennialist and while we're at it, I'm not an Arminianist, nor am I a Calvinist either. I don't think so highly of myself to have an opinion that is strong enough to label myself.



I believe in the Bible as it was written, and all these schemes have their Biblical problems. I'm bashing Dispensationalism more than the rest right now, because most of you learned that and I want you, to jettison your devotion to it... You can still believe it, but I don't want you to be defined by it...

Why? For so many reasons including the love for each other and the unity of the Holy Spirit and the fact that we need to torture the Scripture to make it work.

Trust in God, not your own understanding. Do not be dogmatic, stubborn, and inflexible about questionable things. There are plenty of things that are certain - be

dogmatic, stubborn, and inflexible about them and be wise enough to know the difference.

The context is the Glorious Second Coming and so it is about judgment. Biblically, there can only be two possible outcomes. One is eternal condemnation and the other is eternal fellowship. All who are judged on their works fall into the first outcome. No person can ever be justified by their works because all fall short of the minimum standard.

If you're like so many in the world, those holding to Judaism, Muslimism, Christian legalism, humanistic deism, and a host of other isms that should be wasims, and so, are at least partially relying upon your good works to get you into the Happy Place, you will be Judged and you will be condemned forever. That's the end of that story.

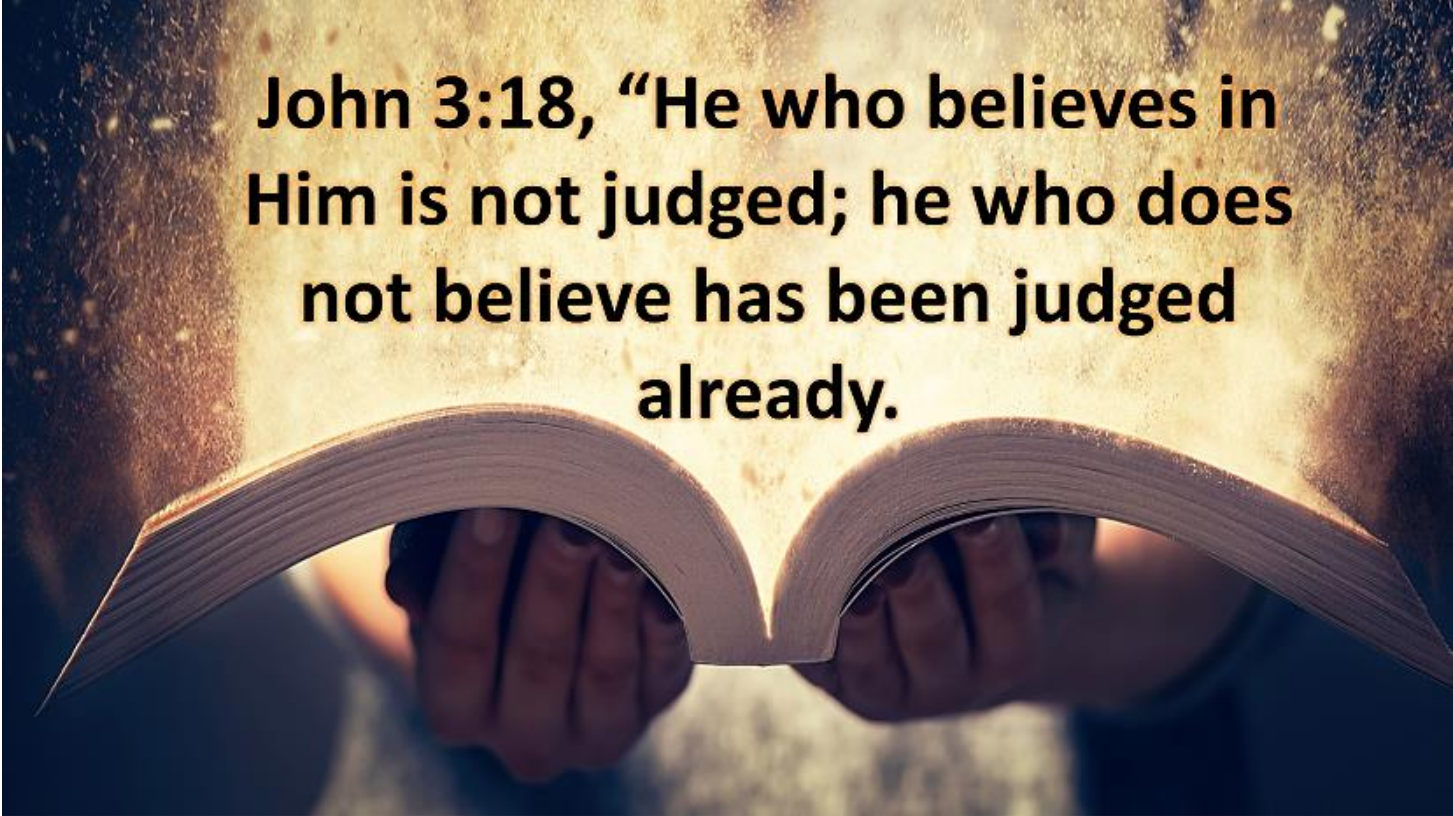
If you are a person who has completely surrendered to the completed work of Jesus on your behalf and stand only in His righteous deeds, then technically you bypass the line for Judgment and are gathered to him forever. You'll still give Him a full accounting of what you did with the resources He gave you in this life, but you will enter into eternal fellowship.

Verses 40&41 parallel each other and both mean exactly the same thing. Jesus used men and women, implied young and old. His scope is universal. The two examples represent all of humanity.

The one taken is either taken to Jesus, or more likely the meaning is that they are taken away to judgment. The Greek is a bit ambiguous as to which one is in deep kimchi and which one is in tall cotton. Another great reason not to be dogmatic.

Jesus point was not which one went where, and it certainly had nothing to do with the Rapture. His point was that the people, likely close relatives and at the minimum friends and co-workers would have dramatically different destinations.





**John 3:18, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already.”**

One will be Saved and the other condemned... At that point it will be too late to change a thing... Your destination will be set forever... So what? So, be ready.

Are those my words? Scott's opinion? What's the very next verse? Matthew 24:42, 42“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. See how easy it is to understand the words of Jesus when we just take His words as they were spoken? When we just take God's Message to us in the context in which He recorded it?

This is a command from Jesus. He said, because of what I just told you “Stay alert.” be ready, my friends,

be ready. Why, because confirming our Thesis verse 36, no one knows when.

