

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.**
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

We are always thinking, “What comes next?” – “What is the plan?” Well, God’s got a plan for the future and what we know of it is what He has revealed to us. On our own we never figure God out.

Slide # 2

Psalm 33:10–11 (NKJV)

10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.

11 The **counsel of the LORD stands forever**, The **plans of His heart to all generations.**

As we study prophecy, we find that God’s plan for history centers around Israel, Jerusalem, and the Messiah with a parenthesis emphasis on the church.

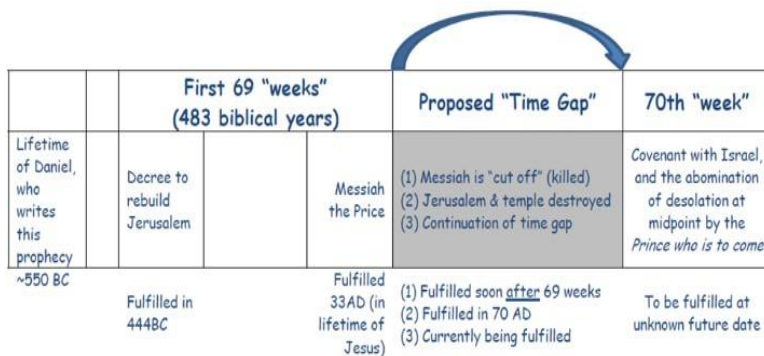
In the book of Daniel God gave an overview of His prophetic Master plan as seen in Daniel 9:24-27. There God said that He has determined 70 weeks (or 70 units of 7 years) of special dealings in relation to Daniel’s people who are the Jews. That totals 490 years of special dealings with Israel.

483 of those years (69 weeks) have already been fulfilled. They were fulfilled to the letter as seen in Daniel 9:25 in the presentation of “**Messiah the Prince**” at the time of the triumphal entry of Christ on Palm Sunday. In Luke 19 Jesus said to Jerusalem at that time this is “**your day**” (Lk. 19:42) and that this was the time of their visitation (Lk. 19:44).

But since they failed to truly recognize, receive, or appreciate Jesus as their Messiah there has since that time been a LONG GAP PERIOD in which Israel has temporarily been put aside. This long gap period essentially corresponds to what we know as “The Church Age”. But one week (one 7-year period) remains to be fulfilled in relation to Israel.

When the Church is complete, Christ will take His Church family out of the world and then the 70th week will commence with Antichrist signing a 7 year covenant with Israel. This 7 year period is known as the Tribulation Period with the last half of it being known as “The Great Tribulation” which will come to a conclusion at Christ’s second coming to the earth.

Slide # 3



And that background brings us to Matthew 24. Matthew 24-25 is commonly called “**The Olivet Discourse**”. It is a discourse on prophecy, and it is the last of 5 discourses given in Matthew (Mt. 5-7; 10; 13, 18; 24-25).

The Olivet Discourse, delivered shortly before Jesus' crucifixion, is the most important single passage of prophecy in all the Bible. It is significant because it came from Jesus Himself immediately after He was rejected by His own people and because it provides the master outline of end-time events. – **Tim LaHaye**

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples asked Jesus about the sign of His coming and the end of the age. The remainder of the chapter is the answer to this question. Jesus begins by connecting end time sign events to the 70th week of Daniel prophecy as seen in Matthew 24:15. In Matthew 24:4-35 Jesus is dealing with the 70th week of Daniel that climaxes in His return to the earth.

But then as we come to Matthew 24:36 a great **TRANSITION** takes place. And unless one gets this transition right what Jesus has to say will be misunderstood. And it is right here that I believe many of my dispensational brethren have messed up in a **MAJOR** way. They have failed to see the significance of this **TRANSITION** and therefore missed the essence of what Christ is saying in Matthew 24:36-44.

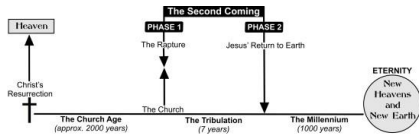
The Jews to this day as a people group generally have failed to see the reality that the Messiah has TWO comings – a first coming in which He would die for the sins of the world – and a second coming in which He comes to reign. As those who have seen the truth of NT revelation, we see that God's plan involves two comings which is in fulfillment of OT prophecy.

However, in addition to the reality of two comings there are also two different phases to His second coming. The first phase relates essentially to the Church and the 2nd phase relates essentially to Israel.

And here is the point I want to stress: Both phases of Christ's Second Coming – both the first phase and the second phase are both presented in Matthew 24.

Jesus was the first one to present that there are two phases to His second coming and He does so with precision here in Matthew 24. This is why I call Matthew 24 the prophetic seed plot of the New Testament. The prophetic seed plot of the OT is Daniel 9:24-27. The prophetic seed plot of the NT is Matthew 24.

Slide # 4



I believe that Jesus was the one who first taught and explained the pretribulation rapture, and that He taught this in both the Discourse and John 14:1-3. Paul, John, and Peter (and perhaps James) have all gained many of their insights into the pretribulation rapture and the day of the Lord from Jesus' teachings in the Discourse.

– *John F. Hart*

One of the problems is that many of the early dispensationalists claimed very strongly that the rapture was not to be found in Matthew 24 at all.

Since they saw that Israel is so strongly represented in the first half of the chapter, they argued that CONTEXT claimed the whole chapter was dealing with only the 70th week of Daniel and Israel. Therefore they claimed that the whole chapter of Matthew 24 dealt only with Christ's second coming to the earth and not at all with the rapture.

I am going to show you today why I think that view is in error and why I think Matthew 24 is the seed plot of prophetic truth developed in the rest of the NT – including the truth of the rapture.

It seems to me that many of the “old timers” in the dispensational camp fell into group think. Some of the leaders took a position on Matthew 24 and they, like dominos all fell in line – even though the plain sense of the text leads in another direction.

I highly recommend the book titled, “***Evidence of the Rapture – A Biblical Case For Pretribulation***” with the general editor being ***John F. Hart***. In the book John Hart has a chapter titled, “***Jesus and the Rapture: Matthew 24***” in which he strongly argues that dispensationalists need to rethink how they have traditionally handled Matthew 24. I fully concur with his position.

We now come to Matthew 24:36 which has a major transitional marker in place which shifts the focus from phase 2 of the Second Coming to Phase 1 of the Second Coming.

It shifts from what can be known in relation to the tribulation period that climaxes in Christ's Second Coming to what cannot be known prior to His coming at the rapture.

Slide # 5

Matthew 24:36 TRANSITION

- Matt. 24:4-35 – (Subject: ***Tribulation signs and Christ's Post-Trib Coming***)
- Matt. 24:36 – **TRANSITION** (“*Peri de*”)
- Matt. 24:37-44 (Subject: ***Christ's “signless” Pre-Trib Coming***)

A footnote on the idea of two phases to the Second Coming.

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Parousia = “coming arrival” denoting “presence”

Used in reference to ***2nd Phase***

Mt. 24:3 “what will be the sign of your **coming**”

Mt. 24:27 “will the **coming** of the Son of Man be.”

Used in reference to the ***1st Phase***

Mt. 24:37 “will the **coming** of the Son of Man be.”

Mt. 24:39 “will the **coming** of the Son of Man be.”

Hence, “***parousia***” (“coming”) is used in reference to both the 1st and the 2nd phase of Christ's second coming. It is for this reason I speak of the Second Coming as having 2 distinct phases.

Matthew 24:36–44 (NKJV)

36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

The words translated here in the NKJV as “But of” are two words in the Greek which are “peri de”. They are sometimes translated as “Now concerning” or “But concerning”. This is consistently used in the New Testament as a TRANSITIONAL PHRASE. It consistently denotes a transition to a different but related subject.

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"Peri de is a frequent device for introducing a change from one subject to another phase of the same subject or from one subject to another." – (**Robert Thomas**, Imminence in the NT – p. 193-94)

So consistently it denotes a TRANSITION of one kind or another. Paul often uses this in his epistles. For example in 1 Corinthians as Paul is moving from one topic of correction to another he consistently uses “peri de” as seen in 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 11:2; 12:1; 15:1; 16:1, 12).

Notably Paul uses this phrase in transitioning from his discussion of the rapture in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 to his discussion of the Day of the Lord in 1 Thess. 5:1-11.

Slide # 8

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – Subject Rapture

TRANSITION....

1 Thessalonians 5:1–2 (NKJV) – Subject Day of the Lord

1 But concerning [*peri de*] the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

We have the same type of transition here in Matthew 24:36 – only here Christ is transitioning from talking about the Day of the Lord to now addressing the time of the Rapture. It is a related but different subject – namely the 1st phase of the Second Coming.

To show you that a clear distinctive transition is in view note that Christ has just been emphasizing that they CAN KNOW about His Second Coming to the Earth, but now after this transition He emphasizes they CAN'T KNOW about His coming. That only makes sense if there are two different aspects to His coming.

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- “When its branch...puts forth leaves, you **know...near.**” (v. 32)
- “When you see all these things, **know that it is near**” (v. 33)

TRANSITION – v. 36

- “But of that day and hour no one knows” (v. 36)
- “and did not know...” (v. 39)
- “Watch therefore, for you do not know” (v. 42)
- “if the master of the house had known” (v. 43)
- “the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (v. 44)

How much more plain can it be? You cannot know and not know at the same time. This only makes sense if Christ is talking about two different aspects of His coming – one can be known when it is at hand and one cannot be known. Only the pretribulation rapture really makes sense here. And the language of ***peri de*** is a clear linguistic marker that such a transition has take place.

The old school of thought claiming that Christ is continuing to describe conditions related to the 2nd phase of His coming claims silly things like – while they might know the general time frame, they will not be able to know the exact day and hour. I would argue that once they get into the Tribulation Period they might well be able to figure out the exact day of Christ Second Coming to the earth.

Here is how they might know. We know from Revelation 13:5 that at the midpoint of the Tribulation Period Antichrist will be given absolute prevailing authority to continue for exactly 42 months. On the Jewish calendar that is exactly 1260 days. Furthermore, we know from Revelation 12:6 that Israel will be preserved during these days in a special place prepared by God for exactly 1260 days.

Well, if Antichrist is going to have absolute sway for exactly 1260 days (the last half of the Tribulation Period) then what is going to happen on day 1261? In at least 7 different places the Bible indicates that Antichrist’s sway over God’s people will be for exactly 3 and ½ years (or 1260) days (cf. Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Rev. 11:2; 12:6; 14; 13:5).

I am not mathematician but even I can figure out that if the Antichrist has exactly 1260 days of absolute domination over God’s people from the time

He goes into the temple and declares Himself to be God – well, then even I can figure out that something is going to happen on day 1261? What is that going to be? Well, we don't have to wonder. The Bible plainly tells us that what will bring the rule of Antichrist to an end is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Slide # 10

2 Thessalonians 2:8 (NKJV)

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of **His coming**.

What will bring the Antichrist to an end after his reign of terror for 1260 days? It will be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ on day 1261! I take it that in the Tribulation Period this can essentially be calculated to the exact day if you know what the Bible has to say.

Therefore, what Christ is describing in verses 36 through verse 44 cannot be talking about His second coming to the earth. My view is that Christ here transitions to talk about His coming in the Rapture.

It is noted that God consistently sets specific dates for His program related to Israel. In Genesis 15:13-16 Abraham was told his descendants would be strangers in a foreign land for 400 years which was fulfilled in Egypt. In Jeremiah 25:11-12 the Jews were told they would be captive in Babylon for exactly 70 years. Daniel 9:24-27 gives specific dates related to God's prophetic program for Israel including precisely when the 70 weeks would begin, the timing of the presentation of "Messiah the Prince", the start of the final 70th week, the middle of the week, and the conclusion of the week. We see very specific dating all the way through.

But in contrast the Church has no dates. It began suddenly and signlessly and it will conclude the same way. After the resurrection Jesus specifically told the disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority." (Acts 1:7). The Church is not given dates or signposts like Israel is.

The second phase of Christ's coming is Israel oriented and has specific dates attached to it. The first phase of Christ's coming is Church oriented and has no dates attached to it. And that is where we are.

When Christ says, “But of that day and hour no one knows” I believe He is talking about the rapture – the 1st aspect of His Second Coming. No one knows when that will happen.

Even the language of “and hour” doesn’t really apply to the Second Coming to the earth because that will be a protracted drawn out event that happens very gradually – evidently taking place over many hours. We know it will be similar to when He gradually ascended into heaven as seen in Acts 1 (cf. Acts 1:9-11).

We know that when Christ comes back to the earth “every eye will see Him” as it says in Rev. 1:7. And we know from Rev. 19 that when the heavens are opened and Christ begins His descent to earth that there will be enough time for Antichrist and his forces to gather together “to make war” against the coming Christ (cf. Rev. 19:19).

So what I am saying is that the description of the “hour” doesn’t seem to really apply to His Second Coming to the earth because it will transpire over a protracted amount of time and not necessarily suddenly at just one appointed hour.

This description of no one knows the day nor the hour really only fits the pretribulation rapture. And the language is strong in saying not even the angels know the timing – only the Father. Some have struggled with Mark 13:32 where Jesus is recorded as saying that even He as the Son did not know the timing.

However, this is easily explained even though we can’t completely comprehend the mystery. Christ in His incarnation set aside the independent use of His divine attributes. In His state of humility He depended fully upon the Father and only operated under the direction of the Father. As it says in Phil. 2:7 He “emptied Himself” and was made “in the likeness of men”. As it says in Luke 2:52, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature”. This is only possible in terms of His humanity and yet He remained fully God as well.

This is a great mystery. We do know that in His high priestly prayer the night before He was crucified Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him “with the glory which I had with You before the world was” so clearly He had set aside this glory in His incarnation (Jn. 17:4-5).

So the answer is that in His incarnation at this point the Father had not revealed it to the Son, but certainly in the exaltation of His glorification the Son now again shares in the full glory of knowing all things just as He did before the foundation of the world.

37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Jesus here confirms the historical reality of Noah and the truth of a universal flood as recorded in Genesis. People that don't believe in biblical story of Noah and the ark really have a problem with Jesus too because He affirmed it.

Conditions prior to the rapture will be similar to what they were in the days of Noah. Yes, Noah was a preacher of righteousness but the people didn't take him seriously (2 Pet. 2:5).

Slide # 11

2 Peter 3:3–6 (NKJV)

3 knowing this first: that **scoffers will come in the last days**, walking according to their own lusts,

4 and saying, "**Where is the promise of His coming?** For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

5 For this **they willfully forget**: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,

6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

In the last day scoffers will mock the idea of Christ coming again and they will "willfully forget" the truth of the universal flood in Noah's day. The evidence is so powerful and evident that one must willfully reject it.

Fossils are EVERYWHERE! There are billions and billions of them. They are found on every continent and even on the highest mountains. Fossils are the result of rapid burial. They are the encased remains of once living things that were suddenly buried in layers of rock. How did this rapid burial happen all over the world? Some fossils still have "soft tissue" showing they were buried merely thousands of years ago and not millions. This rapid burial all over the world speaks of catastrophic circumstances. How could billions of creatures be entombed rapidly all over the world?

The most consistent and logical explanation is the one the Bible gives - namely the global flood recorded in Genesis (cf. Gen. 7-8). God allowed the flood to cover the entire world in a catastrophic event that killed all air-breathers except those on the ark. As the waters rose they covered all the continents burying billions and billions of creatures and plants in the sediments they deposited.

Atheistic "science" wants to deny the reality of the Genesis flood but the evidence for it is overwhelming. There are billions and billions of reasons to believe it happened as seen in the fossil record. Take away the universal flood and you have no basis for a universal fossil record. Fossils all over the world, even in the Himalayas, are a GLARING testament to the truth of the Bible.

The mocking of the last days is based on the idea that life is proceeding without any evidence of divine intervention. This is how it was in the days of Noah and how it will be in the last days before the Rapture. But divine intervention will be on full display in the Day of the Lord Judgments!

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,

What is being described here is life as normal with no thought for God. The emphasis at this point is not great immorality or violence, but rather normalcy and indifference. This is secular indifference. The great evil here was being immersed in everyday life with no regard or thought for God or coming judgment. They were clueless.

There is nothing wrong with eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage. These are the normal activities of life and they are gifts of God to be enjoyed (1 Tim. 6:17). However, even in our eating nothing is to be received without acknowledging God in thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

If you want to offend God, just go on living life as if He doesn't exist. Just leaving God out is godless. He doesn't appreciate the "silent treatment". It is amazing how many "professing Christians" carry on like practical atheists with a self-oriented life with no real thought for God. As it was so shall it be - and so it is.

They carried on with this indifference until the very day that Noah entered the ark. That was the day of judgment and that day everything changed.

Slide # 12

Now let me ask you, does the description here really fit the Day of the Lord as described in the book of Revelation? How can anyone sincerely believe that people in the Tribulation Period will carry on with life as normal with no thought about God or judgment. Really? In the context of the seal judgments we read...

Slide # 13**Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV)**

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, **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?”

Does that sound like life as normal? Does that sound like they are oblivious to what is happening? In the context of the trumpet judgments we read.

Slide # 14**Revelation 9:20 (NKJV)**

20 But the **rest of mankind,** who were not killed by these plagues, **did not repent** of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

Does that sound like “business as usual” going about the normal affairs of life?

In the context of the bowl judgments we read....

Slide# 15**Revelation 16:9 (NKJV)**

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

Does this sound like life as normal or that they are oblivious to what is happening! No! In Rev. 6:8 we find that one-fourth of the world's population will die under the fourth seal judgment. Under the 6th trumpet judgment, a third of mankind will die as seen in Rev. 9:18. That accounts for half the world's population right there and we haven't even gotten to the most severe judgment as seen in the bowl judgments. Isa. 24:1 in speaking of this coming judgment day says, "**the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste...the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left**" (Isa. 24:1-6) and yet we are to believe the people living then will just be oblivious and carrying on with life as normal? That is a MAJOR disconnect!

How in the world can one honestly believe that people will carry on with life as normal in the Day of the Lord until the second coming of Christ to the earth? That is to deny the plain sense of everything that is written about the Day of the Lord.

I submit to you Christ here in Matthew 24:36-44 is describing the time before the Day of the Lord judgment hits, and not after the time judgment has fallen upon the earth. Then life will be anything but normal for the whole of mankind!

Jesus comments "men [will be] fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world" (Luke 21:26). This is not life as usual.

The most transparent meaning of the "days of Noah" illustration (vv. 37-39) is that, just as normal but unsuspecting lifestyles existed prior to the great judgment of the flood, so too normal but unsuspecting lifestyles will exist prior to the sudden onslaught of the day-of-the-Lord judgments and the rapture of the church. – **John F. Hart**

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.

The lost in the world of Noah's day had no idea that the judgment of the flood was about to hit them until it started to rain (cf. Lk. 17:27). This is how it will be when Jesus comes at the Rapture.

As already established the world will know full well that God's judgment is upon them during the Day of the Lord which precedes Christ's coming to the earth. In Revelation 6:17 they cry out, "**For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?**" That is the opposite of "**did not know until the flood came**".

It is the world prior to the 1st phase of Christ's second coming that will be living life as normal and will be completely overtaken by surprise at the coming of the Day of the Lord judgment. The description here is that of being taken in judgment by surprise. That describes the beginning of the Day of the Lord as seen in 1 Thess. 5:2-3 and not the end of it.

Slide # 16 – Trib Judgment not see coming



Would Jesus use a description of casual lifestyles in Matthew 24:37-39 to communicate what the world would be like when, "there will be a great tribulation, such has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will (Matt. 24:21)? **This seems most unlikely.** (emphasis mine) The flood of Noah's day corresponds to the time leading up to the sudden arrival of the day of the Lord, the Seventieth Week of Daniel and the pretribulation rapture.

– **John Hart**

40 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.

The question here is who is taken and who is left? The view that doesn't see the rapture in view here claims that "taken" here corresponds to "took them all away" in judgment as seen in verse 39. So this view says the one taken in verses 40 and 41 are taken in judgment while those left are the saved who are left to go into the kingdom.

The problem with that view is that the wording is different. The word "**took**" (Gk. airo) in verse 39 has the sense of being taken in violence. If Christ wanted to communicate the same nuance in verses 40 and 41 we would expect that He would have used this same word, but He didn't!

Instead He used a different Greek word for “**taken**” (Gk. *paralambano*) in verses 40 and 41 that in some contexts can be used in a negative sense (cf. Mt. 27:27; Jn. 19:16), but most often it is used in a very positive sense.

The Greek word *paralambano* means “*to take to or with oneself*”.

The thought is always one of accompaniment, and almost always in a positive sense, i.e., for close fellowship. The word is overwhelmingly used in a positive sense. – **John F. Hart**

Paralambano is used of taking a bride in Matthew 1:20. It is used of Jesus taking Peter, James, and John up to the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1. And it is used by the Lord in John 14:3 where He promises to come again and receive His people unto Himself. When He says there “***I will come again and receive you***” – the word “**receive**” is the Greek word *paralambano*. The use of this very same word in Matthew 24:40-41 is therefore very significant.

Also note the word “**left**” used in Matt. 24:40-41 is the Greek word “***aphiemi***” which consistently has a negative connotation meaning “**to abandon**” (cf. Mt. 4:11, 22; 8:15; 13:36; 19:29; 22:22, 25; 26:56). For example, in John 14:18 Christ says “I will not leave [Gk. *aphiemi*] you orphans”.

Slide # 17

Matthew 24:39–41 (NKJV)

39 and did not know until the flood came and **took** [*airo*- took violently] them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be **taken** [*paralambano* - to take with] and the other **left** [*aphiemi* - abandoned].

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be **taken** [*paralambano* -to take with] and the other **left** [*aphiemi* - abandoned].

Therefore, I understand the “**taken**” in Matt. 24:40-41 to refer to those taken in the pretribulation Rapture, while those “**left**” refers to those abandoned to the Day of the Lord judgment. In my mind this is the most straightforward and consistent view in light of both the overall usage of the terms and the context.

The sense of being taken in the rapture fits perfectly with the parallel language describing the rapture in John 14:1-3 where Christ promises to come again and receive us to Himself. And it fits perfectly with the idea that the coming of Jesus at the rapture means deliverance for God's people but also surprise judgment for the lost world.

Footnote: It is ironic that dispensationalism is known for dealing with prophecy in a literal/normal fashion but here in Matthew 24 some want to claim that the "**normal life pattern**" being described should perhaps be taken figuratively. Thus, they end up allegorizing the text at that point instead of taking it in the normal straightforward sense.

One of the arguments that those who claim the rapture is not found in Matthew 24 use is this: They claim that the book of Matthew is Jewish in orientation and does not deal with Church truth. However, in response it is pointed out that it is the gospel of Matthew that specifically introduces Church truth as seen in Matt. 16:18 and also Matt. 18:17. Certainly, the great commission in Matt. 28:19-20 is given to the Church and not to Israel.

And I would point out that after the transition of "peri de" in Matthew 24:36 Israel is no longer mentioned at all in this immediate context of Matt. 24:36-44. Matthew 24:4-35 is thoroughly Jewish in orientation but not Matthew 24:36-44. This argues for complete consistency in seeing Matthew 24:36-44 as dealing with the rapture instead of dealing with the Second Coming of Christ to the earth.

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

This is where we get the idea of "imminency".

Since in most contexts and especially prophetic contexts, "to watch" (gregoreo) stresses imminence, the use of "to watch" is most appropriate for the pretribulational rapture of the church, not a posttribulational return of Christ. – **John Hart**

When we say the coming of Christ is "imminent" we are saying the rapture could happen at any time. All the way through the NT the coming of Christ for the Church is consistently presented as being imminent (cf. 1 Cor 1:7; 16:22; Phil. 3:20; 4:5; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:6; 1 Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; James 5:7-9; 1 Pet. 1:13; Jude 21; Rev. 3:10-11; 22:7, 12, 20; etc.).
"Perhaps Today!"

Slide # 18**1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV)**

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

We as believers are not waiting to be delivered from the wrath of hell. In salvation that is already a reality (cf. Jn. 3:36; Rom. 5:8-9). Rather as God's people (the Church) we are waiting for Jesus to come and deliver us from the time of wrath (the tribulation period) that is about to come upon the earth (cf. Rev. 3:10-11; 6:17). We are not waiting for the Antichrist. We are not waiting for the tribulation period. We are waiting for Christ. We are "looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

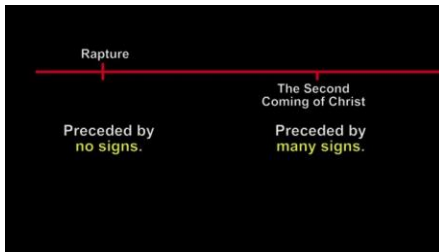
Once the signposts of the Tribulation Period begin then Israel (and all Bible students) will be able to know when the Lord is coming. But the Church does not know which is why we are told to be ever vigilant in watching. The coming of Christ for the Church is imminent. Perhaps Today!

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

It is Jesus who first introduces the idea of His coming as being like a thief coming in the night (cf. Mt. 24:43; Lk. 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). The OT prophets NEVER spoke of Christ's coming in this way because they only dealt with the 2nd phase of His second coming. The rest of the NT builds on this analogy. Paul, John, and Peter all borrow from Jesus in this regard which is one reason I say Matthew 24 is the prophetic seed plot for the rest of the NT.

Thieves come without warning, without signs, without any heads up. This fits perfectly in illustrating how Christ will come before the Tribulation Period at the Rapture of the Church. It will come unexpectedly because there are no clear signposts to indicate its arrival. Yes, we see the day coming generally in that we see the last days trend of apostasy, but there are no definitive signposts (cf. Heb. 10:25; 1 Jn. 2:18).

Slide # 19



It is common for some dispensationalist to say that the rapture is completely disassociated from the beginning of the Day of the Lord and they argue that therefore there may be a gap – perhaps a fairly large one between the rapture and the start of the Day of the Lord which begins with Antichrist signing a 7-year covenant with Israel.

I don't believe in this "gap theory". I believe that the rapture takes place and immediately history segues into the Day of the Lord judgment. A key reason for believing this is that here in Matthew 24:43-44 Jesus illustrates that His coming will be like a thief in the night. And then as we turn to 1 Thess. 5:2 we find Paul saying that the Day of the Lord also comes as a thief in the night. What is true of the one is also true of the other because in fact they are closely connected.

Slide # 20

Matthew 24:43–44 (NKJV)

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (NKJV)

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

I take it that the coming of Christ at the Rapture and the coming of the day of the Lord are like two sides of the same coin. The coin is the coming as a thief. On the one side of the coin is the coming of Christ, on the other side of the coin is the coming of the Day of the Lord. They are distinct but yet closely related in that the one segues into the other.

We also see this earlier in this section in verse 36. Christ there introduces the coming of “that day” singular. The OT prophets consistently referred to the coming Day of the LORD judgment that culminates in Messiah’s second coming as “that day” as Paul also did in 1 Thessalonians 5 (cf. Ezek. 30:3, 9; Joel 3:14, 18; Zeph. 1:7-15, also see 1 Thess. 5:2, 4, etc.). But here Jesus also ties the coming of “that day” with his coming as seen in verse 37.

So again, we have the single coin of “that day”. On one side of the coin we have that day of Christ’s coming, on the other side of the coin we have that day of the Lord’s judgment. They are distinct and yet closely related as the one ushers in the other.

And there is one more illustration of this in the text. In verse 38 we find the people are carrying on with life in a normal way UNTIL the day that Noah entered the ark. In verse 39 the people did not know UNTIL the flood came and took them all away. The single coin here is the word “UNTIL”. On the one side of the coin is UNTIL Noah was safely tucked inside the ark – which corresponds to deliverance via the rapture. On the other side of the coin is UNTIL the flood of judgment came – corresponding to the day of the Lord judgment.

The rapture comes as a thief in the night as does Day of the Lord. The one ushers in the other. They are like two sides of the same coin. When the one happens the other follows. It is an immediate segway. Thus, the rapture in effect introduces the Day of the Lord which immediately follows on its heels.

Slide # 21- Rapture/Day of Lord comes as a thief in the night

Daniel 9:27

THE SEVENTIETH WEEK OF DANIEL

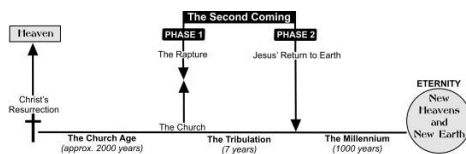
| After 69th Week | "Time Gap" 2000 + "x" Years | Daniel's 70th Week 7 Years | 1000 Years |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Cross | The Church Age | Tribulation | Millennium |
| Daniel 9:25, 26 | | Daniel 9:27 Rev 6-19 | Rev 20 |

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Christ plainly says here that this aspect of His coming will happen when we do not expect it. This is the very opposite of verse 33 which says “**when you see all these things, know that it is near – at the doors!**”

The only reasonable explanation is that there are in fact 2 phases to Christ’s Second Coming. The first phase is totally unpredictable and unexpected. That relates to the rapture. The second phase is predictable for those who will be alive in the Tribulation Period.

Slide # 22 – Unexpected v. Expected



The next event on God’s prophetic calendar is the rapture but we have no idea when it will take place. Christ has plainly told us this. So to set any dates is wrong!

Early in my ministry in a service we were singing the song, “**What If It Were Today?**” It has a line that says, “**Jesus will come someday**”. I happened to be sharing a song book with a brother and when we got to that line he inadvertently sang, “**Jesus will come today**”. I got to laughing so hard I could hardly continue to sing.

Jesus may come today, but we don’t know. Many have set dates – they have all been wrong. No one knows when Christ will come for the Church.

That is why we are to “**live ready**”. We get ready by putting our faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. And then we live ready by ever being watchful and vigilant in our daily walk.

In 1 Cor. 1:7 Paul said the Corinthian church was “**eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ**”, and then at the end of this letter he signed off by saying “**Maranatha**” (an Aramaic word) in 1 Cor. 16:22.

Slide # 23

Maranatha = “Our Lord Come”

“Mar” = (“**Lord**”)

“ana” = (“**our**”)

“tha” = (“**come**”)

The early Church was looking for Christ to come at any time and therefore greeted one another with the greeting, “Maranatha” (Our Lord Comes).

Perhaps today! Live ready! Maranatha!