



KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE

Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Matthew 24:40-42

In the hey day of pre-tribulation literature, wherein Christ's returning was described as a secret event and the unprepared were simply left ("LEFT BEHIND") to fend for themselves—the world they imagined would suddenly turn hostile towards basic Christian principles, and the above opening text was seen as an easy proof text confirming Christ's second (secret) coming. However . . .

Although many familiar with the Left Behind series may not be aware of it, the above passage is not universally accepted as describing Christians who escape prior to Christ's returning at the end of John's Revelation (in the 19th chapter, for example).

Although contrary to the Left Behind (book) scenario, this is actually quite logical. For how could anyone who lived through the 9-11 attacks, and have observed the unusual response by rank and file persons within the West (particularly, in the US) –possibly forget how the churches *filled up* after those attacks! Yet, consider, that was only *two* jet liners crashing into tall buildings — and the Left Behind scenario presents the possibility of dozens (or more) air liners suddenly losing their pilots and bringing havoc and mayhem from the sudden disappearance of Christians the

world over—and at that, after having sold *millions* of books from the "Left Behind" series!

Come now, please do not tell too many agnostics that you believe such a thing: that the sudden collision of dozens of air craft, piloted by persons confirmed to be Christians, would not peak a sudden interest in the Christian faith! Such a view may spark an incredulous response from people investigating Christianity! No, a careful exegesis by Bible scholars demands that the events described in our opening text *must necessarily* be at the end of the age *after* humankind has already made its final decision on whether or not to follow the Antichrist. Therefore, we must admit that the Scripture cited above can only take place *after the tribulation* at the end of the age (which is exactly what Matthew 24:29 states).

In fact, since we have come this far along the path, we must also acknowledge that the event cited above concerning the catching away of the saints will also take place *prior* to the outpouring of God's wrath, which is what the verse *immediately before* the above text states by using very graphic images. Specifically, the verses before read:

³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matthew 24:37-39

In other words, just as Noah was spared personal harm from the onset of a world –class cataclysm

(through the world-wide flood, of his day) —so too will the saints be spared the heaven shaking, earth rattling, events foretold by the prophets, that are scheduled to take place just as Christ begins bursting from Heaven's dimension, into our own.

¹⁹ *The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.* ²⁰ *The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.*

Isaiah 24:19-20

Such an event as that described above in which the earth actually “totters” —or turns on its side, would cause the very heavens appear to rock and reel, as the relative position of the stars shift across the sky and “the stars . . . fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (vs. 29) —even before we consider the effects of distant stars having their constellations becoming unstable—just experiencing the effect upon this planet would be enough to generate the horror described by the prophets, wherein people cry out to the mountains, as they observe:

. . . the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

¹⁵ *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, . . . hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,* ¹⁶ *and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"* ¹⁷ *For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

Revelation 6:14-17

What is it, exactly, that prompts this cry of despair? It is the sudden realization that the very God of Creation: the One Who put the stars in their places to begin with, has become displeased with His creation

(humankind) upon this planet. *Realizing that God's vengeance* has started to become unleashed, will give reason for the extreme anxiety cited above!

You can tell how devastating such an event would appear to those left upon this planet, particularly by those who depend so much upon the primacy of the natural universe in which we live. Notice, if you will, the way scientists resist even *considering* the concept, when saying that the poles that now tilt ~30° could not

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possibly move any radial distance—without it taking millions of years(!).¹ Yes, nuclear war is terrible, but the shifting of the *entire planet* beneath our feet, resulting from rocking poles is altogether unbearable! We are so dependent upon the God of Creation for the stability of our environment, and yet how we take it utterly for granted. Truly *this* is the wrath that God will spare the saints from: a fury that only *He* can unleash.

Note, again, Christ's similar statement when comparing His return to Lot's departure from Sodom:

²⁸ *Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;* ²⁹ *but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.* ³⁰ *Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.*

Lk. 17:28-30 [emphasis added]

Notice what, exactly, it was that

Lot was spared: *God's answer* to the sin of Sodom, which was to rain down fire upon the city, as a direct act of God, Himself. Of course, the “true” rapture passage, that would illustrate an escape from tribulation (which event all Christians are *guaranteed* to experience — John 16:33) or even *great tribulation*—is supposed to be found within the Pauline epistles, such as 1 Cor. 15:52. It is there, some have assured us, that we have a description of a secret removal of the saints prior to the great tribulation: presumably, taking place in a quiet manner, that would not upset the transportation systems of the world or call undo attention to the wide spread disappearance of millions of Christians—lest, instead of facilitating the rise of Antichrist . . . they foster possible revival.

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Oops. Forgive me, this must be a mistake, as well, for the passage just quoted from the Paul's writing does (clearly) state that this is a description of Christ's returning with great noise, even with “the trumpet of God” — which, Paul carefully informs us, in the previous chapter, is a signaling for war (1 Cor. 14:8). Even the Thessalonian passage given to describe the procession of both living, and those previously dead, mentions both the sounding of trumpet *and a shout . . .* loud enough to awaken the dead (1 Thes. 4:16,17).

Interesting.

On another front, you may have noticed how insistent the politically correct are today, when proclaiming a near apocalyptic danger resulting from “climate change”: so that even

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the President now appears more concerned with this perceived event than the defense of our country from a ground or air based nuclear terrorist attack²—or even crude EMP weapons that could send our country back a hundred years, in technology.³ Have you ever wondered why this is? Consider, just for a moment, the ramifications of offending the God of creation, Himself, and then meditate on a statement made by the apostle Paul regarding how the natural world about us begins to groan in its anticipation of Christ's returning, as persecution of the saints intensifies:

¹⁸ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

¹⁹ *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

Romans 8:18-19 [emphasis added]

Or, consider the prophet Isaiah's observation:

⁵ *The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.*

Isaiah 24:5

And why is this? Isaiah explains:

⁶ *Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.*

Isaiah 24:6

And Paul elaborates:

²¹ *because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty*

of the children of God.

Romans 8:21

In other words: in some mysterious way, the ecological systems of our world are starting to groan in anticipation of Christ's returning. As this "groaning" increases, it becomes ever more obvious that "something is wrong"—so that the enemy of our souls starts to find it necessary to provide some sort of spin to explain the increasingly unusual happenings in the torturous wrenching of the environment around us (with increases in the prevalence of tornadoes and violent storms, for example). "Climate change" is merely a cover, or an attempted explanation, for the unusual turn of natural events that now seem to be occurring at intervals of ever increasing frequency all about us. Yet, Christ clearly warns that the events most significant, as we move ever closer to His returning, are not mere temperature and weather changes, but geological activity (earthquakes), pole shifting, and eventually the very destabilizing of the cosmic universe (Heb. 12:26).

So where will *you* be, and on which side of the line will you be standing, when the God of creation suddenly rends the veil and bursts into our dimension with power and majesty? On whose side, as the nations of the world finally begin the execution of humankind's "final solution"—seeking to complete what the man with the funny little mustache had only *begun* within his ovens and camps at Auschwitz and Dachau (Zech. 14:1-4)? Or even . . . after the insanity of the age launches its *next* demand, after having utterly violated the "bathrooms" of our land?

Insane? Unbelievable? It would be . . . except, it's already happening!

These are issues that every believer in the Man of Galilee, the Christ of Calvary, and the Savior of

humankind, Who came to offer *His life* for *our* salvation, must now consider. Yes, we must stop to consider them, as uncomfortable as it may seem, as the Western world marches with ever more determined step back towards the darkness from which the Christian faith once delivered us.

Will we follow the crowd back into the Dark?

—And, where will we be when the vilest and most heinous offense one can pronounce, becomes being called a hate-filled (sh-h-h-h) "Christ lover" or Christian who is so intolerant as to believe that after the God of Creation sent His Son to (gasp!) *die* for *our* sins upon the Cross we now have the temerity to believe that there is only *one* way to have our souls saved (John 14:6, Isaiah 53:1-6)?!!

As Christ Himself answered at His trial when asked His identity:

. . . *Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the [Messiah], the Son of the Blessed?"*

⁶² *Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."*

Mark 14:61-62

When He *does* return in those clouds of heaven, directly above the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:8, Zech. 14:4) will you be ready?

We can be ready: you and I really can be, by repenting of our sins and turning our hearts ever heavenward, towards the Messiah of the Jews (the Christ) today. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved. Be ready to "lift off" with the saints when He returns (Job 19:25,26)!

And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'

Acts 2:20-21

Amen.

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