

I thought you might find this exposition helpful. If you think others might benefit from it you are welcome to pass it on. If you have any points I may not have thought of or considered, if you detect any flawed reasoning, or if you have any suggestions, or helpful comments please let me know.

"LEFT BEHIND . . . IS IT BETTER TO BE TAKEN OR LEFT BEHIND?"

Recently there has been a tremendous craze about a new Christian movie "Left Behind." The entire movie is based on a false premise that *the one that is LEFT BEHIND is left ALIVE* to go through the great tribulation-the seven last plagues.

Even some Adventists have also adopted the idea that *the ones left behind are left alive*, and that it is "actually much better to be 'left behind'." <sup>1</sup>

In defending the Bible truth of the Christian faith we should use "sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9), not arguments that cannot endure close examination.

I would humbly submit the following as a very persuasive way to present the truth to those who have been or will be persuaded by both the book and the movie *Left Behind*.

We must remember that people who cannot always see spiritual truth are somewhat like a person who is accustomed to drinking alcohol and has gotten drunk; *they look at the same things that someone who is sober does, but they see something entirely different*. They see a distorted view, a blurred picture, a foggy view of those same things. So it is in the spiritual realm. Those who have been drinking from the wine of Babylon<sup>2</sup>, or even casually sipping a little of her wine, can look at the same passages as we do but see something entirely different than we might see. Just as it takes a person who has been literally drinking TIME to sober up, and for their vision to return to normal, so it takes TIME for those who have be spiritual drunk to see things in their true light, especially if they refuse to "quit drinking." Many do not even believe that "occasional drinking" affects them, their judgment, or their perception. My point is, that it takes time for people to see the truth, and it may take several repetitious exposures to the truth before they begin to sober up and see things as they really are, in their true light. This can apply to anyone of us.

Following my analogy of someone who has been drinking . . . some times people can get sober real quick when they are exposed to something which shocks them, that initiates the body's "fight or flight" mechanism, like a fire alarm going off in a bar. This is sort of the method which I follow in

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<sup>1</sup> *Left Behind or Sincerely Taken*, Remnant Publications, 2000, back cover.

<sup>2</sup> The *Secret Rapture* theory is the result of the counter reformation (1590) promoted by the Roman Catholic Jesuit Francisco Rebera, who came up with the idea that *Antichrist is a single person* who will come in the future (from his day). This theory was then disseminated by Cardinal Bellarmine (1581-1593)-  
[www.amazingdiscoveries.org/RT\\_encyclopedia\\_Futurism\\_Jesuit\\_Ribera](http://www.amazingdiscoveries.org/RT_encyclopedia_Futurism_Jesuit_Ribera) see also  
[www.amazingdiscoveries.org/RT\\_encyclopedia\\_Futurism\\_Europe\\_Dispensationalism](http://www.amazingdiscoveries.org/RT_encyclopedia_Futurism_Europe_Dispensationalism)

dealing with those who believe that the one taken and the one left are BOTH left ALIVE.

There are two passages that present the idea of "one take and one left." Matthew 24:37-42 and Luke 17:26-37. Some would have us believe that the ones who are LEFT are "left alive." But what Christ says is shocking to them for He says they're left dead as a corpse. The context of both passages use the days of Noah as an illustration of what it will be like at the coming of Christ;

**Matthew 24:37-42;**

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

38 They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark,

39 And they knew not until the flood came, and TOOK the all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then two shall 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. 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.

**The almost identical wording is found in Luke 17:34-36;**

**Luke 17:26-36;**

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

27 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.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. I tell you, that in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other 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.

37 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.

I have asked those who believe in the *Secret Rapture Theory* if these passages were describing the rapture “one shall be taken, and the other left.” Their response is “YES!”

Then I asked them to read the next verse in Luke 17, *slowly* ;

“And they answer and said unto Him, WHERE LORD? And He said unto them, 'Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.'” Luke 17:37.

“Wheresoever the CARCASS IS, there will THE VULTURES BE GATHERED TOGETHER!”  
(*In more recent translations, the last phrase reads similar to this way*)

Then I simply ask the question;

“*Are the disciples asking the Lord WHERE is the one TAKEN or are they asking WHERE is the one LEFT?*”

Some say the disciples are asking Jesus the question “Where is the one taken?” Others say they are asking “Where is the one left?” Some others say they're not sure which way the question goes.

The answer to whether the disciples are asking “Where is the one taken?” or “Where is the one left?” is found in Jesus' answer to their question;

“Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”

“Wheresoever the CARCASS IS, THERE WILL THE VULTURE BE GATHERED TOGETHER!”

Jesus says; “Wherever the body IS, there is where the vultures will gather. . . Wherever there IS a carcass, that's where the vultures will be going to come for a meal.”

What is a “carcass?” A DEAD BODY! The implication is *Absolutely Clear*~by saying this; Jesus is saying that *WHERE (wherever) the CARCASS IS LEFT!* or *A DEAD BODY IS LEFT!* there is *WHERE the vultures will BE GATHERED TOGETHER!* You just don't take a carcass to vultures.

Please notice that all these words in Jesus's answer, “wheresoever,” “left” and “be gathered,” all of have to deal with *place and location* of the dead body. This is one evidence that Jesus is answering the question “Where is the one LEFT?” not “Where is the one TAKEN?”

How so? Let's assume that Jesus was answering the question of “*Where Lord, are they TAKEN?*” How much sense does Jesus' answer make if He was saying “*They are TAKEN to wheresoever the body is, there will the vultures be gathered together?*”

When we make Jesus say; “*They are TAKEN to wheresoever the body is,*” we are really making Jesus say that the ones TAKEN are TAKEN to where someone else's dead body is! This reasoning introduces or makes TWO persons out of ONE and the SAME person.

The wording “*They are TAKEN to wheresoever the body is*” implies that one person is *taken to where the dead body of another person is located*, and therefore, the one TAKEN is *not the same*

person as the one who's dead body they are taken too. The one TAKEN is TAKEN to where a dead body already is. But those who argue that the ones TAKEN are the lost, teach that the lost are the SAME persons as those dead bodies which the vultures feed on!

In Greek or English syntax, the closest *antecedent* to the question "Where Lord?" is the word "LEFT" and NOT the word "taken." The answer Jesus gives is linked to the question "Where Lord? . . . Wheresoever the carcass is" and to the phrase "the other is left."

The fact that Jesus says where the body "IS" (which is implied in the Greek) is a reference to the location of the body of the wicked. A carcass is a dead body that is left on the ground and the vultures will soon come to where the body has been left and eat the remains.

Does it make sense to believe that those who are TAKEN are TAKEN to where the vultures gather? Wouldn't it have made more sense, (if this were true), for Jesus to say "Wheresoever the vultures are, there will the dead bodies be TAKEN?"

The problem is, that in Jesus' answer He taught the universal truth of the nature of vultures; they ALWAYS come to where a dead body is lying, and NEVER are dead bodies brought to where they are. It is the vultures who "gather" "wheresoever" they find a dead body. Dead bodies are NEVER TAKEN to where they gather!

What Jesus was teaching is that when the Son of man comes, the wicked will be destroyed or die right where they are when He comes, and the vultures will come and gather together around the dead bodies. This is the same truth taught in the OT;

<sup>CJB</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ On that day, those killed by ADONAI will be strewn from one end of the earth to the other; they will not be mourned or gathered or buried, but will lie on the ground like dung.

<sup>CSB</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ Those slain by the LORD on that day will be spread from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned, gathered, or buried. They will be like manure on the surface of the ground.

<sup>ESV</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ <sup>a</sup>And those pierced by the LORD on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other.  
<sup>b</sup>They shall not be lamented, <sup>c</sup>or gathered, or buried; <sup>c</sup>they shall be dung on the surface of the ground.

<sup>GWN</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ On that day those killed by the LORD will stretch from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned, taken away, or buried. They will become like manure on the ground.

<sup>KJV</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

<sup>NAB</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ On that day, those whom the LORD has slain will be strewn from one end of the earth to the other. None will mourn them, none will gather them for burial; they shall lie like dung on the field.

<sup>NET</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ Those who have been killed by the LORD at that time will be scattered from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned over, gathered up, or buried.<sup>92</sup> Their dead bodies will lie scattered over the ground like manure.

<sup>NIV</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ At that time those slain by the LORD will be everywhere-- from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried, but will be like refuse lying on the ground.

<sup>NLT</sup> Jeremiah 25:33 ¶ In that day those the LORD has slaughtered will fill the earth from one end to the other. No one will mourn for them or gather up their bodies to bury them. They will be scattered on the ground like manure.

Alright . . . after reading this text in several translations, we can only come to the conclusion that when the LORD-the Son of Man returns, He will destroy the wicked with the brightness of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Isaiah 11:4; Revelation 19:11-21), and they will die right WHERE they ARE when He comes. In the Cowboy's translation of the Bible the wicked will be lying on the ground like a field of "cow-pies." The wicked will be as though they had been randomly "scattered" or "strewn" across the face of the entire earth, but in reality they have been LEFT right WHERE they were when Christ returns . . . they are LEFT BEHIND DEAD!

**Zechariah 14:1-3, 12** <sup>1</sup> ¶ *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh*, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. <sup>2</sup> *For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle*; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. <sup>3</sup> *Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.* . . . <sup>12</sup> ¶ And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; *Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.*

**Revelation 19:11-21** <sup>11</sup> ¶ And I saw heaven opened, *and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.* <sup>12</sup> His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. <sup>13</sup> And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup> *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* <sup>16</sup> And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. <sup>17</sup> ¶ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, *saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together* unto the supper of the great God; <sup>18</sup> *That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.* <sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. <sup>20</sup> And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. <sup>21</sup> *And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

The Bible does not portray any kind of the TAKING of the wicked and gathering them into one big pile, in one place, to be eaten by the vultures. But rather they are "scattered" all over the entire face of the earth and "NO ONE will gather up their dead bodies to bury them!"

What will happen is that the vultures or "fowls" of the earth COME down and gather together around every dead body, wherever they have been LEFT, and the eat of their flesh. The ones who are LEFT, are LEFT DEAD upon the surface of the entire earth.

The assumption made by the *Left Behind* producers, as well as the majority of churches, is that *the one that is LEFT BEHIND is left ALIVE!* They all seem to either stop at verse 36 in Luke 17, and then just pass over and never read verse 37 (*remember what I said about the difference between what an intoxicated person sees and what a sober person sees*). The facts are; that Jesus said that one is TAKEN ALIVE! and the other is LEFT DEAD! NOT LEFT ALIVE to go through some kind of seven year tribulation! BOTH are not left alive. Its one and not the other who lives.

Here is this key text in several translations, including the original Greek of the text;

<sup>CJB</sup> **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed - one will be taken and the other left behind. <sup>35</sup> There will be two women grinding grain together - one will be taken and the other left behind." <sup>36</sup> ★ <sup>37</sup> They asked him, "Where, Lord?" He answered, "Wherever there's a dead body, that's where the vultures gather."

CSB **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> I tell you, on that night two will be in one bed: one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>35</sup> Two women will be grinding grain together: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>36</sup> [Two will be in a field: one will be taken, and the other will be left.] <sup>37</sup> "Where, Lord?" they asked Him. He said to them, "Where the corpse is, there also the vultures will be gathered."

ESV **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup> <sup>a</sup>There will be two women <sup>b</sup>grinding together. One will be taken and the other left. <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> And they said to him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, <sup>a</sup>"Where the corpse<sup>1</sup> is, there the vultures<sup>2</sup> will gather."

GWN **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> "I can guarantee that on that night if two people are in one bed, one will be taken and the other one will be left. <sup>35</sup> Two women will be grinding grain together. One will be taken, and the other one will be left." <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> They asked him, "Where, Lord?" Jesus told them, "Vultures will gather wherever there is a dead body."

KJV **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. <sup>35</sup> Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. <sup>36</sup> Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. {this verse is not found in most of the Greek copies} <sup>37</sup> 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.

NAB **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. <sup>35</sup> And there will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken, the other left. <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> They said to him in reply, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will gather."

NET **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there will be two people in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup> There will be two women grinding grain together; <sup>90</sup> one will be taken and the other left. <sup>91</sup> <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> Then <sup>92</sup> the disciples <sup>93</sup> said <sup>94</sup> to him, "Where, <sup>95</sup> Lord?" He replied to them, "Where the dead body <sup>96</sup> is, there the vultures <sup>97</sup> will gather." <sup>98</sup>

NIV **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup> Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. {35 Some manuscripts left. 36 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.} <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> "Where, Lord?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

NLT **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> That night two people will be asleep in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. <sup>35</sup> Two women will be grinding flour together at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. <sup>1</sup> <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> "Where will this happen, Lord?" <sup>1</sup> the disciples asked. Jesus replied, "Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near." <sup>2</sup>

SCR **Luke 17:34-37** <sup>34</sup> λέγω ὑμῖν, ταύτη τῇ νυκτὶ ἔσονται δύο ἐπὶ κλίνης μιᾶς· ὁ εἷς παραληφθήσεται (*taken*), καὶ ὁ ἕτερος ἀφεθήσεται (*left*). <sup>35</sup> δύο ἔσονται ἀλήθουςαι ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό· ἢ μία παραληφθήσεται (*taken*), καὶ ἡ ἕτερα ἀφεθήσεται (*left*). <sup>36</sup> δύο ἔσονται ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ· ὁ εἷς παραληφθήσεται (*taken*), καὶ ὁ ἕτερος ἀφεθήσεται (*left*). <sup>37</sup> καὶ ἀποκριθέντες λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ποῦ, Κύριε; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, "Οπου τὸ σῶμα, ἐκεῖ συναχθήσονται οἱ ἄετοὶ.

It is so very sad . . . that because of a failure to see verse 37 and what Jesus was teaching, that so many sincere people have been misled. Think of the 17+ Million Dollars that has been wasted (not to mention all the money that has been spent over the years producing, buying, selling, publishing and viewing media ), in promoting this enormous error, all based on the failure to include the last verse in the passage of Luke 17. Both the book and the movie are not really worth reading or watching. I think I've come to the conclusion that I will encourage people to spend their time reading, studying, and teaching the truth of God's Sacred Word instead of watching error.

The Greek here in Luke 17 should be noted, the word for "*taken*" is παραληφθήσεται and the

word for “left” is ἀφεθήσεται, these are the same words un in Matthew 24:40-41; we will come back to the significance of these two Greek words herein further below.

Now in order to combat the Secret Rapture idea~that those who are LEFT are LEFT ALIVE, some say these folks are mistaken because those who are LEFT are the saved and those that are TAKEN are the lost. By turning the saved/taken and the lost/left around they try to prove that the LEFT BEHIND teaching is wrong because the righteous ARE NOT TAKEN up in the rapture (whether “secret”/invisible or visible) but are LEFT BEHIND. They have taken a different position than the normal reading of the passage in order to prove the secret rapture doctrine is in error.

So, they say; When the disciples were asking the question “Where Lord?” they "wanted to know 'where' the wicked will be taken."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the disciples were really asking “Where Lord, is the one TAKEN?” They were not asking “Where is the one left?” It is argued that because of the context of this passage; “We can only conclude from Luke 17 that it is not the righteous who are 'taken' at all- but the wicked! Those that are left are the righteous . . .”<sup>4</sup> Is this really the only conclusion we can come to from the context?

Ellen G. White gives the following meaning of this very passage as found Luke 17;

#### MR No. 713 - Meaning of Those Who are "Left"

"Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." "Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Luke 17:36, 35.) The righteous and the wicked are to be associated together in the work of life. But the Lord reads the character, He discerns who are obedient children, who respect and love His commandments. {9MR 137.1} . . .

Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light; they shall enter in through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. The one shall be taken. His name shall stand in the book of life, while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God. {9MR 137.3}

EGW could not be clearer. Those who are “taken” have their names “in the book of life.” She says the ones who are “taken” are the righteous, and this is in direct conflict with those who say “Those that are left are the righteous.”<sup>4</sup> So they both can’t be right . . . Who then is? Let’s take the time to look very closely at the context.

Some of the confusion can be cleared away when we examine where the problem begins-with a misunderstanding of Matthew 24:37-42. Keeping this text in the context of the parallel passage of Luke 17, and comparing the two passages with one another, Jesus uses the days of Noah as an illustration of what it will be like at the coming of Christ;

Luke 17:26 - 36 <sup>26</sup> And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; <sup>29</sup> But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. <sup>31</sup> In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field,

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<sup>3</sup> *Left Behind or Sincerely Taken*, Remnant Publications, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> *Left Behind or Sincerely Taken*, Remnant Publications, 2000, p. 102.

let him likewise not return back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> Who-soever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. <sup>34</sup> **I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other shall be LEFT.** <sup>35</sup> **Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other LEFT.** <sup>36</sup> **Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other LEFT.**

**Matthew 24:37 - 42** <sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. <sup>38</sup> 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, <sup>39</sup> And knew not until the flood came, and TOOK them all away; **so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** <sup>40</sup> **Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other LEFT.** <sup>41</sup> **Two *women* shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be TAKEN, and the other LEFT.** <sup>42</sup> Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

If those who are “LEFT” behind at Christ’s coming are really the righteous, then to be consistent with Jesus’ illustration of Noah’s day and Lot’s day, those that were “left” back in those days are also the righteous. But, as we shall see, this is not the case.

Here’s where the confusion begins; It is erroneously *assumed* that the word “TOOK” in the phrase “TOOK them all away,” is the same as the word “TAKEN” in the phrase “the one shall be TAKEN.”

But some will argue; “Did not Jesus say “the flood came and TOOK them all away?” . . . And He also said “So shall the coming of the Son of man be?” So those who are “taken” are the same as those whom the flood “took away?”” The context nor the Greek word comparison support this suggestion.

It is true that the flood came and those who were “taken” away by the flood were the wicked. BUT are we to also then believe that another flood will come to take the wicked away as it was in Noah’s day? Obviously not. Is it then legitimate to conclude that when Jesus comes again, the ones “TAKEN” are taken “to destruction,” and therefore the ones LEFT, are left alive?

We could understand how a person could conceive how that those who are “taken” from the field and the mill are “taken to destruction,” *IF* we exclude the principle of Biblical Interpretation of the analogy of Scripture, which says that we must consider *all* the Scriptures relating to the same subject before we draw our conclusions, (which, in this case, would include Luke 17:34-37). . . and if we only had the passage in Matthew's gospel to draw our conclusions. But even then, if we were limited to only using what Matthew wrote, this conclusion that the one “taken” is taken to destruction, is found to be erroneous. How so? By the immediate context of the passage and by giving all due respect for the Greek syntax of the passage;

**CHECK THE GREEK DEFINITIONS, GRAMMAR, AND SYNTAX:**

The context and syntax of the passage in Matthew’s gospel is this;

As it was in the days of Noah so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. The people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage “AND KNEW NOT UNTIL the flood came, and took the all away.” We know that another flood is not coming to “take then all away.” Jesus is coming. But is He coming to “take” the wicked all away, like it was in Noah’s day?

The emphasis in Matthew is placed on the UNEXPECTANCY of the EVENT, NOT the MANNER of how the wicked were destroyed!-that is, they were destroyed by being “taken away by the flood.”

Noah's day PARALLELS the Coming of the Son of Man. The eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage PARALLELS the working in the field and the grinding at the mill; they ALL were busy, business as usual, "until the flood came." This PARALLELS "until Christ comes."

So then, is the Bible trying to teach us that *just as the flood came and took them (the wicked) all away* that so too, when Jesus comes, *He will take all the wicked away*? OR is the Bible simply trying to teach us that, just as there were two groups in Noah's day-the saved and the lost, so there will be two groups at the second coming of Christ, the save and the lost? -That is, there were those that were destroyed and those who remained alive.

Now, is the Bible saying that it will literally be just like in Noah's day (identical) or only similar to it? At the coming of Christ will there be another flood that will come "and take them all away?" No. Then what is the parallel being drawn here?

It is the "not knowing" of "when" Christ is coming that is REEMPHASIZED by verse 42 of Matthew 24. The EMPHASIS is placed upon the UNEXPECTANCY of Christ's coming, NOT on the MANNER in which the wicked are "destroyed."

"Watch THEREFORE . . ." implies that we are to WATCH, we are to be "looking for" Christ's coming, because the coming of Christ (mentioned in the preceding verses) *will come when we least expect it, it will come as a surprise*. This is further emphasized by Jesus saying "for ye KNOW NOT what HOUR your Lord doth COME!"

Matthew 24:41 is the concluding remark to verses 36-40, as indicated by the word "THEREFORE." It reemphasizes what has been stated in verse 36; "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*"

The emphasis placed upon the UNEXPECTANCY of Christ's Coming is repeated 3 times in just these few verses, and 7 times in the whole of Matthew 24, while the idea that the wicked were "taken" away by the flood is mentioned only once in this passage. The Bible is not trying to teach that the wicked are "taken away" but that they are destroyed, and when they least expect it.

The fact that the flood of Noah's day "took" them all away is really just a passing remark, a parenthetical statement (verse 39), while the emphasis is placed on the concept that "*they knew not until the flood came . . . [passing remark] (and took them all away) . . . so shall the coming of the Son of man be.*"

The wicked, that are living just before Jesus returns, will NOT KNOW that He is coming until it's too late. The emphasis is on the fact that the wicked will be caught off their guard when Christ returns and will all be destroyed, AND NOT on the manner of their destruction.

In Noah's day the flood came as a *surprise-unexpectantly* to the wicked and destroyed them all, in Christ's Day Jesus will come *unexpectantly* as a *surprise*, and destroy them all. He does not do this by "taking them all away" but by *leaving the behind, abandoning them*-this is the true meaning of the word "left" (ἀφίεται) in the Greek. And that is the point. It is not that Jesus will destroy by "a flood" the wicked, by "taking them all away," just as the flood came and "took them all way."

The structure of the text (check the Greek syntax- relation of words to one another) *does not allow*, in the slightest degree, a parallel to be drawn between those whom the flood “took” away and those whom are “taken” when Jesus comes again! How so?

The Greek words translated “TOOK”-**ἔρρεν** (Matthew 24:39) and “TAKEN”-**παραλαμβάνεται** (Matthew 24:40 ) are entirely different and carry completely different meanings.

In the reading of the passage of Matthew 24:39-41, *in only the English*, there is a tendency to assume that those spoken of as being “taken away” by the flood parallels the ones that are “taken” from among the two that are in the field, so that we are left with the impression that *those who are “taken” from the field or the mill are equivalent to those whom the flood “took” away*, just like in the days of Noah, to destruction. Let’s look at the text again.

“They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, and *they knew not until the flood came, and TOOK them all away*; so shall the coming of the Son of man be. Then two shall 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*.” Matthew 24:38-41

The actual Greek word translated “TOOK” gives the sense of “to take life,” i.e. “he took her life.”

{Arndt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon, p. 24 states this meaning; "take away, remove . . . by force, even by killing . . . sweep away Mt 24:39."}

The flood not only “carried them away,” but it actually “killed them” or “took their lives.” The stress is not on the fact that the flood waters “took” the dead bodies and carried them off, but on the fact that the wicked were “all destroyed.”

Also, *Strong’s Concordance* meaning of “took” states;

142 ἀίρω airo {ah'-ee-ro} **Meaning:** 1) to raise up, elevate, lift up 1a) to raise from the ground, take up: stones 1b) to raise upwards, elevate, lift up: the hand 1c) to draw up: a fish 2) to take upon one's self and carry what has been raised up, to bear 3) to bear away what has been raised, carry off 3a) to move from its place 3b) to take off or away what is attached to anything 3c) to remove 3d) to carry off, carry away with one 3e) to appropriate what is taken 3f) to take away from another what is his or what is committed to him, to take by force 3g) to take and apply to any use 3h) to take from among the living, either by a natural death, or by violence 3i) cause to cease. (All under score and bold is mine)

The semantic range or the variety of meaning of this word can be quite broad. So, how do we select which meaning is correct?

Context also determines meaning, not just the use a Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic Dictionary. If these list that specific spelling of the word, and also if they site that specific verse, those definitions will be more concrete with the context, rather than just the generic meaning.

Was the flood “violent?” Were the lives of the wicked “taken by force?” “By violence?” “Taken from among the living?” *The flood just did not carry them off somewhere, it “TOOK” their lives from them.*

So then, Greek word for “took” carries the meaning of be taken to death or taken away by “killing,” but NOT so for the Greek word translated "TAKEN" as in “one shall be taken” (the same word as

in Luke 17:34-36). This is the word which means “taken to one's self!” and is the SAME word that is translated in “I will TAKE you to Myself” John 14:3;

{See Arnt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon p. 619; "the one is taken (by the angels), the other is left Mt 24:40; cf. vs. 41; Lk 17:34f."}

Again, the word TAKEN in “one shall be TAKEN” is NOT that same word as TOOK found in the phrase “the flood came and TOOK them all away.”

On the other hand, John 14:3 reveals the truth about who will be “taken” and who will be “left.” Compare this with the disciples question “Where Lord?” Notice how in John 14:3 Jesus had already answered the question of “where” the righteous would be “taken.”

<sup>KJV</sup> Luke 17:37 And they answer and said unto Him, *where* LORD? And He said unto them, 'Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.'

<sup>CJB</sup> John 14:3 Since I am going and preparing a place for you, I will return to take you with me; so that where I am, you may be also.

<sup>CSB</sup> John 14:3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also.

<sup>ESV</sup> John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you<sup>a</sup> to myself, that <sup>b</sup>where I am you may be also.

<sup>GWN</sup> John 14:3 If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again. Then I will bring you into my presence so that you will be where I am.

<sup>KJV</sup> John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

<sup>NAB</sup> John 14:3 <sup>1</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.

<sup>NET</sup> John 14:3 And if I go and make ready<sup>8</sup> a place for you, I will come again and take you<sup>9</sup> to be with me.<sup>10</sup> so that where I am you may be too.

<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

<sup>NLT</sup> John 14:3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.

<sup>SCR</sup> John 14:3 καὶ ἐὰν πορευθῶ καὶ ἐτοιμάσω ὑμῖν τόπον, πάλιν ἔρχομαι καὶ **παραλήψομαι** ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἑμαυτόν· ἵνα ὅπου εἰμὶ ἐγώ, καὶ ὑμεῖς ᾗτε.

**παραλήψομαι** verb indicative future middle deponent 1st person singular from παραλαμβάνω

[GING] παραλαμβάνω

παραλαμβάνω—1. take (to oneself), take with or along Mt 1:20, 24; 2:13f, 20f; 12:45; 24:40f; Mk 4:36; Lk 9:28; 11:26; J 14:3; Ac 15:39; 21:24, 26, 32. Take into custody, arrest Ac 16:35 v.l.—2. take over, receive Mk 7:4; 1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; Gal 1:9; Col 4:17; 1 Th 4:1; Hb 12:28.—3. receive with favor, accept J 1:11; 1 Cor 15:1; Phil 4:9. [pg 149]

Here is the key phrase in the English and the Greek of John 14:3;

“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and **receive you unto myself**; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

καὶ **παραλήψομαι** ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἑμαυτόν·

And **take to myself** you towards **to myself**

NOTE the repetition of “take to myself” with “towards, to myself.” This is making it emphatic that those who are the righteous, Christ’s disciples, are literally *taken from this earth and received into Christ “bosom”* -that is close to His own person at His return. They are dear to Him and He takes them close to Himself, which is the true meaning of the Greek. They are NOT “taken away to themselves” or “take to itself” (the flood) for or to “destruction.” Now compare John 14:3 in the Greek with the Greek of Matthew (see the whole Greek text [Luke 17:34-37](#) on page 6);

**Matthew 24:37-42** <sup>Christian Jewish Bible</sup> <sup>37</sup> For the Son of Man's coming will be just as it was in the days of Noah. <sup>38</sup> Back then, before the Flood, people went on eating and drinking, taking wives and becoming wives, right up till the day Noah entered the ark; <sup>39</sup> and they didn't know what was happening until the Flood came and *swept them all away*. It will be just like that when the Son of Man comes. <sup>40</sup> Then there will be two men in a field - *one will be taken* and *the other left behind*. <sup>41</sup> There will be two women grinding flour at the mill - *one will be taken* and *the other left behind*. <sup>42</sup> So stay alert, because you don't know on what day your Lord will come.

**Matthew 24:37-42** <sup>37</sup> ὥσπερ δὲ αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ Νῶε, οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. <sup>38</sup> ὥσπερ γὰρ ἦσαν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταῖς πρὸ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ τρώγοντες καὶ πίνοντες, γαμοῦντες καὶ ἐκγαμίζοντες, ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας εἰσηλθε Νῶε εἰς τὴν κιβωτόν, <sup>39</sup> καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν, ἕως ἦλθεν ὁ κατακλυσμὸς καὶ ἦρεν ἅπαντας, οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. <sup>40</sup> τότε δύο ἔσονται ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ· ὁ εἷς **παραλαμβάνεται**, καὶ ὁ εἷς **ἀφίεται**. <sup>41</sup> δύο ἀλήθουσαι ἐν τῷ μύλῳ· μία **παραλαμβάνεται**, καὶ μία **ἀφίεται**. <sup>42</sup> γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε ποῖα ὥρα ὁ Κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται.

These Greek words ἦρεν “took” and ἀφίεται “left” are totally different than the Greek word **παραλαμβάνεται**~“I will take you unto myself”- both in their meaning as well as is their application in this passage, as well as within the syntax of the Greek text.

The disciples’ question “Where Lord?” is asking, *where are the wicked*, as far as their physical location is {Arndt & Gingrich p. 576; particle *denoting place* Lk 17:37}. But it means more than this.

Now, some have pointed out that this would not make sense because *they already knew where the were left* <sup>5</sup> . . . *in bed, at the grinding wheel, and in the field*, so why would they be asking something about what they already knew?

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<sup>5</sup> *Left Behind or Sincerely Taken*, Remnant Publications, 2000, Ibid, p.p. 14-15 (for other points in favor of this view see p.p. 8-17.

Yes, the disciples knew that one would be left in bed, at the mill, in the field . . . but what they did not know and what wanted to know was *WHAT would happen to them AFTER they were left there?* If they are LEFT BEHIND what would be their end?

The disciples ALL knew that *Jesus was talking about His coming back again*, right? And this would naturally have brought up in their minds *the promise He already gave them in John 14:3*—that when He would come again, He would “take them unto Himself, that *WHERE I am, THERE you may BE also.*” Let’s not forget this. It is part of the broader context of Christ’s second coming.

They *already knew* Jesus would come back to take them to the Father’s House, to those mansions where He went to prepare a place for them. They were expecting when Christ returned, that He would TAKE them out of this world. So why would they ask “Where are they taken when they are taken out of bed, out of the field, or out of their employment?” They knew that answer. What they *did not know* was *what would happen to the wicked* who would be LEFT BEHIND.

So, what the disciples were really asking was “Where Lord?” in the sense of **CONDITION!** *What condition are they left in!* This is shown in Jesus’s answer to their question; “Wheresoever the body is (left), there will the vulture be gathered.”

The Greek for “left” ~ ἀφίημι means to “leave, abandon . . . Leave standing or lying (without concerning ones self further about it . . . half dead . . . *Leave behind*” {Arndt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon, p. 126, 3. -leave}

ἀφεθήσεται verb indicative future passive 3rd person singular from ἀφίημι

[GING] ἀφίημι

ἀφίημι—1. *let go, send away* Mk 4:36; *give up* Mt 27:50; *utter* Mk 15:37; *divorce* 1 Cor 7:11ff. *Cancel, pardon* Mt 18:27, 32; *remit, forgive sins, etc.* Mt 6:12, 14f; Mk 3:28; Lk 12:10; Ro 4:7; 1 J 1:9; 2:12.—2. *leave* lit. Mt 4:11; 19:27; Mk 13:34; Lk 10:30; *abandon* Mk 14:50. *Let someone have something* Mt 5:40; *give peace* J 14:27. *Fig. give up, abandon* Ro 1:27; Hb 6:1; Rv 2:4; *neglect* Mt 23:23.—3. *let, let go, permit, tolerate* Mk 5:19; Ac 5:38; Rv 2:20; 11:9. *Let someone go on* J 11:48. The imperatives ἀφες ἀφετε are used with the subjunctive, esp. in the first person ἀφες ἐκβάλω τὸ κάρφος *let me take out the speck* Mt 7:4; ἀφες ἴδωμεν *let us see* 27:49; also with ἴνα and the third person ἀφες αὐτήν ἴνα τηρήσῃ αὐτό *let her keep it* J 12:7. [pg 31]

Matthew 24:39 καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν, ἕως ἦλθεν ὁ κατακλυσμὸς καὶ ἦρεν ἅπαντας, οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

“Took” them all away in Greek is ἦρεν verb indicative aorist active 3rd person singular from αἶρω

[GING] ἀίρω

ἀίρω—1. *raise, lift, take up, pick up* [Mt 16:24](#); [Lk 17:13](#); [J 8:59](#); *keep in suspense* [J 10:24](#); *weigh (anchors)* [Ac 27:13](#); *take or carry along* [Mt 16:24](#); [27:32](#); w. φωνή *cry out loudly* [Lk 17:13](#). The transition to mng. 2 may be seen in [J 1:29](#), where αἰ;) means both *take up* and *remove*.—2. *take or carry away, remove* [Lk 6:29](#); [J 2:16](#); [19:38](#). *Do away with, kill* [J 19:15](#) (s. ἄρον); *sweep away* [Mt 24:39](#); *conquer, take over* [J 11:48](#); *expel* [1 Cor 5:2](#); *cut off* [J 15:2](#). Supply τι *something* [Mt 9:16](#). [arsis] [pg 5]

The Greek for “took” (ἀίρω) means to “do away with” to “remove by force, even kill,” “sweep away” with the connotation of “force” in Mat. 24:39 {Arndt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon, p. 24, no. 4.}

If this text, “and the other one left,” is describing those righteous that are LEFT BEHIND, then why use a Greek word that is descriptive of one who has been abandoned? Certainly Christ would NOT have those whom He has “left” alive (to be with Him), remain in such a condition, would He?

It is the wicked that are “left behind.” This is unmistakably testified too in Jesus' answer; “Where the carcass IS THERE will the vultures be gathered!” “The one shall be taken and received unto myself, and the other shall be left abandoned” (Lit. Greek).

Jesus tells His disciples, the ones LEFT are LEFT *right where they were* when HE came; “*in the bed, at the mill, in the field.*” They haven't been “taken” anywhere or gone anywhere, but they are LEFT DEAD! So, what we find here is, that Jesus tells the disciples *not only the LOCATION where they were LEFT* (“wherever the carcass IS”), which is obvious, *but also the CONDITION in which they were LEFT!~DEAD!*

When the disciples asked “Where Lord?” the fact that they were asking “*In What Condition were they LEFT*” is born out by the fact that Jesus said the were LEFT DEAD! This is the stress of the text.

To take *the opposite position*, that the disciples were asking “Where is the one TAKEN?” makes no sense, for we then make Jesus say “one shall be TAKEN to wheresoever the carcass is [ ? ], there will the vultures be gathered together.”

Everybody knows *vultures COME to where the dead body is lying*. The dead bodies are not “taken” to where the vultures are, nor are the wicked “taken” to judgment.

The Bible clearly teaches in John 14:1-3 that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for His disciples and that He will COME again. Jesus says that “I will come again, and RECEIVE (παράληψομαι) you UNTO MYSELF; that WHERE I am, THERE ye may be also!”

This is in perfect harmony with Matthew 24:40-41 and Luke 17:34-37, and also I Thessalonians 4:13-18 where those who are resurrected *are caught up in the clouds together* with those who remain alive until the second coming *to meet the Lord in the air*. And as in Acts 1:11 and Luke 24:51, Jesus was “taken” up into heaven and His disciples were “left” on the earth, so it will be the “same” when Jesus will come “in like manner, as you have seen Him go.”

<sup>NIV</sup> **Luke 24:51** While he was blessing them, *he left them* and was *taken up into heaven*.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Acts 1:9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was *taken up*; and a cloud *received him* out of their sight.

<sup>SCR</sup> **Acts 1:9** καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν, βλεπόντων αὐτῶν ἐπήρθη, καὶ νεφέλη ὑπέλαβεν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

ὑπέλαβεν verb indicative aorist active 3rd person singular from ὑπολαμβάνω

[GING] ὑπολαμβάνω

ὑπολαμβάνω—1. *take up* [Ac 1:9](#).—2. *receive as a guest* [3 J 8](#).—3. *reply* [Lk 10:30](#).—4. *assume, think, believe* [Lk 7:43](#); [Ac 2:15](#).\* [pg 207]

The Greek here ὑπολαμβάνω, in this text is related directly to the Greek in John 14:3 παραλαμβάνετα, where Jesus will receive or “take” to Himself those who love His appearing.

It is the righteous who are TAKEN off the earth into the air and received by Jesus when He comes, just like they had SEEN Him “taken up” or “raptured” into heaven, leaving His disciples behind on the earth. This will not be quite the same at His second coming because He was coming back for His disciples the first time and they would not be “abandon” to themselves. NOT so for the wicked when He comes the second time. *They will be “abandon~left” to the destruction of the vultures.*

<sup>KJV</sup> **Acts 1:10-11** <sup>10</sup> And while they looked stedfastly *toward heaven as he went up*, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; <sup>11</sup> Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven*, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Here is the key phrase;

οὗτος ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ὁ ἀναληφθεὶς ἀφ’ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν,

ἀναληφθεὶς verb participle aorist passive nominative masculine singular from ἀναλαμβάνω

[GING] ἀναλαμβάνω

ἀναλαμβάνω *take up* [Ac 1:11](#); *take* [Eph 6:13, 16](#); *take along* [Ac 7:43](#); [2 Ti 4:11](#); *take on board* [Ac 20:13f](#). [pg 12]

The Greek here ἀναλαμβάνω in this text is also related directly to the Greek in John 14:3 παραλαμβάνετα (παραλαμβάνω), thus, all these “taken” texts are speaking of the righteous being “taken up into heaven” including those found in “the one shall be taken” both in Matthew 24 and Luke 17.

The confusion about those whom the “flood took” away, as relating to the one “taken” at the second coming, is further cleared up when we consider Luke 17:26-33-the context of our main text “the one shall be TAKEN and the other LEFT.”

**Luke 17:26-37** <sup>26</sup> And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. <sup>27</sup> 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.** <sup>28</sup> Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; <sup>29</sup> But **the same day that Lot went out of Sodom** it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, **and destroyed them all.** <sup>30</sup> **Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.**

<sup>31</sup> In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise **not return back.** <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

<sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; **the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.** <sup>35</sup> Two women shall be grinding together; **the one shall be taken, and the other left.** <sup>36</sup> Two men shall be in the field; **the one shall be taken, and the other left.** <sup>37</sup> 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.**

There are 2 events used in parallel to each other in Jesus answer to the disciple's question of “what would it be like when the Son of man shall come” Matthew 24:3.

These two events parallel the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus said His coming would be like;

- #1 Like the Days of Noah.
- #2 Like the Days of Lot.

In the days of Noah “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and **the flood came, and destroyed them all.**” Luke 17:23. This is the same meaning of the wording in Matthew 24:39 “**the flood came, and took them all away.**”

Who was it that came and “took them all away?” It was “the flood” that “came” and “took the wicked with him (with the flood waters). If the wicked are indeed those who are “taken away” at the second coming, who are what takes them away to destruction?

It is the Son of Man who is coming. Right? If He is the One Who “comes” and it is the wicked He “takes with Him” or “to Himself” (**παραλαμβάνεται/παραλαμβάνω** ~ “I will take you unto myself”), then are we to believe that Jesus takes with Him “the wicked to destruction?” How is this so? Because “We can only conclude from Luke 17 that **it is not the righteous who are 'taken' at all-** but the wicked! **Those that are left are the righteous . . .**” (see [footnote #4](#)).

The Bible says that it was the “flood” that “took them all away” to destruction. When Christ comes He will not “take” the wicked with Him “to destruction,” because He would have to “take them unto Himself” and the righteous He would have to “abandon!” ~ **ἀφίημι** to “leave, abandon . . . Leave standing or lying (without concerning ones self further about it . . . half dead . . . **Leave behind**” {Arndt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon, p. 126, 3. -leave}

This teaching is contrary to the character of Christ and His endearing love for those He is coming for.

BUT The Greek terms do allow for this. BUT they do harmonize with the truth that *it is the righteous Jesus “takes to Himself,”* and that *is it the righteous that He “takes with Him”* to heaven.

Matthew is not trying to *equate* Jesus coming to the flood coming “taking the wicked away,” but rather Jesus coming and “destroying the wicked” to the flood coming and “destroying the wicked.” The emphasis is on *the wicked being destroyed*, not on their being “taken.” See Luke 17:27.

Matthew says the flood “took them all away,” and when compared to Luke 17:27 “and destroyed them all,” this shows an emphasis on the fact that they were destroyed, not an emphasis on how they were destroyed by the flood taking them all away.

- 1) In Noah's day the wicked were "DESTROYED."
- 2) In Lot's day the wicked were "DESTROYED."
- 3) So it will be in the Day of the Son of Man . . . the wicked will all be DESTROYED!

- 1) In Noah's day those LEFT outside the ark were DESTROYED!
- 2) In Lot's day those LEFT in the city were DESTROYED!
- 3) In the Day of the Son of Man those LEFT BEHIND are DESTROYED! They are NOT LEFT ALIVE! They are LEFT DEAD!

- 1) Noah was TAKEN into the ark and out of this world!
- 2) Lot was TAKEN out of the city!
- 3) The servants of God will be TAKEN out of this world by Jesus at His Coming!

Luke 24:24 is almost Identical to Matthew 28:27

"For as lightening cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:27

"For as lightening, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth even unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day." Luke 17:24.

Both passages draw the same conclusion;

“For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” Matthew 24:28

“And they answer and said unto Him, Where Lord? And He said unto them, 'Wheresoever the body is {lying}, thither will the eagles be gathered together'” Luke 17:37.

These passages are dealing with the same event, and they arrive at the same conclusion; *those that are TAKEN, are taken to heaven, but those who are LEFT, are left dead.* They are destroyed by the “lightening” (“brightness”) of His coming right where they are found when Christ comes. The wicked are NOT “taken” anywhere, they are “Left Behind.” How do you prove this? By the mere fact that vultures *do not* have their prey delivered to them, rather they go to where the dead are lying when they breathed their last breath. The vultures *come* to eat of their flesh.

This is exactly the position the *Spirit of Prophecy* supports. Ellen White quotes the passage in Luke 17:35-36 then states that the righteous, who’s name stand in the book of life, are the ones taken;

"Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." "Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Luke 17:36, 35.) The righteous and the wicked are to be associated together in the work of life. But the Lord reads the character, *He discerns who are obedient children, who respect and love His commandments.* {9MR 137.1}

*The onlookers may discern no difference*, but there is One who said that the tares were not to be plucked up by human hands, lest the wheat be rooted up also. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then the Lord sends forth His reapers to gather out the tares, and binds them in bundles to burn, while the wheat is *gathered into the heavenly garner.* {9MR 137.2}

Compare this with her fuller statement from *Testimonies to Ministers*; note the parallel phrase;

## The Tares and the Wheat

*The looker-on may discern no difference*; but there is One who said that the tares were not to be plucked up by human hands lest the wheat be rooted up also. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then the Lord sends forth His reapers to gather out the tares and bind them in bundles to burn, while the wheat is *gathered into the heavenly garner.* The time of the judgment is a most solemn period, when the Lord gathers His own from among the tares. Those who have been members of the same family are separated. A mark is placed upon the righteous. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." *Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light; they shall enter in [BEGIN P.235] through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. The one shall be taken. His name shall stand in the book of life, while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God.* {TM 234.2}

The tares and wheat *are now commingled*, but then the one hand that alone *can separate them* will give to everyone his true position. Those who have had the light of truth, and heard the warning message, heard the invitation to the marriage supper--farmer, merchant, lawyer, false shepherds who have quieted the convictions of the people, unfaithful watchmen who have not sounded the warning or known the time of night--all who have refused obedience to the laws of the kingdom of God, will have no right therein. Those who have sought an excuse to avoid the cross of separation from the world will, with the world, be taken in the snare. They mingled with the tares from choice. Like drew to like in transgression. It is a fearful assimilation. Men choose to stand with the first rebel, who tempted Adam and Eve in Eden to disobey God. The tares multiply themselves, for they sow tares, and they have their part with the root of all sin--the devil. {TM 235.1}

Upon *those who keep the commandments of God* the benediction is pronounced: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, *that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*" They are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;" that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The obedient are called the just; they are drawn to the holy magnet, Jesus Christ; the holy attracts the holy. He that is unjust will be unjust still. Character cannot then be made or transformed. The oil of grace [BEGIN P.236] cannot be lent by one to another, neither have the foolish virgins time to buy oil for themselves. *The righteous are those who keep the commandments of God, and they will be forever separated from the disobedient and unrighteous who trampled underfoot the law of God.* The pure ore and the dross will no longer commingle. {TM 235.2}

Those who are "do-nothings" now will have the superscription upon them, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." They knew their Master's will, but did it not. They had the light of truth, they had every advantage, but chose their own selfish interests, *and they will be left* with those whom they did not try to save. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." {TM 237.1} *Testimonies to Ministers*, 234-235, 237.

The order in which the righteous and wicked are listed in this passage is no accident, she has placed them in that order on purpose. *The order parallels the Bible's order of the one taken and the one left.*  
The righteous and obedient = the ones taken  
The wicked and disobedient = the ones left

Here is her definitive statement about *who* she believes are the ones taken and the ones left;

"Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of saints in light; they shall enter through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. ***THE ONE SHALL BE TAKEN.*** *His name shall stand in the book of life*, while those with whom he has associated shall have the mark of *eternal separation from God.*" *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 235

Clearly she flatly states the one who is "taken" will have his name retained in the book of life. In other words, *the ones who are taken, are the ones who are saved!*

Though she does not use the exact words "*the one who is left*" she is referring to them when she says they;

"chose their own selfish interests, *and they will be left* with those whom they did not try to save."

"those with whom he [the one is taken] has *associated* shall have the mark of *eternal separation from God.*"

The "those" she is speaking of, she says, will have "*the mark of eternal separation from God,*" and these words of EGW are in perfect harmony with the Greek used by Jesus for the one who shall be LEFT~*ἀφίημι* means to "leave, abandon . . . Leave standing or lying (without concerning ones self further about it . . . half dead . . . *Leave behind*" {Arndt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon, p. 126, 3. -leave}. Those who have "*the mark of eternal separation from God*" in other words are those that will be lost. These are the ones who are left behind.

Here is the full conclusive statement that reveals EGW's understanding of those who are *taken* at the Lord's coming, NOTE the heading!

#### MR No. 713 - Meaning of Those Who are "Left"

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The onlookers may discern no difference, but there is One who said that the tares were not to be plucked up by human hands, lest the wheat be rooted up also. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then the Lord sends forth His reapers to gather out [separate] the tares, and binds them in bundles to burn [in the field], while the wheat is gathered into the heavenly garner. {9MR 137.2}

The time of the judgment is a most solemn period, *when the Lord gathers His own from among the tares.* Those who have been members of the same family *are separated.* A mark is placed upon the righteous. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels: and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi 3:17). *Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light; they shall enter in through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. The one shall be taken. His name shall stand in the book of life,* while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God. {9MR 137.3}

The tares and wheat are now commingled, but then the one Hand that alone can separate them will give to everyone his true position.--Letter 64a, 1895, pp. 6-7. (To Elder and Mrs. O. A. Olsen, September 1, 1895.)

Washington, D. C. March 19, 1979 {9MR 137.4} Manuscript Releases, Volume 9 [Nos. 664-770, 1978-1980]. 1993; 2002 (136). Ellen G. White Estate.

### The Harvest Principle:

Last of all, I would point out that while Jesus did say that the tares are “gathered” first into bundles to be burned, every farmer will tell you that the tares are never TAKEN out of the field to be burned. They are gathered in the field and LEFT to be burned. It is only the wheat that is harvested, it is only the wheat that is TAKEN out of the field, while the chaff *remains behind* or is “left behind.” So it will be in the great Day of the Son of Man when He returns to gather His elect from the four corners of the earth and receives them unto Himself to TAKE them to His Father’s House where Jesus has prepared mansions for them. *It’s really worse, not better, to be left behind.*

*Pastor Richard P. Mendoza ~ October 2014*

[www.biblical-investigations.com](http://www.biblical-investigations.com) e-mail to: [rpm@biblical-investigations.com](mailto:rpm@biblical-investigations.com)